

**The real reason for remembrance**

“Remember, remember the fifth of November,  
Gunpowder, treason and plot  
We know no reason why gunpowder treason  
Should ever be forgot.”

So goes the anonymous 17th-century rhyme; the first part of which is probably well known, the second part perhaps not so. We, of course, use it to remember bonfire night and fireworks and, if you're old enough, 'penny for the guy'. Every year we gather round a huge bonfire in the Glebe, burn a guy and watch lovely fireworks. What we are 'remembering' is a treasonous plot to blow up the Houses of Parliament, to remove King James I from the throne and restore a Catholic monarchy. But we've forgotten that part and gather to have a good time together.

Huge numbers of people were killed for their religious beliefs in the times of a power struggle between the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church. What we should be remembering is a dark time in our history, and that people paid for their religious belief with their lives; that is the reason we should never forget.

November is definitely a month for remembering. When we are remembering events where people gave their lives, we do so out of respect for them. (Respect: remember my letter reflecting upon this last month? Respect is about having consideration for the thoughts and life of another human being. It is about being thoughtful and attentive to their needs rather than always thinking about our own.) Perhaps that should be on our minds when we gather, on a number of occasions in November, as community to remember men and women who have lived their lives before us and who have died?

St George's Church will be a focal point for the community to gather in on a number of occasions this month to remember. On Friday 2 November there is a service formally entitled The Commemoration of the Faithful Departed - All Souls' Day; a time to remember, together, loved ones who have died by whatever cause, whether recent or in the distant past. Remembering all that they meant to us and all that they brought to our lives. A time to say, together, "thank you"

for that person being a part of our life. Over the weekend of 9-11 November we'll meet several times as community to remember those killed as a result of war; it's made all the more poignant this year as we mark the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I. On Sunday 11 November we will gather, in church, for a service and Act of Remembrance in the morning; we will gather again at the war memorial; we will gather again in church, in the evening, as we commemorate the passing of 100 years since the end of the 'war to end all wars'.

Oh that we could remember that, and learn from it - out of respect for the millions, on both sides, who were killed.

Revd David Commander, Rector