Rector's Ramblings – November 2026 (Waiting and Remembering)

As the last leaves fall from our churchyard trees and the twilight settles earlier each evening, November enters with its own distinct atmosphere of quiet reflection. It is a month that invites us to slow our steps, to look back with gratitude, and to look forward with hope.

Within the rhythm of the Church year, November brings together three profound seasons: the commemoration of All Saints and All Souls, the solemnity of Remembrance-tide, and the expectant beginning of Advent.

We begin the month in the company of the holy ones and those we have loved and lost. At All Saints' Day, we celebrate the vast cloud of witnesses whose lives radiated the light of Christ, reminding us of the extraordinary calling shared by every ordinary believer. Yet, the following day, All Souls' Day, often speaks most intimately to our hearts. In the stillness of our parish churches, candles are often lit and names read aloud, we hold our personal griefs in the gentle presence of God. We are reminded that love does not end with death, and that those who have gone before us remain forever safe in the divine mercy.

This spirit of remembrance broadens as we enter Remembrance-tide. Standing together at our local war memorials, accompanied by the muffled silence and the stark red of poppies, we pay tribute to those who sacrificed their lives in conflicts past and present. In a world that still knows the deep agony of war and division, our act of remembering is more than an exercise in history. It is a solemn pledge to continue to seek and work for peace, to foster reconciliation within our communities, and to pray for wisdom among those who lead the nations. We honour the fallen best when we actively build a world rooted in justice and compassion.

As November draws to a close, the mood subtly shifts once more. On the final Sunday of the month, we cross the threshold into Advent—the start of a new liturgical year. After weeks of looking back and remembering, Advent invites us to turn our faces towards the future. In the gathering darkness, we light the first candle on our Advent wreaths. Whilst each candle offers a modest flame, yet it speaks of an unshakeable promise: the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Advent calls us out of the rushing bustle of seasonal preparations and into a holy watchfulness. It asks us to make space in our hearts for the coming of Christ—not merely as a child in a manger long ago, but as a living presence in our lives today and as the ultimate hope of our world.

May this November be a time of deep blessing for you and your families. As we navigate the movement from memory to hope, may we find comfort in God's unfailing love and strength in the light that no darkness can extinguish.

With every blessing,

Mark

The Revd Mark Woodrow (Rector)