

REDDITCH BAPTIST CHURCH – NOVEMBER 2026

And suddenly it's November!

Which of course is another busy month in the church calendar…

First out is our *church anniversary*, which will already be done and dusted by the time you read this.

This year our anniversary coincided with *All Saints' Day* and *All Souls' Days* – two festivals that we Baptists don't tend to make much of, and when we do we normally roll them into one: because all believers are saints, there seems to be no reason to separate them into two classes… It's perhaps a shame that we have often focused more on the negative aspects of Halloween than on the positive sides of remembering those who have gone before us!

But perhaps the reason is that the follow Sunday is *Remembrance*, when we focus on remembering our national heroes. As a foreign-born Brit I've always thought it's intriguing that different people treat Remembrance so differently – to some it's really important, whereas others basically ignore it. It's also a bit confusing from a Christian perspective, since there isn't really a biblical foundation for it, other than gratefulness (which of course is a Christian virtue) and the potential parallel with Jesus' sacrifice for us.

In between those two we have another weird, Britain-only festival: Bonfire night, or Guy Fawkes night – although I imagine that despite the battle cry "Remember, remember the fifth of November" very few people actually remember that it started with a guy (!) wanting to blow up Parliament… Maybe it's best just to focus on the fireworks!

Then, after all the remembering we have a few "ordinary" weeks before the biggest celebration of the year: *Black Friday*!

This new-fangled festival has even less biblical basis than Remembrance… which of course doesn't mean you're not allowed to benefit from any good deals – just be alert to the danger of consumerism and materialism! The Bible warns against letting our possessions play too big a role in our lives, and tells us (quite bluntly) that "if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that" (1 Tim 6:8) – not a sentiment the powers behind Black Friday would be happy with!

Fortunately, almost immediately after Black Friday we start the *Advent season*, when we prepare for Christmas and the celebration of how God stepped into human history to make us his children. (In many church traditions, Advent is also a season to think about and prepare for Jesus' return as King of kings – a different aspect of God stepping into human history, but no less important).

The sad thing about Advent is that it has become just an extension of Christmas, especially in the eyes of our secular contemporary British society: instead of a time of reflection and preparation, it just means we have more time to do our shopping (which of course means we spend more). And this also means that Christmas nowadays ends on Boxing Day – very few people today seem to be aware that the traditional *Twelve Days of Christmas* actually *start* on the 25th December!

Like last year there is a Churches Together Advent Service on *Advent Sunday,* the 29th November – it's a bit further away from our church this year, but it's still well worth joining in: not just because it's good for the different churches in town to meet and worship together sometimes, but because it's always good to mark the beginning of the Advent season. Perhaps it will help us remember that Advent – a Latin word which means arrival – isn't primarily about shopping but about preparing to celebrate a God who repeatedly breaks into human existence in order to rescue us from the clutches of death, politics and Mammon!

David

Monday	8pm	Romans Course	Meeting ID 619 679 7453 passcode Jesus
Wednesday	2.30pm	Romans Course	Church Hall
Wednesday	8pm	Zoom Prayer Meeting	ID 619 679 7453
Thursday	11-2pm	Harm Reduction	
Sunday	11am	Remembrance Worship Service -	Starts 10.55am
Saturday 14 November		Big Quiz	Fundraising for Tearfund – See Simon!
Wednesday 25 November	8pm	Church Members' Meeting	Church Hall
Saturday 20 March 2027			Louie and Lacey's Wedding

CHRISTMAS EVENTS (plus 1!!!)

Saturday 5 December – St Leonard's Christmas Market – Beoley – 11am to 3 pm

Church and Gardens!

Activities and Games!

Live Music and carols!

Festive Food and Drink!

Father Christmas!

CTIR Advent, St John's Greenlunds

Sunday 29 November 6 p.m.

Venue: St John's Greenland

Saturday 12 December – 11.00a.m. Carols in Kingfisher Centre

Saturday 19 December – 11.00a.m. Carols in Kingfisher Centre

Sunday 13 December 11.00a.m. Pass the Parcel! Pop Up Nativity

Saturday 19th December 5.30 p.m. Carol Café

Sunday 20th December 6.30 p.m. Carols by Candlelight

Wednesday 25 November 8.00pm Church Members' Meeting

Saturday 20 March 2027 – Louie and Lacey's Wedding

4 The Revd Paul Hardingham considers the grief and loss of war…

Lest We Forget

'In Flanders' fields the poppies blow between the crosses, row on row, that mark our place: and in the sky the larks, still bravely singing, fly scarce heard amid the guns below.'

This is the first verse of John McCrae's poem, first published in Punch magazine in 1915. It soon came to symbolise the sacrifice of all who died in World War One. Today, the poppy remains an important symbol of all those who have sacrificed their lives in conflicts over the years. But why do we remember them?

'They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.' (Micah 4:3). Writing 700 years before Christ, Micah spoke at the time when Samaria was captured due to the invasion of Assyria. However, he prophesied a future of hope, a world where nations would come together in peace rather than war. His words are fulfilled in the kingdom of God established by Jesus.

Our understanding of *peace* is more than simply the absence of conflict. It is about building relationships between people, communities and nations, founded on love and justice for all. As we remember those who have died in war, we should look practically at how we can build such relationships, beginning with our own families, colleagues and neighbours. *'We will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.'* (Micah 4:5). Let us ask God's Spirit to make us people of peace, justice and compassion for today's world.

'They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old: Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning we will remember them.'



I am the good shepherd. As the Father knows me and I know the Father, in the same way I know my sheep and they know me. And I am willing to die for them.

John 10:11-15

By the Revd Roy Shaw, a retired but active priest in the diocese of York, where he is a spiritual director.

All Saints

At the beginning of this month, we celebrate 'All Saints' (1st November), when we remember all those heroes of the faith who have in one way or another been a witness to Christ in what they said and what they did. But sometimes the saints of old- those portrayed in Renaissance pictures or in craggy, oversized sculptures- can matter less to us than the saints we have personally known.

For instance, one minister tells of a good friend of his, Stan, a farmer on the Yorkshire Wolds, who died earlier this year. Stan was the sort of man you'd meet at the mart, or stop to have a chat with in the village. He always had time for you. You'd go away thinking 'salt of the earth', and you would be right.

But Stan was much deeper than that. He was a devout Christian, with a simple but profound faith, used by God in many situations that never made the public eye. His farm had a Site of Special Scientific Interest in that it captured many of the unique features of the Wolds. He was a knowledgeable plantsman, although you would have to drag it out of him. In his day he had taken Bibles to Soviet-era Ukraine and Romania, and received the thanks of Christians there who were so encouraged that they were not alone, that someone cared, made the effort to bring them the Word of God.

So Stan, although a quiet family man living on a fairly remote farm, had had a profound influence for God and for good in many people's lives, both in the area – and in Ukraine and Romania.

And there have been multitudes like him. This month, are there folk in your life who have been an influence on you for God and for good? What difference did they make to you?

All Saints-tide is the ideal opportunity to give thanks for them. They are life's unsung heroes, who help others steer a path closer to God by their wise words, or their support, their prayers. The impact of a good life on others can be enormous. For all of them, let's thank God.

You have heard that it was said, 'Love your friends, hate your enemies.' But now I tell you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may become the sons of your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:43-45

Remembering Leonard Cohen – poet and singer

Ten years ago, on 7th November 2016, Leonard Cohen, Canadian folk/soft rock singer, songwriter and poet died.

He was born into a well-off Jewish family in Montreal that was said to claim direct descent from Aaron – the name Cohen meaning priest. Bob Dylan once observed that Cohen wrote songs that were really prayers.

Before he was a singer Cohen was a poet and a novelist. Two collections – *Let Us Compare Mythologies* in 1956 and *Spice-Box of Earth* in 1961– brought him acclaim as a poet, and this was enhanced by two novels, *The Favourite Game* and *Beautiful Losers,* in the early 1960s.

He had already moved to the Greek island of Hydra in 1960, where he met the Norwegian Marianne Ihlen, who became his muse. Later he was the long-time companion – though not husband – of Suzanne Elrod, who he met in a lift in Manhattan in 1968. They had two children: Adam, also a singer-songwriter, and Lorca, a photographer.

Somewhat confusingly, Cohen's early song *Suzanne*, on his 1967 debut album, *The Songs of Leonard Cohen*, referred to a different woman, the wife of a friend.

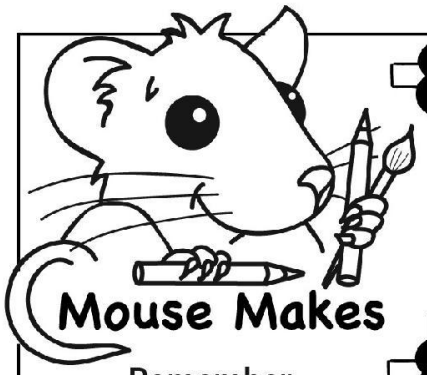
Though some people mysteriously described his distinctive baritone voice as "depressing", many others found his performances and his songs magical, compelling and full of spiritual and physical depth. Songs like *Hallelujah* and *You Want it Darker*, with its use of the Hebrew word *hineni* (here I am), implying total availability to God, meant much to practising Jews and Christians.

Cohen spent seven years in a Buddhist monastery in the 1990s, and afterwards lost much of his life savings through financial betrayal by his former manager. Following that, at the age of 71 he embarked on a global tour that was a massive success. He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2008, and two years later was honoured with a lifetime achievement Grammy.

Do not store up riches for yourselves here on earth, Jesus said, where moths and rust destroy, and robbers break in and steal.

Instead, store up riches for yourselves in heaven, where moths and rust cannot break in and steal. For your heart will always be where your riches are.

Matthew 6:19-21



Mouse Makes

Remembrance Sunday is the day we remember the sacrifice of those who gave their lives so that we could live in peace, it mirrors what Christ did for us when he gave his life so that we could live in peace with God.

Remember
the words Jesus said:
"It is more blessed to give than to receive."
Colossians 3:25

Jesus said:
"No one can have greater love than to give his life for his friends."
John 15:13

O P R O T E C T
S R E S P E C T U N
B R A V E R Y H E F
E S E C O L O Y A L H T C
I R E M E M B R A N C E R O
M E L E B K O R I M
K G F M Y F U O B M
V A L O U R I U R I U E
R R E R K N F O V L A S T N
I D S I H O N O U R G M E D
G S A C R I F I C E L V
L U S E R V I C E
D A R M I S T I C E
E D E F E N D N



REMEMBRANCE • PROTECT • DEFEND • SACRIFICE • SELFLESS • SERVICE
BRAVERY • VALOUR • HONOUR • COURAGE • HEROISM • LOYAL • REGARD
RESPECT • THANKFUL • MEMORIAL • TRIBUTE • COMMEND • ARMISTICE • PEACE

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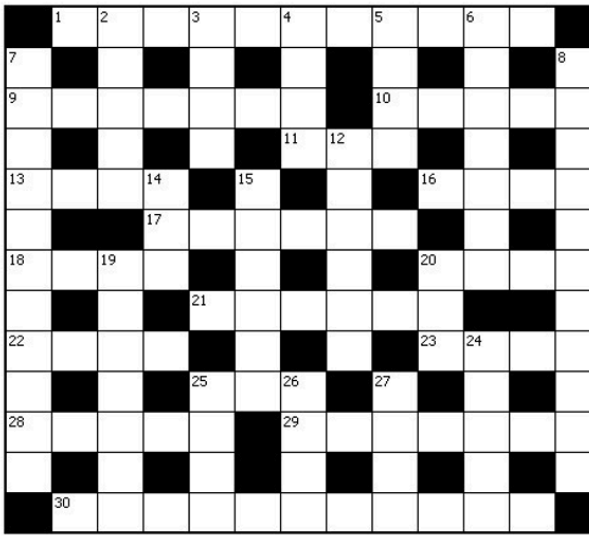
8Crossword Clues

Across

1 and 20 Down 'Lord of all _, Lord of all _, whose trust, ever child-like, no cares could destroy'(11,3)
9 Mosesí question to a fighting Hebrew labourer: 'Why are you _ your fellow Hebrew?" (Exodus 2:13) (7)
10 Acclaimed cellist who contracted multiple sclerosis at the height of her fame, Jacqueline _ (2,3)
11 'At even _ the sun was set, the sick, O Lord, around thee lay'(3)
13 A descendant of Gad (xNumbers 26:16) (4)
16 'Do not leave Jerusalem, but _ for the gift my Father promised' (Acts 1:4) (4)
17 Clambers (Jeremiah 48:44) (6)
18 Peter's response to questioning by the Sanhedrin: 'We must _God rather than men!'(Acts 5:29) (4)
20 Christian paraplegic author, artist and campaigner, _ Eareckson Tada (4)
21 Bird partial to the nests of other birds (6)
22 'Such large crowds gathered round him that he got into a boat and sat _ _ '(Matthew 13:2) (2,2)
23 Infectious tropical disease (4)
25 Tree (3)
28 'No fear of me should _ you, nor should my hand be heavy upon you'(Job 33:7) (5)
29 For example, to Titus, Timothy or Philemon (7)
30 Week beginning with Pentecost Sunday, according to the Church's calendar (11)

Down

2 'O Jerusalem _ how _I have longed to gather your children together' Matthew 23:37) (5)
3 Way out (4)
4 Exhort (Romans 12:1) (4)
5 Done (anag.) (4)
6 Highest of the four voice-parts in a choir (7)
7 Concerning the study of God (11)
8 Uniquely, it has Abbey, Cathedral and Chapel (11)
12 Admonish (Matthew 16:22) (6)
14 Frozen (3)
15 Established form of religious ceremony (6)
19 Inscription often found on gravestones (7)
20 See 1 Across
24 Behaved (Joshua 7:1) (5)
25 Time (anag.) (4)
26 Lists choice of meals (4)
27 'For the wages of sin is death, but the _ of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord'(Romans 6:23) (4)



Whispers of wings.

O for the whispering wings of a dove

Softly and silently soaring above

Bringing peace and purity to the soul

Resting on Jesus, a sight to behold.

Tiny sparrows two for a penny

Filling the hedgerows,oh so many

Our God looks after every single one

And for us He sent His only Son.

Majestic eagle alone in the sky

Enduring hardships like you or I

Like a mother eagle who cares for her young

So God shields us and keeps us strong.

Dazzling peacock dancing in the rain,

Created by God,so royal, so vain.

Fan of feathers full of intricate eyes

Symbolising Gods watchfulness over our lives.

Roosting on the ruins of Babylon,

The young bittern sits silently watching for frogs or fish

Hidden by reeds in the murky marshes,

Seeing his prey forward he charges,

A satisfying call pierces the air

The river Euphrates has revealed its fare.

Raven with your coat so glossy black

Playful trickster who loves a snack.

Stately raven stern and grave,

Did fly to Elijah his life to save.

Gave him bread and meat aplenty

Fed him daily,oh so gently.

Birds of the air flying so free

Help us to learn more about thee.

God loves us all no matter how small,

He will not let us stumble or fall.



From Rosie

9Prayer for November

Dear Lord,

At this dark and dismal time, when the year is closing down and our lives get busier and the world more confusing, we can sometimes become discouraged and low in spirits.

Help us to adjust our perspective, to turn and look up, to focus afresh on You, to remember that Your name is above all names, above discouragement, above despair, above confusion.

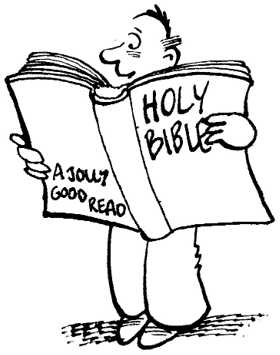
Help us to be thankful for each day that You have made, recognising each one as a gift from You, to be treasured and lived fruitfully.

May we welcome Your powerful, healing light into our hearts and lives – Your light, which no darkness can dim. Help us to remember your words,

I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

Help us to follow you and walk in the light, this November and always. In your name, Amen.

By Daphne Kitching



ACROSS: 1, Hopefulness. 9, Hitting. 10, du Pre. 11, Ere. 13, Ozni.

16. Wait. 17, Climbs. 18, Obey. 20, Joni. 21, Cuckoo. 22, In it. 23, Yaws. 25, Elm. 28, Alarm. 29, Epistle. 30, Whitsuntide.

DOWN: 2, Often. 3, Exit. 4, Urge. 5, Node. 6, Soprano. 7, Theological. 8, Westminster. 12, Rebuke. 14, Icy. 15, Ritual. 19, Epitaph. 20, Joy. 24, Acted. 25, Emit. 26, Menu. 27, Gift.

14: 2-6