



NOVEMBER 2020 Newsletter

Nights Drawing In...

Every year, towards the end of October, when the clocks go back to return us from British Summer Time to Greenwich Mean Time, there is a debate about *why* the clocks have to change at all. Some people would prefer that we stay on BST (or Central European Time) all through the year. They would prefer to get up in the dark and have more daylight at the other end of the day. Some suggest this would be safer for children walking to school, as drivers are more alert in the morning than the evening and by mid-winter, children are in the dark for journeys to school and back home again.

For me, the more interesting question is why we move from GMT to BST in the first place. Originally, this was done to maximise the hours farmers (and home workers, pre-electric light) could work, taking advantage of the sunshine. If the sun is up at 4am, but workers can't manage to get out of bed until 5am, much better to just adjust the clock and go with the sun! When I worked on a camping holiday for 8-11 year olds, we used to put our watches an additional hour later, because kids under canvas definitely wake with the sun! Now we live in a 24/7 world and farmers have enough lights on their machines that they harvest far into the night, the main reason for changing the clock seems to have disappeared!

Proverbs 4 says this: ¹⁸ The road the righteous travel is like the sunrise, getting brighter and brighter until daylight has come. ¹⁹ The road of the wicked, however, is dark as night. They fall, but cannot see what they have stumbled over.

Having light to see is important, so important that every year we continue to change our clocks, forward and back, to maximise the light we can use, despite the fact that these days, there really is no need. Spiritually, we also need light to live by. The psalmist suggests this is the word of God. Jesus said He was the light. How much light are you seeing day by day?

Sarah



All Saints and All Souls

November is a natural time for remembering our loved ones who have passed away, whether it happened in the Autumn or not. November the first, in the church calendar, is All Saints Day, when those of the Christian faith who have gone before are remembered. November the second, in the church calendar, is All Souls Day, when every departed person is remembered. November the 5th (or now the Friday/Saturday closest) is used to celebrate the deaths of plotters who planned to blow up Parliament – notably, Guy Fawkes. Bonfires signify the burning of the traitors' entrails, or perhaps the fate they intended for those in Parliament. Fireworks evoke the exploding of the gunpowder the plotters had stored in Parliament by which to do the deed. November 11th is Remembrance Day, when those killed in war are especially remembered. In a secular nation, the 11th is no longer a national day of mourning and services are now moved to Remembrance Sunday, the Sunday closest to the 11th. Having these dates so close together makes the beginning of November a solemn time, and perhaps tie in our mourning with the way nature seems to draw things to a close in Autumn, as these lyrics by Eva Cassidy suggest:

Autumn Leaves By Eva Cassidy

The falling leaves drift by my window
The falling leaves of red and gold
I see your lips, the summer kisses
The sunburned hands I used to hold

Since you went away the days grow long
And soon I'll hear old winter's song
But I miss you most of all, my darling
When autumn leaves start to fall

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