

Opening Music: Nimrod' from Elgar's Enigma Variations

<https://youtu.be/sUgoBb8m1eE>

Welcome:

Welcome, everyone, whether you are here in the church, joining us on Zoom, or watching the recording of this service later. And a special welcome if you are joining us for the first time. Today, like millions of people in cities, towns and villages in the UK and in many different countries around the world, we have gathered to remember and honour in our hearts **all** those killed or injured as a consequence of war and conflict. And so we gather, not puffed up with jingoistic pride, but in this 85th anniversary year of the start of the 2nd World War, with sadness, and humility, in the sincere hope that the human race will learn from the dreadful lessons of conflicts past and present, that there has to be a better way of resolving our differences, than by fighting. We will honour **all** who have died in war by observing two Minutes of Silence at 11 o'clock (by our church clock.)

Chalice Lighting: First, as is our custom, we light our chalice flame as a symbol of our free religious faith. Those at home may like to light one with us now. Words by Rev Cliff Reed:

Out of the fires of war
Let us kindle the chalice of peace.
Out of the fury of battle
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..... AMEN

It has become a tradition to quote the words of the 4th verse of Laurence Binyon's 'For the Fallen'. He wrote this poem sitting on cliffs near Polzeath in Cornwall, in September 1914, following the retreat from Mons and the victory of the Marne, only a few weeks after the start of the First World War.

"They shall not grow old as we who 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."

ALL to say, "We will remember them."

11 a.m. THE TWO MINUTES' SILENCE – ALL WHO ARE ABLE, PLEASE STAND

11.02 Thank you. Please be seated.

Some words, from The 'Kohima epitaph' written by John Maxwell Edmonds, Cambridge classicist turned wartime codebreaker.at the end of the First World War

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

1st Prayers: *A Prayer for Remembrance Day* by Marianne Griffin, 2004

For those who were killed in battle,
For those who gave up their lives to save others
For those who fought because they were forced to,
For those who died standing up for a just cause
For those who said war was wrong,
For those who tried to make the peace
For those who prayed when others had no time to pray
For those creatures and all living things who needlessly die or
are slaughtered for human use in War, and
For all of humankind let us quietly pray:

May your God, however you perceive that, hold them in peace,
May Love flow over the Earth and cleanse us all
This day and for always...*AMEN*

1st Hymn Green Book 198 '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 Kaanst

Prayer for the week's events:

Let us pause to hold in our thoughts and prayers all those in our own church community
and in the wider world, who are going through sad, difficult or worrying times, whether
through illness, or accident due to human actions or natural causes.

At this time of Remembrance, we pray especially for all whose lives were changed forever or lost, in the many wars and conflicts of the past century and a quarter. Sadly, the toll of terror and violence resulting from social and political unrest continues to rise in places throughout the world. May their leaders be blessed with compassion and the wisdom to prevent further destruction.

May those rushing to escape the violence, many of them vulnerable young families and the elderly, find sanctuary and peace. May the countries to which they flee somehow find the strength and resources to provide what is needed. We think too, of those living in USA, where people perceive changes in political leadership as threats to their well being and way of life. May their leaders current, and soon to be, govern wisely for the well being of their nation and the world beyond those shores. .

We pray too, for all who have been affected by the floods in Spain, still continuing, for those who have died, their grieving families, and all who have to deal with the messy aftermath. We pray for the future health of our home, planet Earth, amid warnings by climate experts as COP 29 begins on Monday. May it be a successful meeting. Let us remember that each one of us will be touched by sad as well as joyful events. May we be moved to offer comfort and solace to one another. May we contribute to and benefit from the resources of love and strength our church community offers, to us and within the wider community outside our doors. ...*AMEN*

I invite those of you who wish to do so, to join now in saying the prayer Jesus taught his disciples –also called ‘The Lord’s Prayer’:

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever..... *Amen.*

Story: 'The Sword of Peace' a story by Pedro Pablo Sacristán read by Ann

Once upon a time there was a precious sword. This sword belonged to a great King. For as long as anyone could remember, the King spent all his time in his palace, enjoying his tournaments and parties. One day a great dispute broke out between the King and the King of a neighbouring country. It ended with them both declaring war.

The sword was greatly excited at the prospect of taking part in its first *real* battle. It would show everyone how truly brave and special it was, and would become renowned throughout the kingdom. On the way to the front line, the sword imagined itself the winner of many battles. However, when they arrived, the first battle had already taken place, and the sword saw the results of war, and it was nothing like it had imagined. No elegant shining knights, triumphant, with their weapons gleaming in the sunlight. Instead, all the sword saw was broken weapons, and hordes of hungry and thirsty men. There was hardly any food left. Everything was covered in dirt and shrouded in a disgusting smell. Many were half dead and scattered on the ground, bleeding from their wounds...

At this, the sword realised it did not like war and real battles. The sword decided it preferred to live in peace, spending its time taking part in tournaments and competitions. So, on the night before the big final battle, the sword tried to find a way to prevent it. After a while, the sword started to vibrate. First it gave out a low buzz, which gradually became a loud, annoying, metallic noise. The swords and armour of the other soldiers asked the King's sword what it was doing. It told them "I don't want there to be a battle tomorrow. I don't like war".

One answered, "No one likes war, but what can **we** do?"

"Make yourself vibrate, like me", said the King's sword. "If we make enough noise no one will sleep."

So the weapons started to vibrate, and the noise became deafening. It was so loud that it reached the enemy camp, and the weapons there, who were equally sick of the war, joined the protest.

The next morning, when the battle should have begun, not a single soldier was ready to fight. No one had managed a wink of sleep, not even the Kings or the Generals. So they spent the whole day catching up on their sleep. In the evening they awoke, and decided to put off the battle until the next day.

However, the weapons, led by the King's sword, spent the night repeating their peace song, and again no soldier could rest. So the battle was postponed yet again, and this carried on for the next seven days. On the evening of the seventh day, the Kings of the two armies met to see what they could do. Both were furious from their previous dispute, but after being together for a while they started to discuss their sleepless nights, the surprise on their soldier's faces, the confusion of day with night, and the amusing situations all this had created. It wasn't long before both were laughing, like old friends, at these stories.

Fortunately, they forgot their old disputes and put an end to the war. Each returned to their own land with the double joy of not having had to fight, and having regained a friend. And from then on, from time to time the Kings would meet up to talk about their experiences as leaders.. They now understood that there was much more which united them than set them apart.

Readings: I am grateful to Gill and Viv who have both offered poems on the theme of Remembrance.

'The Last Post' Written by 'John', a blind WW2 veteran chosen and read by Gill

A withered flower on the battlefield lay,
Clenched in the hand of the soldier.
His sightless eyes to heavenwards gazed,
His body growing colder and colder.

Not for him the victory march,
A hero coming home.
No. What he will get is a warrior's grave
And his surname carved in stone.

But he won't be the only one.
There were thousands more like him,
Who gave their all, as soldiers do
Their pride will never dim.

But now the war is over
And all are safe and well.
The last post has been sounded,
So ringers, ring your bell

And remember them
Remember them
Remember them.

'The Inquisitive Mind of a Child_' chosen and read by Viv

Why are they selling poppies mummy?
Selling poppies in town today.

The poppies child are flowers of love
For the men who marched away.

But why have they chosen a poppy mummy?
Why not a beautiful rose?

Because my child men fought and died
In fields where the poppies grow.

But why are the poppies so red mummy?
Why are the poppies so red?

Red is the colour of blood my child
The blood our soldiers shed.

The hearts of the poppy is black mummy
Why does it have to be black?

Black my child is the symbol of grief
For the men who never came back.

But why mummy are you crying so?

Your tears are giving me pain.

My tears are my fears for you my child
For the world is FORGETTING AGAIN.

Anon

‘HELL — AS SEEN ON TV’ by Cliff Reed

‘I switched on the TV today and saw yet another country that no-one's ever heard of wracked by hatred and violence; with too many people on too little land, sunk in misery and poverty with little prospect of escape.

What little peace there is -and there is precious little - is kept, as usual, by hapless soldiers from disunited nations far away. The programme finished and I moved on, but that god-forsaken country did not. Lord, have mercy upon us all!’

2nd Hymn: Green Book 101 ‘Dear Lord and father of Mankind’

Dear Lord and father of Mankind,
Forgive our foolish ways!
Reclothe us in our rightful mind;
In purer lives thy service find,
In deeper reverence praise.

In simple trust like theirs who heard
Beside the Syrian Sea
The gracious calling of the Lord,
Let us, like them, without a word,
Rise up and follow thee.

O Sabbath rest by Galilee!
O calm of hills above!
Where Jesus knelt to share with thee
The silence of eternity
Interpreted by love!

With that deep hush subduing all
Our words and works that drown
The tender whisper of thy call,
As noiseless let thy blessing fall
A fell thy manna down.

Drop thy still dews of quietness,
Till all our strivings cease:
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of thy peace.

Music Charles Hubert Hastings Parry 1848 - 1918
Words John Greenleaf Whittier 1807 - 92

'Maybe we should remember' *Marianne Griffin 12 November 2006*

.....Maybe we ought to read the words of Chief Seattle on Remembrance Day too, and remember that the living planet itself is under attack, every living thing being linked to each other the water, the trees, the plants , whole ecosystems, habitats, animals ... and us humans who are trying to dominate Nature. All nations' God is the same except by name and we all live on the same planet. We are all brothers and sisters, but we do not understand each other's ways, and this is the problem.

"Go in Peace today. Love and be loved. The Fountain of Truth will prevail for a few hours at least today and make people wonder 'why ?' "



Time for personal prayer and reflection during the music, which is Sospiri, Op. 70, composed by Edward Elgar just before the beginning of World War I.

While composing it Elgar realised that he was writing something more intense than originally intended, and so chose an Italian word, sospiri, meaning "sighs"

This music was first performed in the Queen's Hall in London, conducted by Sir Henry Wood on 15 August 1914, just a few weeks after the outbreak of WW1.

Reflective Music: 'Sospiri' by Elgar

<https://youtu.be/7uqgv2xsw2o>



ADDRESS for Remembrance Sunday 2024

And so once again, we gather for this annual act of Remembrance. This special day was originally observed on 11 November 1919, the 1st Anniversary of the Armistice, the day 1st World War ended, to honour the huge numbers who died during it, and it continued ever since. Of course, no soldier who served in that 'Great War' – “the War to end all wars” is now alive. Harry Patch, the last surviving trench combat soldier of the First World War from any country died in 2009, aged 111. There will be very few people now living who were even babes in arms at the end of that War – they would have to be at least 106 – but someone on the bus told me of one lady aged 110 living in a residential home in Plymouth.

Remembrance Day became a tradition throughout the 1920's and 1930's. My father told me he could remember as a boy, that 11th November was always a sombre day, kept as 'Armistice Day' whatever day of the week it was, with the 2 Minutes Silence being observed very strictly, the only exception may have been that trains didn't stop, unless already at a station, for reasons of safety. Some of our more senior members may also remember this, as it continued until 1939, when the Day was moved to the Sunday nearest November 11 so as not to interfere with war efforts during World War II.

Yes, sadly, that 'War to end all war' didn't, and 21 years after it ended, another World War began. The number of people who served in the 2nd World War, my parent's generation,

inevitably becomes fewer each year, as it is now 85th years since the beginning of that war, and 80 years since D-Day landings by Allied forces, which led to its ending within a year. I'm sure many of us can remember watching the D-Day Commemorations on the TV this summer. It was so moving to see some of the old soldiers, now in their late 90's or over a hundred, taking part and being greeted by some of the French children who they liberated from Nazi occupation. Those children are now themselves elderly!

It was all a long time ago! So why is it so important to continue with annual Day of Remembrance? Although there have been no wars on the same scale as World War II, it hasn't all been peace and harmony. Uppsala University in Sweden identified over 280 distinct armed conflicts since 1946, typically between 30 and 50 each year. Nearly all were outside Europe, except for the troubles in Northern Ireland, the Bosnian War in the 1990's and the 2022 war between Ukraine and Russia, which still rumbles on. There are only 2 years since end of WW2 when not a single member of British armed forces died in military operations, 1968 and 2016, the Ministry of Defence has confirmed.

So Remembrance Sunday, on the nearest Sunday to 11 November, honours the people who have died in all wars since. The custom continues to this day, but in recent years, with the names of many young people in British Armed Forces sadly being added to war memorials throughout this land and overseas, a two Minutes Silence and stillness is being more widely observed on the 11th November, whatever day of the week it is, to give us all a chance to stop and think, and be grateful that we can.

We also remember the many who are injured but, due to the miracles of modern medicine, are increasingly surviving with horrific injuries, of the mind as well as of the body...

We think too of those of every country in which there has been, or still is, conflict. Not only those in the armed forces, but the civilians, dragged into violent situations through no choice of theirs, and whose lives are changed, and often ruined for ever, as a consequence...We see this on our TV and computer screens at every news bulletin.

The legacy of war can last many decades. Some years ago, when the building opposite (this church) was being built, when the old NAAFI was demolished, two unexploded bombs from WW2 were discovered, just before Remembrance day. I remember saying we don't what is under this church! And, we only have to think back to February this year, when a huge unexploded German World War Two bomb was discovered in a garden in Keyham, not far from where I used to rent a house. Four days of disruption followed. Hundreds of people had to be evacuated, roads were closed, rail and bus services stopped, while the bomb was transported over a mile through the streets and taken out to sea where it was safely detonated. All this disturbance caused by one 80 year old bomb! But this pales into insignificance when compared with what is happening in places where bombs are dropped and missiles shot daily into the heart of towns in war zones, reducing most buildings to heaps of rubble. There are too many war zones around the world – lets face it, one is too many. It can feel overwhelming even for us watching from afar.

What can we do? Any nation has the right to defend itself, but how far can that extend to becoming aggressive and attacking rather than sitting down and talking. Its open to debate, and each of us in this country still has right and freedom to think “is this or that situation a reason to fight or not?” Is it worth fighting for freedom or a principal? Would that it were as simple as in the story which Ann read earlier, that we could all do as the swords and weapons did and make such a noise of protest that it eventually wore down the Kings and generals, so that they sat down and talked to one another, and made peace, each thankful that they didn’t have to fight again. For those who feel like trying, we could make individual protests, write to those who have some power to make a difference, like our MP’s. Or join together in peaceful protest It is an individual choice, and only you know what feels right at any particular time. I know my father and my late partners went and did their duty, but all admitted they didn’t like war, wouldn’t have chosen to go – they were signed up - and wouldn’t wish to do it again.

In conclusion, here is an extract of a recent article by Phineas Harper writing in ‘The Guardian’. He was thinking of his grandfather, who was conscripted as a very young man to fight in 2nd World War.

“Remembrance Day should be a chance to reflect on the long shadow our militarism casts.... ...My mum experienced a very different type of Remembrance from today’s. She recalls attending Armistice Day church services with her father: very silent, very sad ceremonies, full of bereft men mourning friends who had not chosen to die. Nobody was judging the extent of other families’ pain or measuring the angles of their bows. It was a funeral, not a show.” He concluded, “This year there will again be demonstrations promoting peace planned on and around Armistice Day. I will be there wearing my white poppy. I hope it’s what my grandad would have wanted...There can be no greater tribute to those who have suffered and died in wars of the past than working to end war in the present.”

So, on this Remembrance Sunday, as we remember all those people who did not have the opportunity to grow old, let us hope a newer kinder age is on the way, heralding mutual respect and consideration of all, so that all have the chance to do so.

Final Hymn: no 226 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

Closing words: The Millenium Prayer

“Let there be respect for the earth,
Peace for its people, love in our lives,
Delight in the good, forgiveness for past wrong,
And from now on, a new start, *A M E N*”

Extinguish the Chalice

Closing Video: ‘November’ by Brandon Feitcher
<https://youtu.be/iEegHOnuPJM>