

November 2023



Archdeacon Karen writes...

Every day, my phone sends me a 'memories' montage or a 'featured photo' from my gallery and very often, in a moment's pause in my day, I'll look and be reminded of people, places and events some of which may have faded in my mind, and smile or ponder.

November is, in many ways, a remembering month. Nationally, we pause on the 11th and again on Remembrance Sunday itself, and also on November 1st, All Saints Day, as we remember those who have walked the path of faith before us, some giants of the faith and others known to us personally. Many churches hold special services to remember the faithful departed at this time and that can bring a mixed bag of reaction in the midst of being helpful, especially if memory is jagged or bruised or grief is raw.

November also marks the transition from autumn to winter, the blaze of colour turning to a soggy mush of decaying leaves and debris (that threaten to clog drains and gutters as the season changes), moving us to let go of summer and prepare for winter, psychologically and maybe with a hint of anxiety as we see how long we can go without putting the heating on and step into ever-shortening days.

And yet we know that the seasonal cycle will repeat, sadly with greater variation as the climate changes, but spring will come again and so we, almost without

realising it, set our hearts and minds to take stock, to remember and to draw strength from the certainties of life as we live with change.

Some of the Old Testament psalms (poems) do just that and it's a way of building hope for the future. Psalm 136 reminds us repeatedly as it remembers history, events and stories, of the deepest truth: God's 'steadfast love endures forever'. That line repeats at every verse, all 26 of them, driving home the fact.

Remembering is usually far from straight-forward and it can be incredibly painful. But, as we remember and reflect, let's take time to recognise and give thanks for the thread of God's steadfast love for each and every one of us that weaves its way through our stories, individual and collective – a love that 'bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things, a love that never ends'. That's the love that is the Kingdom of God, good news for all, that meets us in Jesus.

May you be able to recognise and know that for yourself in this season of remembrance and on into the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karen', written over a horizontal line.

**The Venerable Karen Hamblin
Archdeacon of East Derbyshire**