

Circuit letter 01.11.23

Dear Friends,

I am writing this on my favourite day of the year: Halloween. Now, I know that this is not traditionally a big holiday in this country. I know that it's more of an "American thing". Sometimes it gets a bit of "negative press" in Christian circles. While I enjoy the chance to see cool costumes and the excuse to eat candy, I do realise that this day has unfortunately picked up some (non-deserved) stigmas among Christians. This is unfortunate as Halloween was originally a Christian celebration. As a matter of fact, the day you'll (presumably) be reading this is the TRUE Christian holiday.

The early church celebrated a day called All Saints Day (also called All Souls Day or All Hallows Day) to commemorate the martyrs who had died in defence of the faith. Over the years this became a day to honour the Saints in the Roman Catholic Church. After the Reformation it became a day to honour all the Christian dead, remembering those who passed away in preceding years, celebrating their lives in Christ and their reunion with him in heaven. Some countries mark this day in the same way that many people do Memorial Day in this country: it's a day to visit the graves of loved ones, bring flowers, remember how much we loved them.

The day before All Hallows Day is Hallow's Eve, which we eventually mispronounced as Halloween. (If you have any doubts as to how this happened in the English language, please see the pronunciation of "Southwark".) In more superstitious times, the night before you honoured the dead was naturally going to be a little spooky, especially to children. Out of fears that ghosts and goblins were wandering the countryside, children began to wear masks and costumes to frighten them away.

As I said, Halloween is my favourite time of year and I look forward to seeing the ghosts, witches, Power Rangers, and Batman at my door this year begging for candy. However, I also invite you to take a moment on November 1st and remember the real reason for the day. Remember the loved ones that have gone before you, thank God for the time that they touched your lives, and look forward to the day when you will see them again in heaven.

Scarily yours,

Rev. Adam Payne

Resources/Good News

How to engage with your community this Christmas

Emma Nash (Mission & Community Engagement Officer) takes us through five top tips for engaging with your community this Christmas.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BpBTNUSuNXs&t=16s>