

A SEASON OF CREATION?

As I write this we had been basking in Mediterranean weather with mid thirty degree temperatures during the day and hot sultry nights making sleep difficult. After violent thunderstorms and torrential rain we are back to normal British weather conditions with cool wet days wondering where the sunshine has gone. Whatever the weather we will always complain. These weather conditions which are unusually extreme we are told will become more and more usual as the earth's weather patterns change.

Climate change has recently taken a less prominent place in the news bulletins as the Corona virus pandemic has rightly taken centre stage. Last month, in his letter, John alluded to the respite from pollution that less travel had provided and there is a feeling that perhaps we shouldn't (as conditions or government pronouncements allow) simply return to the previous status quo. A 'new normal' needs to be found.

In November last year the Diocesan Synod unanimously declared a climate emergency acknowledging and owning a commitment to do what it could to reverse the effects of climate change. As a diocese the church will make efforts to be carbon neutral by the year 2030. As parishes we should be looking to contribute in a significant way towards meeting this target. There is a suggestion that PCC agendas should have a standing item entitled 'climate emergency' at every meeting so as not to lose focus. Bishop Viv has said, 'We have got to look at every aspect of Church life and our own lives' to work towards this goal.

PCC's officers have received the offer of a financial incentive to carry out an energy audit. We are told that the typical saving from implementing recommendations is 20%. There is also an added focus on making changes in both Warmley and Bitton as both churches have boilers which are obsolete and in the event of a breakdown engineers won't be able to source replacement parts. Changes to greener and more sustainable energy use may come sooner than we expect throughout the whole benefice.

Surely from small acorns do mighty oaks grow! A commentary on my meagre faith if ever there was one. Most of all I am pleased that whilst our daily lives have been turned upside down, nature has quietly carried on. The poet Gideon Heugh says it eloquently in his poem 'job description' where he pictures the wise trees that '...sway, perhaps a motion of pity, [for us] then quietly, slowly, continue the tender business of being themselves.'

We are grateful aren't we for the tide of gratitude that has risen during these Covid days? For the NHS, for carers, for neighbours whom we have met for the first time in some cases, for the phone calls, food parcels, deliveries of shopping, for time to just be, for time to discover ourselves again, for time to read and reflect, for time for the tender business of being ourselves.

The festival that Revd. R.S. Hawker invented will surely mean something greater this year, greater than wheat and cereal crops safely gathered in, silage dry in the barn. Gratitude for our neighbour and our environment, for our health and well-being, for our friends and family, '...come ye thankful people come. Raise the song of harvest home.'

With every good wish

Thoughts and prayers

Jeremy

WARMLEY WARBLINGS

We remember in our regular prayers, those of our church family who have been unwell, thinking in particular of Mervyn and Lil Little, Martin Pullin, Margaret Hill, Beryl Holder, John Eames, Roger and Pauline Newman, we wish them all well.

As usual, we remember all of our friends who are in residential or nursing homes at this time, Grace Watson, Eileen Penny, John Short, Marjory Cox and Rita Jones. They are in our thoughts especially at this time

We would like to send our love and best wishes to Helen Willcox who recently underwent surgery in hospital and is recovering at home and I am sure, being well cared for by husband Leslie.

It is of course disappointing that after a period where restrictions were lifted, to see that the spread of the virus and consequently hospital admissions are again on the increase. Opinions on why this is happening vary greatly but the effect is to make people, particularly the elderly and more vulnerable amongst us very nervous and uneasy about going out or even leaving home at all. I make no apology therefore, for emphasising how important, even vital, it is for those of us who are able to help. Especially, we should try to stay in regular contact with those that need our support. That friendly and regular voice over the telephone can avoid the loneliness that so many people experience in these uncertain times. Although church services have resumed not everyone feels confident enough to return. There are also those who used to get transport to church but now feel uncomfortable about accepting lifts while the virus is still being transmitted.

We continue to appreciate the value and importance of the online services for those who have access to them and the pew news that is distributed weekly so that at least people can feel they still belong to our church family even if they cannot be there in person.

Brian Draper



Looks like the sexton went to Spain after all, and is still in quarantine.

ST. BARNABAS UPDATE

As we continue in a life of uncertainty and walking with the unknown beside us, the events we have planned all reflect the most recent updates from the government, especially where numbers and spacing are concerned.

Saturday Morning Church Opening 10 am-12noon

Saturday refreshments will continue with table service only, shared households sharing a table, so please do come and catch up with those you have not had the chance to see for some time. Strictly following table based service only and keeping a distance between everyone means we can manage social distancing, COVID19 hygiene requirements and still meet up and catch up.

No need to book, just come along **between 10am and 11:30am** (open till 12 but drinks may not be available after 11:30) and we will see you there. On the same basis, teas and coffees are available after services, when conditions allow.

Harvest Festival and Holy Communion 4th October 2020 10:30am

Our Harvest festival service, (with COVID19 safety precautions), will be held on 4th October at 10:30am and will coincide with our first service of Holy Communion since Lockdown began. All non-perishable items will be donated to the Community of the Sisters of the Church for distribution to those in need, as on previous years, and any perishable items will be sold off after the service. Do please let us know if you need goods collecting, otherwise bring them to the church on Sunday morning or drop them in on Saturday morning between 10 and 12. Please remember that, at the moment, face masks are essential wear for those attending church for any reason. Non-perishable food in good packaging is easiest for us to protect and distribute safely. Please try to donate safely!

Please try to donate safely! Below is a list of some of the items requested:

TINS (in date please): tinned soup, meats and fish (eg ham, stew, tuna), baked beans, vegetables, rice pudding, fruit, custard;
PACKETS: cereals, pasta, rice, instant cup soup, biscuits, tea bags, coffee;

Rotas and coming back to help at St Barnabas

As we are now slowly but surely returning to some of our activities before Coronavirus, if and when you feel ready and able to re-join the rotas for Saturday opening, welcoming, readings, etc. please do contact me and I can let you know what we are doing to provide the extra protection we need to offer each other and follow just now. We can explore whether you feel ready to come back and help or just need to be aware but not involved for a little longer.

Covid Era Autumn Festive Fair

To promote safe gathering and raise some much needed cash for the church, we are planning to hold a scaled down Autumn Festive Fair which will follow Covid 19 safety requirements:

Date: Saturday 16th November

Venue: St Barnabas Church Hall

Time: 11am – 1pm

We will have Tea, coffee, cakes for sale to take away (bring a travel mug if you have one), as well as stalls of preserves and pickles, books, gifts and fancy goods, cards etc...

Access and the movement of visitors will be carefully controlled, masks or face covering needed, and queuing minimised (contactless card payment possible).

All donations of goods must be delivered to the church or church hall by Saturday October 31st and the hall will be open from 10am to 12 noon. This means everything can be quarantined before going on sale. Please ring Nicola or Margaret on 01179616629 if you would like to donate to the fair and need donated goods collecting, or want further information.

Holiday at Home

Our Afternoon tea trip out remains planned but not possible to book yet.

Rest assured, we are thinking of all our friends at this time and praying you and those you love are well and have come through so far without much ill health or struggle with our current situation.

Margaret and Sheila 23/09/2020

4th OCTOBER: ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI – LOVE FOR THE CREATION

St Francis (1181 – 1226) is surely one of the most attractive and best-loved of all the saints. But he began by being anything but a saint. Born the son of a wealthy cloth-merchant of Assisi, Francis' youth was spent in fast-living, parties and on fast horses as a leader of the young society of the town. Then he went to the war between Assisi and Perugia, and was taken prisoner for a year.

By the time of his release, Francis had changed. Perhaps his own suffering had awakened him to that of others. In any case, he abandoned warfare and carousing, and began to help the poor and the lepers of his area. Then one day a voice which seemed to come from the crucifix in the small, semi-derelict church of Damiano Assisi 'Go and repair my house, which you see is falling down'.

This religious experience was a vital turning point in Francis' life: Jesus Christ became very real and immediate to him. His first action was to begin repairing the church, having sold some of his father's cloth to pay for materials. His father was not amused, in fact he was furious – until Francis renounced his inheritance and even his clothes by his dramatic stripping off in the public square of the town. The Bishop of Assisi provided him with simple garments, and Francis began his new life.

His inspiration was always religious, not social, and the object of his quest was always the Crucified Christ, not Lady Poverty for her own sake. Francis rebuilt San Samiano, and then travelled as a pilgrim. His compassion for the poor and lepers became famous. Soon disciples joined him, and they set up a communal life in simple wattle and daub huts. They went on occasional preaching tours. (Not until later did they become an Order whose theologians won fame in the Universities.)

In 1219 Francis visited the Holy Land, and his illusions about the Crusaders were shattered. He went on to seek out the Sultan and tried to convert him. Back home, he found his Order was now 5,000 strong, and growing. Francis stepped down as head but continued to preach and was immensely popular. He died after a prolonged illness at the age of 45 and was canonised in 1228.

Francis' close rapport with the animal creation was well known. The story of his preaching to the birds has always been a favourite scene from his life. He also tamed the wolf of Gubbio. This affinity emphasises his consideration for, and sense of identity with, all elements of the physical universe, as seen in his Canticle of the Sun. This makes him an apt patron of nature conservation.

The 20th century witnessed a widespread revival of interest in Francis. Sadly, some films and books caricatured him as only a sentimental nature-lover or a hippie drop out from society. This ignores the real sternness of his character, and his all-pervasive love of God and identification with Christ's sufferings, which alone make sense of his life.

Two ancient, and many modern English churches are dedicated to him.

ONE IN FIVE OF US SUFFERING FROM DEPRESSION

The pandemic has doubled our rates of depression. Now one in five adults are struggling with the symptoms. And yet the peak of the Covid-19 mental health crisis is 'yet to come', according to NHS bosses.

In June the Office for National Statistics released data showing that 19.2 percent of adults were experiencing some form of depression. This figure had almost doubled, from around one in 10 (9.7 per cent), before the pandemic. But NHS bosses warn that up to half a million more patients are expected to enter the system in coming months.

Those most vulnerable to depression are women aged 16 to 29 who are unable to afford an unexpected expense, or who are disabled. A spokeswoman for Mind, the mental health charity, says, "It's crucial that mental health is put at the centre of the government's ongoing recovery plans."

ALL IN THE MONTH OF OCTOBER

It was:

500 years ago, on 21st Oct 1520 that Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan's Spanish expedition to the East Indies discovered the Strait of Magellan at the southern tip of Chile.

175 years ago, on 12th Oct 1845 that Elizabeth Fry, died. This prison reformer and philanthropist was depicted on the British £5 note between 2001 and 2016.

100 years ago, on 7th Oct 1920 that Oxford University allowed women to become full members and study for full degrees for the first time, and the first 100 women were admitted.

90 years ago, on 22nd Oct 1930 that the BBC Symphony Orchestra gave its first concert.

80 years ago, on 9th Oct 1940 that during the Blitz, a German bomb destroyed the high altar of St Paul's Cathedral in London. Later that same month on 31st Oct, the Battle of Britain ended.

70 years ago, on 7th Oct 1950 that Mother Teresa founded what would become the Missionaries of Charity, in Kolkata, India.

40 years ago, on 3rd Oct 1980 that the Housing Act came into effect in Britain, giving more than five million council tenants the right to buy their homes.

Also 40 years ago, on 10th Oct 1980 that Margaret Thatcher gave a memorable and defiant speech defending her policies to combat inflation and economic recession. She told the Conservative Party conference in Brighton: 'The lady's not for turning!'

30 years ago, on 8th Oct 1990 that East and West Germany reunited as the Federal Republic of Germany.

20 years ago, on 17th Oct 2000 that the Hatfield rail crash took place. Four people were killed when a high-speed passenger train derailed because of a cracked rail.

15 years ago, from 18th to 26th Oct that Hurricane Wilma, the most intense Atlantic hurricane ever recorded, caused massive damage worth \$29billion across the Caribbean, Central America and the eastern USA. 63 people were killed.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND RSCM AWAIT NEXT STEPS ON SINGING SAFETY

The Church of England and Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) have been awaiting updated guidance on singing in places of worship after findings of a Government-backed study were published.

The research project, known as 'PERFORM', recently published its findings on measuring aerosol production from humans. It measured singing, speaking and breathing in a zero-background environment.

Researchers reported a steep rise in aerosol mass with increase in the loudness of the singing and speaking, rising by as much as a factor of 20-30. However, it was also found that singing does not produce substantially more aerosol than speaking at a similar volume.

The RSCM's Director, Hugh Morris said: "We welcome this news. Singing is of such importance in worship, and this is a really encouraging step towards its safe resumption.

"It is of course vital that all choirs and singing groups follow the relevant government advice, and so we look forward to receiving the latest guidance in this important area." The Church of England and RSCM both regularly update their advice following the publication of Government guidance.

OPPRESSED CHRISTIANS STRUGGLING UNDER COVID-19

Oppression and discrimination against Christians has increased during Covid, says Release International, which has launched an appeal to help Christians suffering during the pandemic.

Many Christians have been denied food and relief aid and excluded from support systems during lockdown. They have been abandoned by families because of their faith and refused relief by governments and NGOs.

At the same time, several countries have stepped up persecution against Christians. One of the worst offenders is China, where Christians have been arrested for simply holding prayer meetings online.

“The situation has got much worse for many Christians during lockdown,” says Release International CEO Paul Robinson.

“Covid-19 is having a devastating impact on the lives of many poor Christians. In places hostile to the faith Christians are experiencing increased hardship.

“Food is now in short supply. They are unable to work and can’t earn, and support is being withheld because of their faith. Their cries for help are being ignored by local charities who are distributing food packages only to families of other faiths. We can’t afford to delay. These Christians need our help.”

In **Algeria**, many Christians have had to stop work because of the lockdown, and so lost their income. They have been rejected by society and their families as a result of their faith. There is no social security in the country or government support.

Eritrean Christians fleeing persecution have been barred from refugee camps and are unable to get support from UNHCR. And they refuse to resort to crime to get the money and supplies they need.

In **Pakistan** the situation is especially hard for converts from a Muslim background.

The only form of social security is family support, and Muslim families often withdraw support for family members who change their religion.

In several countries, lockdown has led to an increase in persecution.

In Upper **Egypt**, where Christians face discrimination for their faith, some organisations are allegedly refusing food and support to Christian families. Release partners report: “The authorities are helping Muslims but not Christians. And churches that try to help are being closed by police order.”

In **China**, Release partners say the government is using the pandemic to step up its crackdown against Christians. They have accelerated campaigns such as the forced demolition of crosses. Pastors have been rounded up for sharing the gospel and distributing facemasks on the street. The authorities have “totally prohibited” online church services and prayer meetings, as “nothing constituting a religious service is allowed.”

In **Nigeria**, the lockdown deepened the insecurity facing many Christian villagers, who face attacks by Fulani militia.

Paul Robinson of Release International says: “Right now, it’s up to us in the family of faith to give them our support.” Partners of Release International are providing food parcels to impoverished Christians in Algeria, Ethiopia, Egypt, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey.

If you can help, go to: www.releaseinternational.org/covid

THE CHILDREN’S SOCIETY

The Children’s Society boxes are now due for opening. Please could you let me have your box as soon as possible. Due to Covid-19, if you are not attending church, I am happy to collect your Children’s Society box. Please just let me know on 0117 9326145

Wendy Pullin.

HOW IS YOUR GARDEN GROWING?

This year's Green Health Awards were just one of many activities to be cancelled because of the current situation. Whilst churches have been closed their gardens have continued to grow and many of these will have been used for therapeutic gardening.

But have these been growing wild or have enthusiasts found ways round the rules and regulations to tend and care for them?

Have some special plants been given new homes where they have been encouraged to thrive in these unusual times before they can be returned to more holy ground?

We would like to find stories of how therapeutic gardening may have been underway despite lockdown.

We have already discovered some – the group of gardeners from St Pancras Hospital who volunteer at St Paul's Woodland Garden in Camden have been missing their weekly visits during lockdown. The garden was the overall winner of the Green Health Awards organised in 2018 by Church Times, The Conservation Foundation and Guild of Health and St Raphael, in association with the Church of England.

Green City Projects' Ben Ledden and Catherine Tidnam, who run the garden, arranged for seeds, baby plants and compost to be delivered to them by the hospital's activity worker, Tom Parnell. "Our patients struggle with severe mental health issues and it has been great for us to continue to feel part of St Paul's during this time", Tom explained. A WhatsApp video call with Ben and Catherine helps keep them in touch with their hospital garden growing and tomatoes, basil, squash, peas, courgettes, cucumber, basil and sunflowers are coming along. Said one patient, "It felt like we were off the ward and at St Paul's Garden again".

Meanwhile our friends up on the roof of Manchester Cathedral report they have been kept busy. "We are still in lockdown, but the Volition bees carry on as usual no lockdown for them. Neither are they

thinking about social distancing as they overcrowd their hives getting ready to swarm. Weekly inspections are going ahead in line with Defra guidelines on livestock. All hives at Manchester Cathedral are as they should be for the time of year.”

The Bishop of Carlisle is a great supporter of using church space for therapeutic gardening projects and as lead bishop for health chairs the church’s Green Health initiative. As he says “Almost everyone agrees that the Coronavirus pandemic has had a significant effect on people’s mental health and wellbeing across the country. That’s why it is more important than ever that we use the green spaces around church buildings for therapeutic gardening as part of our co-ordinated effort to tackle mental health issues’.

If you have some good news from your garden do let David Shreeve know at david.shreeve@churchofengland.org.

LITTER VIRUS

A face mask is a helpful thing –
It traps those nasty germs!
An extra message I must bring
In these poetic terms:
When you’ve finished with your mask
A bin is simply found
So drop it in – an easy task!
Don’t leave it on the ground!

By Nigel Beeton

6th OCTOBER: WILLIAM TYNDALE – BIBLE TRANSLATOR AND REFORMATION MARTYR

Tyndale was an outstanding English scholar, translator and martyr of the Reformation.

William Tyndale (c. 1494 – 6th October 1536) was born near Gloucester and studied at Oxford and Cambridge. He could speak seven languages and was proficient in ancient Hebrew and Greek. As a priest, his abilities would have taken him a long way, but by 1523 Tyndale's only desire was to translate the Bible, so that English men and women could read it for themselves. It became his life's passion.

For Tyndale had rediscovered a vital doctrine that the Church had been ignoring: that of justification by faith. He had found it when reading Erasmus's Greek edition of the New Testament. In fact, his life's work was well summed up in some words of his mentor, Erasmus: "Christ desires His mysteries to be published abroad as widely as possible. I would that [the Gospels and the epistles of Paul] were translated into all languages, of all Christian people, and that they might be read and known."

Tyndale's translation was the first Bible to be published in English, the first to draw directly from Hebrew and Greek texts, and the first English translation to take advantage of the printing press.

It was to cost him his life. For Tyndale's work was seen as a direct challenge to the power of both the Roman Catholic Church and the laws of England in maintaining the Church's position.

When the authorities had tried to stop his translation, Tyndale fled to Hamburg, Wittenberg, Cologne, and finally to the Lutheran city of Worms. It was there, in 1525, his New Testament emerged. It was quickly smuggled into England, and King Henry VIII, Cardinal Wolsey, and others, were furious.

Tyndale moved on to Antwerp, where for nine more years he continued his work. Then in May 1535 he was betrayed, arrested, and

jailed in a castle near Brussels. Tied to the stake for strangulation and burning, his dying prayer was that the King of England's eyes would be opened. Sure enough, two years later King Henry authorised the Great Bible for the Church of England, which relied largely on Tyndale's work.

Not only that, but in 1611, the 54 scholars who produced the King James Bible drew very heavily from Tyndale. Even today we honour him: in 2002, Tyndale was placed at number 26 in the BBC's poll of 100 Greatest Britons.

BEAUTY RANGES LEFT ON THE SHELVES

Covid-19 has even affected women's make-up routines. In many cases, they simply haven't bothered.

The lack of demand for foundation, lipstick, eye makeup and hair-dye has been so great in recent months that 350 products have been pulled from supermarket shelves. Research from Edge by Ascential, the ecommerce consultancy, found that overall, there was a 60 per cent drop in sales.

Claire James, an analyst for IRI Insights, the retail experts, said that social distancing measures have meant that cautious shoppers no longer browse health and beauty aisles. "It will be interesting to see if routines will remain simpler as lockdown eases and people return to the office."

A LITTLE HUMOUR

A spirit guest?

When new neighbours moved in next door, they held a House Warming party and invited the entire road. My husband and I were glad to go along, as our daughters were both five years old. But next morning I was taken aback when my daughter told me that the mother had taken her into the kitchen and given her 'a spirit guest', which my daughter had really enjoyed. Now she wanted me to get her 'a spirit guest.'

I was wondering how to contact the local vicar for exorcism when I realised that my daughter meant 'asparagus'.

Moses revisited

Nine-year-old Joseph was asked by his mother what he had learned in Sunday school.

"Well, Mum, our teacher told us how God sent Moses behind enemy lines on a rescue mission to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. When he got to the Red Sea, he had his engineers build a pontoon bridge and all the people walked across safely. Then he radioed headquarters for reinforcements. They sent bombers to blow up the bridge and all the Israelites were saved."

"Now, Joseph, is that really what your teacher taught you?" his mother asked, somewhat alarmed.

"Well, no, Mum. But if I told it the way the teacher did, you'd never believe it!"

Ten Commandments

A Sunday School teacher was discussing the Ten Commandments with her five and six-year-olds. After explaining the commandment to 'honour thy father and thy mother', she said: "Is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?"

Without missing a beat, one little boy answered: "Thou shalt not kill."

Sorry

Our minister, an avid golfer, was once taking part in a local tournament. As he was preparing to tee off, the organiser of the tournament approached him and pointed to the dark, threatening storm clouds which were gathering. "Sir," the organiser said, "I trust you'll see to it that the weather won't turn bad on us."

Our minister shook his head. "Sorry," he replied. "I'm in sales, not management!"

Noah and the Ark – 2020 version

In the year 2020, Noah was living in England when the Lord came unto him and said, “Once again, the earth has become too wicked to continue. Build another Ark and save two of every living thing. You have six months before I will start the unending rain for 40 days and 40 nights.” Six months later, the Lord looked down and saw Noah weeping in his garden, but no Ark. “Noah”, He roared, “I’m about to start the rain! Where is the Ark?”

“Forgive me Lord”, begged Noah “but things have been difficult. I needed Building Regulations approval because the Ark was over 30 square metres. I’ve been arguing with the Fire Brigade about the need for a sprinkler system. My neighbours claim that I should have obtained planning permission for building the Ark in my garden because it is a development of the site even though in my opinion it is a temporary structure, but the roof is too high.

“The Local Area Access Group complained that my ramp was going to be too steep and the inside of the Ark wasn’t fully accessible. Getting the wood has been another problem. All the decent trees have Tree Preservation Orders on them and we live in a Site of Special Scientific Interest set up in order to preserve the Spotted Owl. I tried to convince them that I needed the wood to save the owls – but no go!

“When I started gathering the animals the RSPCA sued me for intending to confine wild animals without the proper paperwork. The County Council, the Environment Agency and the Rivers Authority have ruled that I can’t build the Ark until they’ve conducted an Environmental Impact Study on your proposed flood. The Trade Unions insist that I can’t use my sons to build the Ark; I can only employ members of the Shipbuilding and Allied Trades union. Finally, Customs and Excise have seized all my assets, claiming I am going to attempt to leave the country illegally with endangered species.

“So, forgive me Lord, but it will take me at least another ten years to finish this Ark.”

Suddenly the skies cleared, the sun began to shine, and a rainbow stretched across the sky. “No need for me to destroy the world after all,” observed God. “The government has the matter already in hand.”

31st OCTOBER – ALL HALLOWS EVE

Modern Halloween celebrations have their roots with the Celtic peoples of pre-Christian times.

In those long-ago days, on the last night of October, the Celts celebrated the Festival of Samhain, or 'Summer's End'. The priests, or Druids, performed ceremonies to thank and honour the sun. For there was a very dark side to all this: Samhain also signalled the onset of winter, a time when it was feared that unfriendly ghosts, nature-spirits, and witches roamed the earth, creating mischief. So the Druid priests lit great bonfires and performed magic rites to ward off or appease these dark supernatural powers.

Then the Romans arrived, and brought their Harvest Festival which honoured the Goddess Pomona with gifts of apples and nuts. The two festivals slowly merged.

When Christianity arrived still later, it began to replace the Roman and Druid religions. 1st November – All Saints' Day – was dedicated to all Christian Martyrs and Saints who had died. It was called 'All Hallows' Day'. The evening before became an evening of prayer and preparation and was called 'All Hallows' Eve', The Holy Evening, later shortened to 'Halloween'.

For many centuries, however, fear of the supernatural remained strong. During the Middle Ages, animal costumes and frightening masks were worn to ward off the evil spirits of darkness on Halloween. Magic words and charms were used to keep away bad luck, and everybody believed that witches ride about on broomsticks. Fortune telling was popular, and predicting the future by the use of nuts and apples was so popular that Halloween is still sometimes known as Nutcrack Night or Snap-Apple Night.

Today, Christians have learned to turn to prayer instead of charms to overcome the powers of darkness. And the deeper, true meaning of All Hallows' Eve, should not be forgotten. As Christians, we all draw closer to Christ when we remember and give thanks for our loved ones and for others who have gone before us through the gates of death.