

Faith Comment published in the Petersfield Post

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Lighten our darkness

Between my writing this Comment and your reading it several things will have happened to make us realise that winter is coming.

First, the clocks went back and afternoons became shorter; but we had an extra hour in bed on the Sunday and the mornings became brighter again. This was followed by Hallowe'en, with its witches and broomsticks; scary pumpkin faces; and 'trick or treat'. Then came Bonfire Night, when the sky is lit up by spectacular firework displays and the flames of bonfires, big or small.

I confess I am not a fan of any of these. I don't like shorter days and longer nights. I'm not at ease with the darker traditions of Halloween, nor recalling attempted explosions and their resulting retribution. Call me a kill-joy if you like, but I want to celebrate the good things in life and let a bit of light into the winter months ahead.

Hallowe'en was followed by All Saint's Day, recalling many people (saints with or without a capital 'S') who have made a positive contribution to life. They knew first-hand about the challenges and dangers around them (the dark places) but showed the light of hope, love, faithfulness and compassion, contributing positively to those around them. One, Paul, lived 2000 years ago. Although pelted with stones, imprisoned, ridiculed, he urged his friends to think about whatever is true, honest, right, admirable, praiseworthy. I call that shedding light in dark places!

I know it will be dark and cold in the coming months; that bad things happen in this world. I know life is grim and challenging for too many people. So what about trying to light up the darkness of the coming months? Saints can still be found today!

And remember, in the dark earth bulbs and seeds are already preparing to burst forth when the weather becomes warmer and days lengthen; while, as golden leaves fall, their successors are tightly wrapped within the buds left behind.

Spring will come. Light will return.