

Headcorn & the Suttons

WELCOME TO



26th—31 October 2020

“All Hallows Eve”

Welcome to Messy Church Goes Virtual

As you will realise, the current Covid-19 pandemic has meant that we have not been able to hold any Messy Church sessions this year. However, we are aware how much many of you enjoy the craft activities, games and stories so have decided to go “virtual” instead.

Each day during week commencing 26th October, kits containing a craft activity around the theme of Halloween will be available for you to take home from the church. We will also put all the instructions for the activities on the handschurches website, so provided you have all the materials at home (which we hope you do) you should be able to have a fun time making the items even if you don't want to go out.

We do hope that you enjoy our “Messy Church goes Virtual”

Halloween—the real meaning of the day.

What does “Halloween” mean to you?

Is it purely a night for carving scary faces into pumpkins, dressing up and trick or treating with your friends?

Or is there something more to this very special night?

Believe it or not, “Halloween” gets its name from a religious festival that has been practised for over 1300 years. It's real name is “All Hallows Eve” which means “Holy Night” because it falls on the day before All Saints Day and two days before All Souls Day. These are the days when we are encouraged to think about and pray for all those who have died, whether they be actual saints or not.

About a thousand years ago in Scotland, all Hallows Eve was a time when poor people would visit the homes of rich people and offer to pray for their loved ones in exchange for something to eat. Over the centuries this custom spread and each year bands of “Soulers” went from house to house singing ancient 'souling' rhymes; in return they were given special cakes known as “Soul Cakes” which they would eat while still hot as they said a prayer for the departed.

Through the ages the lighting of bonfires and candles has also been important on Halloween. Besides helping folk to keep warm and find their way safely home each day, it was believed that they would also help to guide the souls of the departed through the dark winter nights that lay ahead and help them find their way to Heaven. It is for this reason that many people still light candles for their loved ones who have died, and many Churches, including Headcorn, normally hold a special All Souls Service which includes the lighting of candles (although sadly not this year due to Covid-19).

In ancient pagan times, a special bonfire was lit on 31 October as 1st November was considered to be the start of the New Year. It was believed that this would protect the farmland with its crops for the following year. People thought that it would be good luck if they took some of the glowing embers home and use them to start their own household fire—traditionally these embers would be carried in a hollowed out turnip.

Maybe you can see how some of these old traditions have changed and become part of our modern day Halloween activities. If so, we hope that you will remember the poor Scottish “Soulers” next time you go “Trick or Treating” and take a moment to stop and pray for all those who you visit, especially if they have recently lost loved ones.

We also hope that next time you carve a pumpkin head you will think about the ancient country folk carrying the burning embers from the village bonfire back to their homes in a hollowed out turnip. That you remember who it is who we can always look to for protection and the way in which we should always be prepared to shine a light so that all can find their way safely to Heaven.

Halloween should not be a day when you scare yourself and everyone else with ghosts, ghouls and monsters, instead it is a day that should be filled with the love, peace and light of God.



We hope that you enjoy the activities that we have on offer this time and that they will help you appreciate the real meaning of All Hallows Eve:

- *Paper lanterns*
- *Candle in stained glass window*
- *Lighthouses*
- *Rainbows*
- *Recipe for Soul cakes and info about them.*
- *Puzzles and colouring from patch the Pumpkin.*

What else is happening at Headcorn Church?

- *Virtual Christingle*—kits to make up your Christingles at home, along with instructions and associated activities , will be available from the church during the weekend of 5th/6th December
- *On-line nativity (with a difference)* - we are hoping to put together an On-line nativity video which will be available to view via the church website and Facebook. However, we need volunteers to take part (don't worry it wont be onerous) please contact Russell Anderson or Fiona Haskett if you would be willing to take part.
- *Christmas around the churchyard*—As we will not be able to hold a Christmas Tree Festival this year we have decided to try and put lots of additional lights and trees up in the churchyard. Please do come and check us out—they will hopefully be up and running for the weekend of 5/6th December and through to the end of the year.
- *Family Carols on your doorstep*—We are afraid that we cannot hold a Christmas Eve Family Carols and Crib service this year. However, why don't you do it from your front garden instead? We are calling everyone to come out into their front garden at 4pm and sing Away in a Manger together. We will put the words on the website for you to download and make sure you bring a torch or lantern with you to “shine a light for the baby Jesus”

We are also hoping to organise some other Christmas activities and events for you to enjoy—watch this space!