

I write this at an in-between time: after All Saints and before Remembrance – though I am told that there are already Christmas lights to be seen in parts of London! There are those who say that Christian festivals like Christmas and Easter are based on ancient pagan festivals. I rather think that the reverse is true: that some of the traditions of pagan festivals found their way into Christian ones which just happened to fall at about the same time. It may be that Hallowe'en as we know it is based on Samhain (pronounced Sow-in), marking the beginning of winter, when people would light bonfires and wear costumes to ward off roaming ghosts. The name 'Hallowe'en' is only as old as the name 'Methodist': it first appeared in England in the 18th century. But the idea that the 'even' – in other words, the day before – of All Saints' Day (aka All Hallows Day) was a time to drive out evil spirits, is much older. However, All Saints Day was not always on 1st November. It used to be observed in May, as it still is in the eastern churches. No connection to any pagan festival, then.

All Saints Day was a feast, probably beginning in Syria in the fifth century, commemorating those who had died or suffered for their Christian faith. In later years the following day (now 2nd November) became known as All Souls Day, a time set aside to remember all those who have died. This happens every Saturday in the Orthodox tradition, by the way. All Souls was not much observed until as recently as the last century: the loss of life during the First World War gave it a new meaning. Of course, we will again remember those who have died in war this coming weekend, but All Souls – now usually combined with All Saints in practice, on the Sunday following 1st November, continues to be when we might remember all our dead. I know of churches which hold a special service at this time, perhaps naming all those who have 'crossed the bar' (using an old naval expression) during the year. And are these not also saints?

Remembrance Sunday, the second in November, falls closest to the 11th, the anniversary of the Armistice which ended the First World War, so it is not surprising that some of us see a relationship between these times of remembrance: of Christian martyrs and other saints; of all those we have loved and lost; and for the victims of war. Autumn clouds provide a suitable setting, too. There is also a contemporary feel about Remembrance. War still claims its victims, and our thoughts return to Ukraine, Gaza, Yemen and Sudan, to name but four. Christians still suffer and even die for their faith. So, it is right to honour the true saints of the church, who in many cases have given up their lives for the gospel. There is also a sense in which, though small in number, whenever we gather to worship, we are surrounded by the saints who were people like us, who worshipped here before us, some of whom we knew, some of whom we loved. I sometimes think of them occupying the empty seats in our churches, their praises joining with ours. It was St Symeon (949-1022) who put it so well all those centuries ago:

'The saints in each generation, joined to those who have gone before and filled like them with light, become a golden chain, in which each saint is a separate link, united to the next by faith and works and love. So in the one God they form a single chain, which cannot quickly be broken.'

God bless,
Peter

Resources/Good News

Please see details below about a Financial Fraud Webinar on the 14 November, 10am-11.30am, being run by Buckinghamshire & Surrey Trading Standards:

You are invited to attend our webinar on how to stay safe from financial fraud, scams and loan sharks.

It is at 10am on 14 November and is free to sign up and attend.

The session will also have subtitles and be signed in British Sign Language.

There will be speakers from [Buckinghamshire & Surrey Trading Standards](#), [Citizens Advice](#) and the England Illegal Money Lending Team (aka [Stop Loan Sharks Team](#))

✔ You can sign up here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/staying-safe-from-financial-fraud-scams-loan-sharks-bsl-available-tickets-970292429777>

Financial Fraud

- Investment scams
- Scam texts offering debt services, saying a parcel needs to be redelivered, or offers of financial assistance for energy costs (and more!)
- Messages from a 'friend in need' asking for money as they've lost their phone
- Unsolicited pension advice
- Fake QR codes
- Too good to be true offers on social media
- Romance scams

...and more!

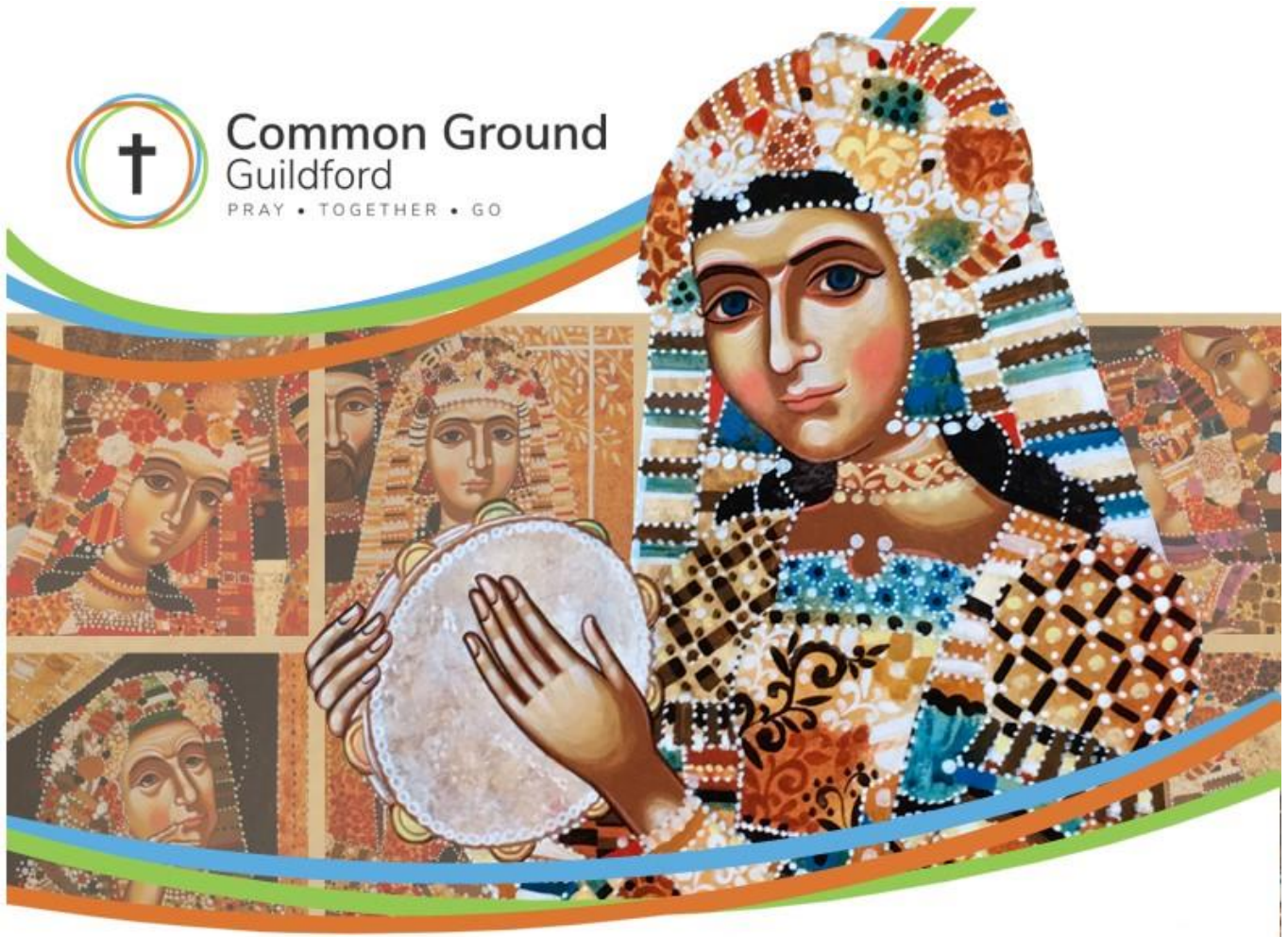
Loan Sharks

Loan sharks come from all sections of society and from all age groups. The only thing that unites them all is that they will strike wherever and whenever someone is vulnerable.

Find out what help is available and a safer way to borrow money and get debt advice.



Common Ground
Guildford
PRAY • TOGETHER • GO



Extraordinary Women of the Bible

By: Tristan Latchford *Sung by:* the In Nomine Choir
Organ: Peter Wright *Conductor:* Sebastian Forbes

Friday 15 November 2024 - 7.30pm

At St Mary's Church, Quarry Street, Guildford, GU1 3UP

7 anthems by Tristan Latchford on
7 poems by Graham Kings on
7 paintings by Silvia Dimitrova

Scan this QR
code to purchase
tickets. Price £10



Practical Aspects of Spirituality

Join us for

Reflections inspired by

**7 Extraordinary Women
of the Bible**

led by

Bishop Graham Kings

Saturday 16 November

09.30 – 12.00

Refreshments from 09.15

**St. Mary's Church Quarry St
Guildford GU1 3UP**



If you would like to attend, please email gmc.info@hotmail.co.uk

SAVE THE DATES

Join us for this year's series of

Advent Reflections

followed by a bread & soup lunch

Thursdays - 28 November and 5, 12 December

12.15 for 12.30

Carols at Lunchtime: 19 December

St. Mary's, Quarry St, Guildford, GU1 3UP

Godalming Band

Presents



The Snowman LIVE

Film Screening
with
Godalming Band &
Godalming Junior School Choir



Saturday 23rd November
3pm & 5:30pm
Wilfrid Noyce Centre
Godalming

www.TheSnowmanGodalming.co.uk



A joyful start to Christmas

Carols for All



Saturday Nov 30th

7.00 - 9.00pm

**Horsley Methodist
Church**

(next to W. Horsley Village Hall)

**Come and sing your favourite
carols with a break for
refreshments and mince pies.**

Phone requests to

01438 282474



Selected pieces from:
Handel's *Messiah*
Christmas Carols

Music Director:
Florence Price

7.30pm, Saturday
30th November 2024

St John's Church
West Byfleet,
KT14 6EH

Tickets: £18 Adults,
£9 students
Order from website,
choir members and
on the door

Genesis Chorale

www.genesischorale.org.uk



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