

Message from Bishop Rachel,

2 November 2021

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'... all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰ and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.' (Colossians 1: 15 – 20).

November has begun and brings with it some key themes and dates in the calendar.

Yesterday we marked All Saints' Day and the beginning of days of remembrance framed by All Souls' Day today and Remembrance Sunday on the 14 November. Towards the end of this month, we will begin the [International 16 days of Activism against Gender-related Violence](#). And COP26 is finally happening.

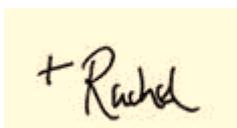
In all of this, you will be living your own November events and issues in your local context, and all at a time as views and choices on how to live this season of Covid seem to grow ever more disparate amid the questions about what this month will bring.

In a desire to try and hold all this together, I think the groaning of creation and ourselves described in [Romans 8:19 – 23](#) is pertinent. In those November markers I have described above, we are acknowledging frailty, mortality and brokenness. It is right that we groan and yearn for transformation, redemption and reconciliation. Yet even now as we groan with creation, we sing a song of hope. As we acknowledge our abuse of creation, our own frailty and the disruption and pain of death, we also give thanks for the beauty of creation and the hope of resurrection, as we proclaim that death will not have the final word, and we endeavour to live to God's glory. This too is present in those November markers.

My prayer is that as we enter into all that November brings, there will be coherence. Rather than a sense of being overwhelmed by demands and activity, we will once more reorient ourselves to the still centre of Christ's love and hope, for it is in Christ that the groaning and the delight are held together in crucifixion and resurrection, and it is through Him that all things will be reconciled to God. It is in Him that all things hold together.

This will be our starting point on Saturday as the new Diocesan Synod gathers for the first time and looks back and looks forward in our LIFE Together.

This comes as ever with prayers and thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a yellow rectangular background. The signature consists of a small cross symbol followed by the name 'Rachel' written in a cursive, flowing script.