

Remembrance Season Prayer Trail – notes for church leaders

Many people have used churchyards more during the pandemic, as a way of getting outside, getting exercise, or finding a place of peace.

These prayer stations are designed to encourage people who may not attend church, or pray much, to use your churchyard for spiritual reflection, and become familiar with the season of All Saints, All Souls, and Remembrance. They can be used by people of all ages.

There is a sign for the entrance to your churchyard and then there are four stations:

1. **All Hallows Eve** – confronting our fears
2. **All Saints** – remembering those whose lives inspire us in faith
3. **All Souls** – remembering our own beloved dead
4. **Remembrance** – honouring the sacrifice of those in war, and praying for peace

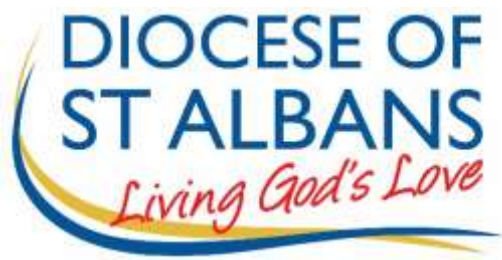
These can be put anywhere around your churchyard that is appropriate. However, one suggested way is:

1. **All Hallows Eve** – by graves that have imagery (angels, skulls, cherubs, etc) to explore
2. **All Saints** – by something with a saint's name on it (your church's sign, or a statue, if you have one)
3. **All Souls** – a memorial bench
4. **Remembrance** – a commonwealth war grave, or your war memorial (if outdoors)

What do I need?

The stations can primarily stand on their own without resources. However, you will need to laminate the pages so they're waterproof, and, if possible, provide the following and ensure they're checked and topped up regularly as needed:

1. A basket of stones, to go by the sign at the entrance
2. Rosemary and myrrh for the fourth station (these can be in waterproof plastic containers – you may want to provide hand sanitizer here as well)
3. There is a space on the third prayer station for you to add a sticker with contact details for someone to talk to about bereavement

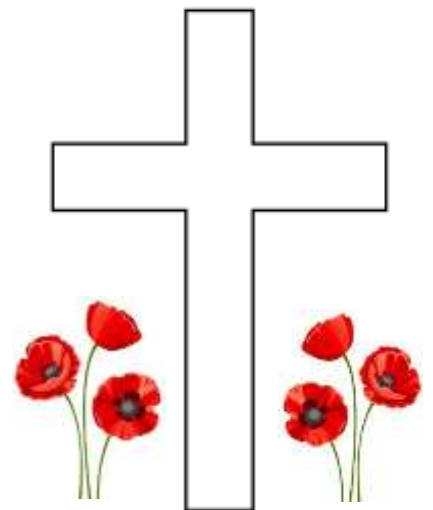


Welcome to YOUR churchyard

This space belongs to you. It belongs to all of us. Spend as much time here as you like. Please respect the plants and animals who make this space their home.

Feel free to take a stone that represents your feelings or your intentions for today. Carry it with you as you go. Return it to this basket or leave it somewhere in the churchyard.

All-Age Remembrance Trail: there will 4 special places to pray in the churchyard during this season of Remembrance. You can do these in any order you like, and do as many or as few as you want. Look for the poppy and the cross picture.



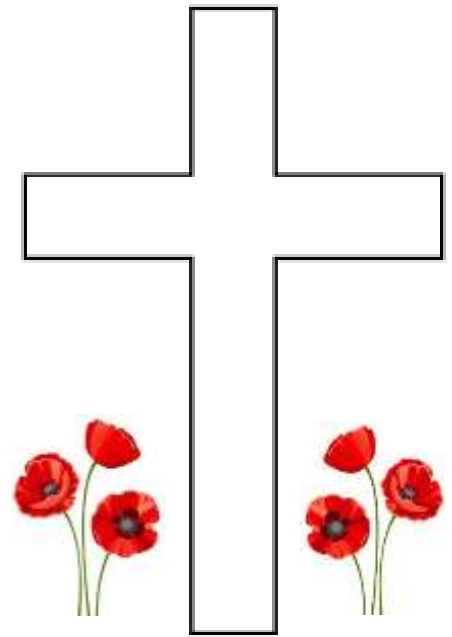
At each station, there's a way to pray with words and a way to pray with your senses. Children and adults may do whichever one they prefer.

Remembrance Trail 1:

Can you think of any films that have graveyards or cemeteries in them?

Many people are watching scary films this time of year, for Halloween.

Halloween is a time when we think about death and dying. This can be scary, but it's a part of life. Talking about death and dying can help us feel less scared.



Praying with words:

God of life and death,

You made us, and everything that has ever been.

In this peaceful place, we are still surrounded by reminders of those who have died.

In these scary times, we may be facing our fears of death more.

Help us to remember that you are with us all the time, no matter what. Help us to know that even death cannot stop love. Be with us when we are afraid. AMEN.

Praying with your senses:

Run your hands over a gravestone. What does the stone feel like? Are there pictures on it? What do you think those pictures mean? Say the name of the person who is buried here and pray for them.

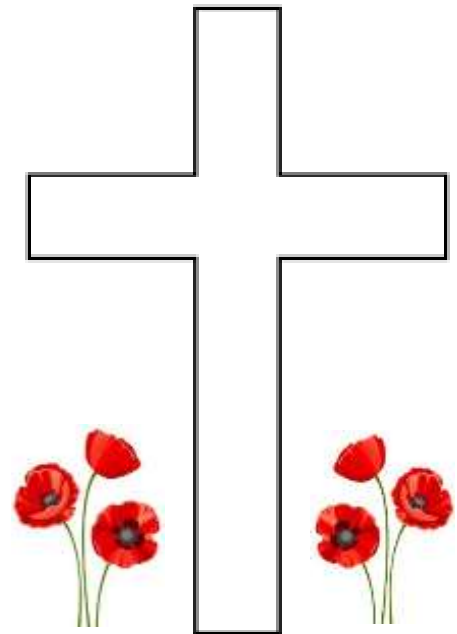
Then touch your stomach and your forehead. Usually when we're scared or worried, these parts of our body hurt. Feel the warmth of your body's life. Ask God to help you with any fears or worries you have. Then take three deep breaths in and out.

Remembrance Trail 2:

November 1st is a special day for Christians called ALL SAINTS DAY.

On that day, Christians remember the people who have lived and died before us, who followed the Christian faith and whose lives made the world better.

Christians believe that people who have died have a new life with God, that never ends. Death isn't the end of the story.



Praying with words:

What stories have you heard about saints? Some of the more famous ones are Mary, St. Francis, and St. George. Many people also consider people like Martin Luther King Jr., who fought for a more just world, to be saints, even if they aren't officially.

What different ways are there to be saints? What associations does the word have for you? Is there a saint with your name? Is there one who reminds you of you? Is there a saint you would like to be more like?

Praying with your senses:

If you have a smartphone or camera with you, go around the churchyard and take some pictures of:

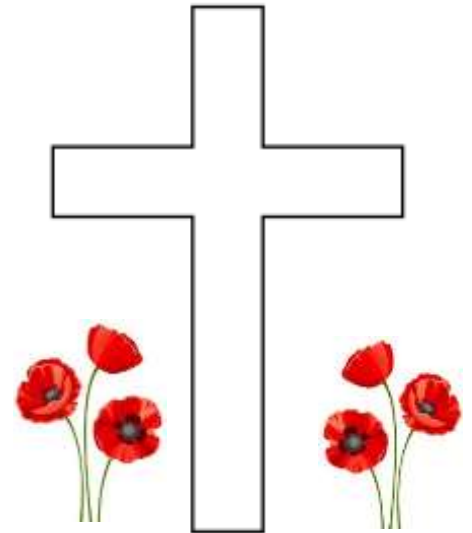
1. Anything you can find with a saint's name on it or any statues of saints (is the church named after a saint?)
2. Anything that makes you think of death and new life.

Share these pictures on social media with the hashtag **#RememberTrail** and, if you can, tag this church in.

Remembrance Trail 3:

After Halloween and All Saints Day, November 2nd is a special day for Christians called ALL SOULS DAY.

On that day, Christians remember the people we love who have died. Christians believe that they are living forever with God, but we still grieve for them.



Praying with words:

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, and he shall gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young. (Isaiah 40:11)

Jesus said, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." (Matthew 5:4)

"The home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away." (Revelation 21:3-4)

Praying with your senses:

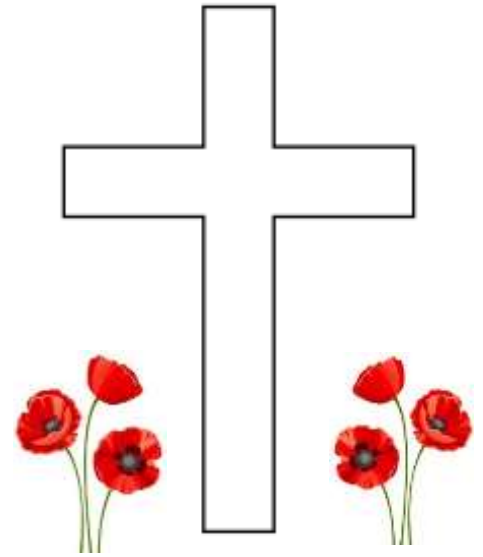
Find a quiet place to sit. Place your hands on your knees or on your belly and close your eyes. Focus on what you can hear – birds? Traffic? Voices? If thoughts arise, acknowledge them and let them go.

After a minute or two of listening, say out loud the names of anyone you love who has died. What does it feel like to hear their name(s) spoken?

If you would like to talk to someone about loss and grief, contact:

Remembrance Trail 4:

On the 11th of November 1918, the horrors of World War One ended. Millions had died, and many more had been wounded. Every year from 1919, people have marked 11th November as Remembrance Day. On that day, the sacrifice of those who served in war is honoured, and we pray for an end to war, and the coming of God's lasting peace.



Praying with words:

Ever-living God,

We remember those whom you have gathered from the storm of war into the peace of your presence.

We pray for all who in bereavement, disability, and pain continue to suffer the consequences of fighting and terror.

May your peace calm our fears, bring justice to all people, and establish harmony among the nations, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Praying with your senses:

Open the boxes and smell the rosemary and the myrrh. Rosemary is associated with remembrance and death – it used to be used often at funerals. In ancient times, myrrh was used on bodies to prepare them for burial. How do these smells make you feel? Do they remind you of anything?

If there is a war grave nearby, leave a bit of rosemary on the grave and say the name of the person who is buried there. You can also say the names of anyone you know who has died as a result of war. Pray that all people may live in peace.

