

Dorset South & West. Written Service.

Sunday 10th November 2024.

Remembrance Sunday

Prepared by Revd Jean Quick.



Call to Worship “God is our refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble.” Psalm 46.1

STF 132

O God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
our shelter from the stormy blast,
and our eternal home.

Under the shadow of thy throne
thy saints have dwelt secure;
sufficient is thine arm alone,
and our defence is sure.

Before the hills in order stood
or earth received her frame,
from everlasting thou art God,
to endless years the same.

A thousand ages in thy sight
are like an evening gone,

short as the watch that ends the night
before the rising sun.

The busy tribes of flesh and blood,
with all their cares and fears,
are carried downward by the flood,
and lost in following years.

Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
bears all its sons away;
they fly forgotten, as a dream
dies at the opening day.

O God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
be thou our guard while life shall last,
and our eternal home.

On this Remembrance Sunday let us remind ourselves that we meet in the presence of God. We commit ourselves to work in penitence and faith for reconciliation between the nations, that all people may, together, live in freedom, justice and peace.

We pray for all who in bereavement, disability and pain continue to suffer the consequences of fighting and terror. We remember with thanksgiving and sorrow those whose lives, in world wars and conflicts past and present, have been given and taken away.

The Methodist Forces Board produced in 2023 a Remembrance Resource booklet and the following is an extract from the book. Hopefully it will be helpful to aid our reflection and some may remember Bill, a former Minister in The Weymouth circuit who is serving as a Military Chaplain.

Thoughts from a memorial garden

In 2006 and 2008 I was serving with 45 Commando and I was part of two six-month tours of Afghanistan. In the first tour we lost six colleagues; in the second tour we lost nine, as well as countless others who suffered life-changing injuries.

Wherever we went in Afghanistan, poppies seemed to be growing or being harvested. We were out there providing security, making a difference, standing up for those who couldn't stand up for themselves. But at a cost; it's a cost I will never forget. I will never forget the smell of the dust – very different from anything else I've ever smelled. The darkness, the silence at night. The impending thud, the impact of an IED (an improvised explosive device) that had gone off and knowing that somewhere, something or someone had been blown up.

One of the things I like about working with the Royal Marines in Plymouth is that very often there are people of all ranks coming up here, just to sit in the memorial garden, remembering.

We have memorials at different times all through the year – because we don't forget. We remember those who lost their lives and we try to reach out and support the friends and families.

Remembrance is quite hard to put into words. Certainly the key part for me is that moment's silence. The hairs on the back of my neck stand up at the Last Post and the Reveille.

At the going down and the rising again, we will remember them. The Revd Bill Gates (Royal Navy chaplain)

THE ACT OF REMEMBRANCE.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;
age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning,
we will remember them.

Let us hold a minute or two in silence.

The Last Post and Reveille, a reflection and prayer. The Revd Dawn Colley (RAF chaplain)

Those notes – bringing us to attention, bowing our heads.

Those notes – a poignant reminder of sacrifice and service.

Those notes – a reminder of the cost of war – to life, to well-being, to family, to generations.

Those notes – a reminder of the cost of the freedom, lifestyle that we enjoy today.

Those notes – a lament that people still wage war,
that people are still serving and making sacrifices – in the hope of peace.

Reveille

Those notes – raising our heads, eyes fixed on today – another day of service, more tasks to be done.

Those notes – a reminder of our chance to contribute to God's kingdom and values.

We remember those who have run the race before us, we remember to pray for God's kingdom and we remember to offer ourselves in service to God. **Amen.**

STF 517

Eternal Father, strong to save,
whose arm doth bind the restless wave,
who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep
its own appointed limits keep:

*O hear us when we cry to thee
for those in peril on the sea.*

O sacred Spirit, who didst brood
upon the chaos dark and rude,
who made its angry tumult cease,
and gavest light and life and peace:

*O hear us when we cry to thee
for those in peril on the sea.*

O Saviour, whose almighty word
the winds and waves submissive heard,
who walked upon the foaming deep,
and calm amid its rage didst sleep:

*O hear us when we cry to thee
for those in peril on the sea.*

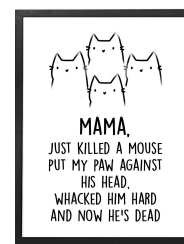
O Trinity of love and power,
shield all who sail in danger's hour;
from rock and tempest, fire and foe,
protect them wheresoe'er they go:
and ever let there rise to thee
glad hymns of praise from land and sea.

Bible Reading: Romans 8:31-35. More Than Conquerors

What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

Reflection

Recently looking for a suitable card for a feline loving friend I came across this picture and didn't we laugh at this humorous take on the pop group Queen's excerpt from their famous song Bohemian Rhapsody. When you think about it, we do make light of warfare, crime and gunfire. As children toys have often been based around guns and weapons. "Bang bang your dead!" Was and probably still is a fun game played by children and probably still by adults who indulge in the craze of pastimes such as paint balling. We love a good murder mystery whether on the television or in a good novel. There's also a plethora of computer and various consoles games - all with fighting, combat and war as their theme. This is all well and good, but it runs the risk of instilling in us the view that war and killing is somehow a game, somehow fun. I don't want to be a kill joy but today should make us really want to reevaluate what we so often don't think about. The horror's of conflict and war and the sacrifices made by so many in the cause of peace. How does our remembrance measure up to the words of faith in our biblical passage. A portion of scripture that reminds us that we are more than conquerors.....through the love of Christ Jesus.



Today it's so important to remember and recall how many young men went off to war in 1914. Sadly, as we know, they were soon to discover the reality of what war is like - dirty, dehumanising, terrifying, painful, fatal. As we look back to the years of 1914- 1918 there can be no illusions of warfare being fun. After that first world war the nation had to try to come to terms with a future without a generation of young men, decimated in the fields of Flanders and at sea. They believed that it would be the war to end all wars. One hopes that the words of our scripture were and still are a comfort to those who have faced the consequences of warfare. In my time serving in military chaplaincy I was constantly reminded that in the face of going out to fight in the

various conflicts our troops were and are engaged in. There was and is no room for atheism on the front line. God was and hopefully still is their strength and hope.

One website says that there has been an estimated 268 wars in the 20th and 21st centuries and the number of fatalities is incalculable.

The sad statistics about our world is that there are currently 56 conflicts, the most since World War II. There are also 92 countries involved in conflicts outside their borders. "Bang, bang", the children call out and their playing dead only lasts momentarily. However today we recall that for too many who served for our freedom, in two world wars and in further conflicts, far too many did not 'grow old'. Robbed of life and cut down too young, through their sacrifice in the cause of freedom and peace. Those who have come through, perhaps thought of as conquering heroes, still have the scars of the battle. Either physically or mentally. Our act of remembering is still so important and pertinent.

Let me in an effort to lighten these heavy thoughts tell you a story that is told of a monastery in Portugal, perched high on a 3,000-foot cliff and accessible only by a terrifying ride in a swaying basket. The basket is pulled with a single rope by several strong men, perspiring under the strain of the fully loaded basket. One tourist who visited the site got nervous when he noticed that the rope was old and frayed. Hoping to relieve his fear, he asked, "How often do you change the rope?" The monk in charge replied, "Whenever it breaks!" The monk's message didn't convey a deep sense of security, did it? There's another story about a group of scientists who went on an expedition into a hard-to-reach location in the Alps, searching for new varieties of flowers. One day as a botanist looked through his binoculars, he saw a beautiful, rare species growing at the bottom of a deep ravine. To reach it, someone would have to be lowered into that gorge. Noticing a local youngster standing nearby, the man asked him if he would help them get the flower. The boy was told that a rope would be tied around his waist and the men would then lower him to the floor of the canyon. Excited yet apprehensive about the adventure, the youngster peered thoughtfully into the chasm. "Wait," he said, "I'll be back," and off he dashed. When he returned, he was accompanied by an older man. Approaching the head botanist, the boy said, "I'll go over the cliff now and get the flower for you, but this man must hold onto the rope. He's my dad!" For this boy, the person holding his rope made all the difference! The fact that his dad was the one who gripped the other end gave him the security he needed to accomplish the task before him.

As we look at the reality of our need for peace in so many different countries in our world. As we recall the sacrifices of more people than we can number or name, in the cause of peace and freedom. Our bible passage today is so powerful and uplifting. It's the climax and almost a crescendo moment in Paul's letter to the Christian's in Rome. They were literally living through all the horror's that Saint Paul outlined in this moving passage. Trouble, hardship, persecution, famine and the risk of death itself by the sword?

And yet his triumphant words state, we are more than conquerors through the love of Christ Jesus and nothing can ever separate us from that love. Our Heavenly Father is holding the end of the rope and He will not let us fall. Therefore, let me ask you; Should we be nervous about the future? Should we be terrified by the threat of terrorism? Should we be anxious about our political situation? Should we be fearful about our financial circumstances? Should we be worried about a medical diagnosis? Should we be afraid for our or our children's future? Should you be apprehensive about anything at all? No! None of these things can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus! No matter what happens to us in this life, know that we are deeply loved and forever forgiven. We can embrace our security in Christ! Nothing can separate us from God's grace.

We can share this security with others, by our actions and our prayers. Our reading begins with a rhetorical question, "What, then, shall we say in response to these things?" How do we answer that question? Surely as we recall the sacrifices of those who gave their all for peace in our time. As we recall how Christ Jesus gave His all in sacrifice for our peace. Then we too must do all we can to make every effort for peace and harmony in those areas that we can influence. We see so many 'frayed ropes' around our world, even in those we meet in our own communities. The 'ropes' need changing long before people reach breaking point. We who have such a strong store of hope and riches in our faith in Christ need to listen to the call of the reveille, 'raising our heads, eyes fixed on today – another day of service, more tasks to be done.' A reminder of our chance to contribute to God's kingdom and values. We need to remember those who have run the race before us, we need to remember to pray for God's kingdom, we must pray for peace and we need to remember to offer ourselves in service to God. Our gracious Heavenly Father "who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things", thanks be to Him.

Prayers of Intercession.

Let us pray for all who suffer as a result of conflict, and ask that God may give them peace:

We pray for the Service men and women who have died in the violence of war,
each one remembered by and known to God; **May God give peace.**

We pray for those who love them in death as in life, offering our prayers for those in distress, grief and the sadness of their loss; **May God give peace.**

We pray for all members of the armed forces who are in danger this day, remembering family, friends and all who pray for their safe return; **May God give peace.**

We pray for civilian women, children and men whose lives are disfigured by war or terror, calling to mind in penitence the anger and hatreds of humanity. We pray for those in the news today. Places of conflict and warfare. We recall that many places in our world are suffering and their struggles for survival and security so easily slip away from the worlds immediate news and thoughts. **May God give peace.**

We pray for For peace-makers and peace-keepers, who seek to keep this world secure and free. For those who give themselves in so many sacrificial ways in the cause of the refugees and victims of the violence in far too many places. **May God give peace.**

We pray for all who bear the burden and privilege of leadership, political, military and religious; asking for gifts of wisdom and resolve in the search for reconciliation and peace. **May God give peace.**

O God of truth and justice, we hold before you those whose memory we cherish, and those whose names we will never know. Help us to lift our eyes above the torment of this broken world, and grant us the grace to pray for those who wish us harm. As we honour the past, may we put our faith in your future; for you are the source of life and hope, now and for ever. **Amen.**"

The Lord's Prayer:

STF 691

What shall our greeting be:
sign of our unity?

Jesus is Lord!

May we no more defend
barriers he died to end:
give me your hand, my friend -
one Church, one Lord!

What is our mission here?
He makes his purpose clear:
one world, one Lord!

Spirit of truth, descend;
all our confusions end:
give me your hand, my friend -
Jesus is Lord!

He comes to save us now:
to serve him is to know
life's true reward.
May he our lives amend,
all our betrayals end:
give me your hand, my friend -
Jesus is Lord!

The Kohima Epitaph.

"When you go home tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow we gave our today."

The act of commitment:

Let us commit ourselves to responsible living and faithful service.
Let us strive for all that makes for peace.
Let us seek to heal the wounds of war.
Let us work for a just future for all humanity.

Merciful God, we offer to you the fears in us that have not yet been cast out by love: May we accept the hope you have placed in the hearts of all people, and live lives of justice, courage and mercy; through Jesus Christ our risen Redeemer. **Amen**"

The Blessing.

God grant to the living grace, to the departed rest,
to the Church, the King, the Commonwealth and all people, unity, peace and concord,
and to us and all God's servants, life everlasting.
And the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us all
and remain with us always. **Amen**"

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