

# Mike's message .....

## Remembering

November is a month of Remembering!

It starts with the Feast of All Saints' (1st November) when the church remembers all the faithful throughout the generations who have followed Christ at great cost to their own lives. It's especially a time of remembering those who don't have their own 'Feast Day' in the calendar. All Saints' Day is followed by All Souls' Day (2nd November) when all who have died are remembered - a poignant time especially for those who have lost loved ones recently.

November is also the time of Remembering those who have died in war and conflict. It's origins are from Armistice Day, 11th November 1918. That was the day that the armistice was signed at Compeigne (France) at 11.00am. It brought to an end the 'Great War' (later called The First World War). Nowadays Remembrance is often focussed on the second Sunday in November, Remembrance Sunday, which is the 8th November this year. We'll be holding our service at 9.30am as usual, but starting with an Act of Remembrance including a two-minute silence. At 11.00am I'll be starting the Family Service at Wesley with an Act of Remembrance too. I'll also be leading a service in Heath Lane Cemetery - where the original West Bromwich War Memorial is located - at 11.00am on Wednesday 11th November.

Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day are also the focus of the Royal British Legion's Poppy Appeal. The 'Legion' raises funds by selling poppies to help those who have been scarred by war and conflict. Those helped included the families of people who have paid the ultimate sacrifice of their lives. Many people wear a Remembrance Poppy as a sign of their support for the 'Legion' and it's work. It's also regarded as a sign of respect for those who have died or been injured.

Some however, for various reasons, chose not to wear a poppy. Wars are fought in the name of freedom and people should have the option not to wear a poppy if they so wish. One West Bromwich Albion player, James McClean, exercises his right not to wear a poppy and has explained in detail why he does so. There should be no stigma associated with exercising the freedom not to wear one. The silence and commemoration should however be observed with respect by all.

Whether people wear a poppy or not, we are asked to remember those, from all nations, who have died or been injured in war and conflict. Arguments of how we do that should not get in the way of the central message that:

*At the going down of the sun, and in the morning: We will remember them.*

