

## 13<sup>th</sup> November 2022 – Remembrance Sunday

Led by Rev Kate Whyman

### **GATHERING MUSIC Enigma variations (4'25'')**

<https://youtu.be/sUgoBb8m1eE>

### **WELCOME AND CHALICE LIGHTING**

Welcome to our Remembrance Day Service. You may have arrived here this morning, bearing the heaviness of loss in your heart or you may have arrived feeling joyful. Whatever frame of mind you find yourself in or whatever the state of your heart, please know you are welcome here. May you find solace for the next hour – here – in this sacred place, on this holy ground.

Today, throughout the United Kingdom, there will be services, tributes, minutes of silence observed, and the laying of wreaths - all in memory of the millions of lives lost in conflicts and war; and all connected by that moment 104 years ago when the guns fell silent marking the end of the First World War. Up until then, Britain had never experienced such huge troop losses. It was the unprecedented scale of these losses that changed the national attitude to the commemoration of those killed in war - that gave birth to the rituals and traditions we most commonly associate with Remembrance Day.

Soon we will be observing the 2 minutes' silence at 11am along with churches, chapels and memorials around the country, including on the Hoe here in Plymouth.

But now, as is our custom, let's light our chalice candle as a symbol of our free religious faith. *If you're at home I invite you to light a candle with me now.*

*Words by Cliff Reed:*

Out of the fires of war

let us kindle the chalice of peace.

Out of the fury of battles

Let us create a passion for peace.

Out of the turmoil of conscience

Let us weave the calm of peace.

In the one Spirit that we share  
Let us celebrate the vision of a  
World made just and free – and  
Find the strength to build it,  
a little at a time.

On this day it is traditional to read the fourth verse of Lawrence Binyon's poem 'For the fallen'.

*"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."*

**11.00 SILENCE** – 2 mins to remember all those who died in the two World Wars and all wars and conflicts since. You may wish to sit or stand in respectful silence

Then...

*In the rising of the sun and in its going down*

*We remember them.*

*In the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter*

*We remember them.*

*In the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of summer*

*We remember them.*

*In the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of autumn*

*We remember them.*

*In the beginning of the year and when it ends*

*We remember them.*

*When we are lost and sick at heart*

*We remember them.*

*When we have joys we yearn to share*

*We remember them.*

*As long as we live, they too will live;*

*for they are part of us*

*and we remember them.*

**Please be seated.**

## **PRAYER**

Divine Spirit

Today we lift up our hearts...

For all who live in suffering in the aftermath of violence

For all who give their lives in smoke and flame

For all who go on in honour of the dead

For all who have served

We lift up our hearts.

For our country and our world

For a planet that will find peace

For the young and the innocent

For the weary and war torn

We lift up our hearts

For those who would pray

For those too angry to cry

For all of us

And for the many names of God

We lift up our hearts

Shanti, shalom, peace, salaam.

Amen.

## **FIRST HYMN 151 (G) Be thou my vision**

Be thou my vision, O God of my heart;

naught be all else to me, save that thou art;

thou my best thought, by day or by night,

waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom and thou my true word,

I ever with thee and thou with me, God;

thou my soul's shelter, thou my high tower,

raise thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.

Riches I heed not, nor world's empty praise,

thou my inheritance, now and always;  
thou and thou only, first in my heart,  
sovereign of heaven, my treasure thou art.

Sovereign of heaven, my victory won,  
may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun.  
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,  
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

*Irish traditional melody, arr by David Evans; words from 'A Prayer' from 'The Poem Book of the Gael', selected and edited by Eleanor Henrietta Hull.*

**READING:** our first reading comes from Perspectives on Civil Religion by Gerald Parsons and describes how Remembrance Sunday came into being.

The ending of the First World War in November 1918 was, understandably, a moment of celebration and rejoicing. But by 1919 the pressing question arose of how best and most appropriately the war might be remembered. By the end of 1920 that question had been answered and a number of the principle elements in British rituals of remembrance had been established. In July 1919 an official victory parade was held in London. It had not originally been intended to include remembrance of the dead as part of the parade but – largely as a result of the efforts of the Prime Minister, Lloyd George, and against considerable opposition – it was agreed that a temporary and non-denominational shrine would be placed in Whitehall, on the route of the parade. It was to be called a 'Cenotaph' – literally, an 'empty tomb' – and was to represent the war dead of Britain, the Dominions and the Empire. The public response to this took the authorities by surprise. At the end of the parade, many of the public placed wreaths at the Cenotaph and, in the words of its architect, Edwin Lutyens, *....the plain fact emerged, and grew stronger by the hour, that the Cenotaph was what the people wanted, and that they wanted to have the wood and plaster original replaced by an identical memorial in lasting stone. It was a mass feeling too deep to express itself more fitly than by the piles of good fresh flowers which loving hands place at the Cenotaph day by day. Thus it was decided, by the human sentiment of millions that the Cenotaph should be as it is now'.*

**READING** George Orwell described a day when he found himself overpowered by empathy during the Spanish Civil War. He wrote:

‘At this moment a man jumped out of the trench and ran along the top of the parapet in full view. He was half-dressed and was holding up his trousers with both hands as he ran. I refrained from shooting at him. I did not shoot partly because of that detail about the trousers. I had come here to shoot at ‘Facists’; but a man holding up his trousers isn’t a ‘Fascist’, he is visibly a fellow creature, similar to yourself, and you don’t feel like shooting at him’.

### **226 (G) Song of peace**

This is my song, O God of all the nations,  
a song of peace for lands afar and mine;  
this is my home, the country where my heart is,  
here are my hopes, my dreams, my holy shrine;  
but other hearts in other lands are beating  
with hopes and dreams and true and high as mine.

My country’s skies are bluer than the ocean,  
And sunlight beams on clover leaf and pine;  
but other lands have sunlight, too, and clover,  
and skies are everywhere as blue as mine.  
O hear my song, O God of all the nations,  
a song of peace for their land and for mine.

*Music by Jean Sibelius, words by Lloyd Stone. Used by permission of The Lorenz Corporation, Dayton, Ohio*

### **REFLECTION and CANDLES**

#### **Invitation to light a candle**

I invite you to come up and light a candle in memory of someone known or unknown to you who lost their life in war or in conflict. Feel free to name them aloud or hold them silently in the confines of your heart.

*Allow time.....*

Though, in time the light of these flames will surely flicker and fade, let us not forget that the intentions with which they were lit, will never die.

### **INTERLUDE 'Da pacem Domine', Arvo Part**

<https://youtu.be/wZSUAsDRKLY>

### **ADDRESS**

Remembrance Sunday means different things to different people. It's quite possible it has raises mixed feelings in each of us. Our wonderful cloth here, covered in red, white and purple poppies, hints at the complexity of the day. After all, our feelings about war and peace, service and sacrifice, duty and conscience differ – and change. Our memories, and our relationships with those affected, may be remote and distant, or intensely personal and intimate. Plymouth being a naval city, and a city that was so very badly bombed in the Blitz, has given some of you particularly strong connections and feelings that may touch you deeply, perhaps with sorrow, perhaps with pride, perhaps with both and much more besides.

Today I don't wish to make a case for whether war is ever justified or not – you will each have our own views about that. Personally I'm not sure anyway. But today is a chance to reflect on and do our best to understand the situations that give rise to such devastating pain in the world. It is a time to mourn the tragic loss of life, the cruelty of war, and the suffering caused. And it is also an opportunity to honour and to give thanks for those who made such huge sacrifices for what they believed in, and for those who did whatever they could – both in the field and at home - to bring relief and comfort, light and even joy into the darkest places. This day is an invitation, too, to hold in our hearts those we know as well as those we'll never hear about – both people and animals who have been caught up in conflict the world over. It is hard not to be intensely moved by their stories.

In February this year war returned to Europe. I think I had become complacent, thinking war only happened in far off lands. But watching the pictures and hearing the testimonies of those fighting in - and fleeing from - Ukraine, has made war feel very close to home. The stories of torture and mass graves have been chilling, and the fears we share about where it's going and how it will end can't help but affect us. I'm sure we all hope that recent withdrawal in Kherson is a good sign, but still we can't be sure. We may feel life's fragility and our powerlessness more acutely. But we have also empathised, as George Orwell did in Spain, not only with the Ukrainians but also with the young Russian soldiers caught up in this. Might we find ourselves more able to empathise with conflicts elsewhere in the world in future – if so that would be a silver lining.

For this day is a chance, too, to reflect on the conflicts that lie in our own hearts. How might I channel my frustrations and disappointments in more positive ways, what could you do with your anger and insecurities that wouldn't hurt yourself or others, how might we better nurture our capacity for understanding and compassion? However troubling the state of the world may seem, each one of us, every day of our lives, has the possibility of bringing a little more peace, a little more light and love, right where we are, now. It may not seem much, but we should never lose sight the power of a listening ear, a kind word, a reassuring smile.

A prayer.

I'd like to close with some well-known words from the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu.

“If there is to be peace in the world,  
There must be peace in the nations.  
If there is to be peace in the nations,  
There must be peace in the cities.  
If there is to be peace in the cities,  
There must be peace between neighbours.  
If there is to be peace between neighbours,  
There must be peace in the home.  
If there is to be peace in the home,  
There must be peace in the heart.”

May it be so.

**Let's sing...**

**198 (G) The healing of the nations**

For the healing of the nations,  
God, we pray with one accord;  
for a just and equal sharing  
of the things that earth affords.  
To a life of love in action  
help us rise and pledge our word,  
help us rise and pledge our word.

Lead us ever into freedom,  
from despair your world release;  
that, redeemed from war and hatred,  
all may come and go in peace.  
Show us how through care and goodness  
fear will die and hope increase,  
fear will die and hope increase.

All that kills abundant living,  
let it from the earth depart;  
pride of status, race or schooling,  
dogmas keeping us apart.  
May our common quest for justice  
be our brief life's hallowed art,  
be our brief life's hallowed art.

*Music John Hughes, words Fred Kaan*

**CLOSING PRAYER – Universal prayer of peace**

Lead me from death to life,  
from falsehood to truth.  
Lead me from despair to hope,  
from fear to trust.



Lead me from hate to love,  
from war to peace.  
Let peace fill our heart, our world, our universe.  
Peace, peace, peace.

**BLESSING** LR Knost

Do not be dismayed by the brokenness of the world.  
All things break. And all things can be mended.  
Not with time, as they say, but with intention.  
So when you go from here - love intentionally, extravagantly, unconditionally.  
For the broken world waits in darkness for the light that is you.

And so, may the wind of the Spirit blow through our world, giving the answer of God's  
everlasting love. That when you leave this place, you go with peace and joy in your heart.  
Amen

*Extinguish chalice*

**CLOSING MUSIC** 'Peace train' Playing for change, with Yusuf/Cat Stevens

<https://youtu.be/0QpjR6-Uuks>