

Dear friends,

As we begin the month of November we embark on a time of remembering, of remembrance.

On Sunday 2nd November, at 6pm, we will be holding our annual All Souls Service of 'Thanksgiving and Hope', for the commemoration of the faithful departed. It is an opportunity to mark, in a special way, the passing of a loved one, whom we dearly miss; to give thanks for who they were and all that they meant to us. If you would like the name of a loved one to be read out, as part of our 'Act of Remembrance', then please do let us know, either by adding their name to the list at the back of Church or letting me or one of the wardens know either by phone or email. Thank you.

On Sunday 9th November, we will once again come together, as a community, to remember and give thanks for those who have lost their lives in conflicts and wars, and at 11am we will fall silent for two minutes. It's important that we remember, with thanks, the names carved on our village memorial.

This year, things will be a little different. Because we will not have the support of the police, (a national funding decision), to close any of the roads around the roundabout, where our war memorial is located, we will be holding the outdoor service in St Stephen's Church Car Park, looking out onto 'The Memorial'. This change will be upsetting for some people. However, The Royal British Legion, The Parish Council and St Stephen's Parochial Church Council are unanimous that the safety of everyone must be a priority, and in addition, we do not have the authority to close roads. We will still have a procession of wreath bearers walking over to the memorial, and the service, in all other respects, will remain the same. All are most welcome in the church hall from 10:30am for coffee and for the service in St Stephen's Church after our 'Act of Remembrance.'



Fit for Mission:

The PCC met in September to vote on whether to become part of the 'acting as if' phase of Fit for Mission, amalgamating parishes in the deanery into a larger single parish process of pastoral reorganisation. After attending many explanatory meetings and listening carefully to invited speakers from the Fit for Mission team, the PCC and our congregation voted against this proposal, and so we will continue as a parish in our own right, looking forward to worshipping God, growing together and continuing to serve our community here in Hightown. Of the 14 churches in our deanery, only 3 voted to continue with the Fit for Mission plan. We will continue to work closely with our deanery and our 'Churches Together' sisters and brothers.

Church Hall:

The PCC are excited to announce that we are making plans to completely overhaul the existing lavatories and kitchen facilities and have commenced fundraising activities to support this. The Church Hall is a well-used and much appreciated space, and it is important that we continue to improve the facilities we have, for the benefit of all hall users.

With your Focus magazine this month is our annual 'Gift Day' envelope. This year, moneys collected will go towards our efforts to raise the funds for this significant, though much needed, work. Envelopes can be brought to church or left with the Village Store.

We very much appreciate all the assistance that is given to the church and parish. Thank you in anticipation of your generosity and support.

**God Bless,
Keith**