

I ended last month's letter with: "Let's remember to make the most of these happy occasions and celebrate them; they are an important part of our changed new normal." Well, we're still in this extraordinary period of things being far from normal; but now we're entering a time of 'remembering'. Remembering those dear to us who have died; remembering those killed and affected by war; remembering why we will, next month, be celebrating Christmas i.e. the Advent season is nearly upon us.

This year our All Souls' Day service will take place at 7.30pm on Monday 2 November at St George's Church. The service will have a familiar format but will also be slightly different (i.e. no congregational singing unfortunately; and regrettably, no time of fellowship before or after the service). If you would like the name of a loved one remembered at the service, please email Cathy at [benendenchurch@gmail.com](mailto:benendenchurch@gmail.com).

This year the way we mark Remembrance Sunday will also be different. We will hold a short service in St George's Church starting at 10am; this year conducted by Revd Rosemary. Numbers will be severely restricted to a maximum of 80 people in church - well down on the usual attendance for our Remembrance Day service - and will be ticketed. There will be a sign-up form in the church porch from Sunday 25 October. If you wish to attend the Remembrance Sunday service, please put your name down and then come to the Rectory to collect your ticket(s). Once the maximum numbers have been reached, we will be unable to admit any more to the 10am service on Sunday 8 November. Sorry. However, the Commemoration - with Roll of Honour, Last Post, two minutes silence, and Reveille - will take place down at the village War Memorial starting at 10.50am on the same Sunday. If you can't get to church, please come to this commemoration. Please remember: no groups of more than six people; and always maintain social distancing between groups. Armistice Day will be marked in the village, with an Act of Remembrance at the War Memorial starting just before 11am on Wednesday 11 November.

The season of Advent begins on Sunday 29 November. We will mark the beginning of Advent this year by an adapted Service of Light starting at 5pm. This will not be the usual Advent carol service with the lighting of individual candles filling the church with light, but we feel we can mark the start of Advent in a suitable way.

So, there are some important dates for your diary this coming month: 2, 8, 11 and 29 November. I am now turning my attention to how we mark Christmas, and all the traditional things we 'normally do'! One thing is for certain, it will be different. I just hope that the COVID-19 restrictions are not tightened further between now and December. I have ideas for our usually packed Crib service. Just prepare to wrap up warm is all I'd say at the moment!

In the meantime: keep well, keep safe. If you'd like a visit or a chat, please contact me.

Revd David Commander, Rector