

Remembrance Sunday 9th November 2025**Opening Music:** Nimrod' from Elgar's Enigma Variations

3 mins 57 secs

<https://youtu.be/sUgoBb8m1eE>

Welcome: Welcome, everyone, whether you are here in church, joining us via Zoom, or watching the recording 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 countries around the world, we gather to remember and honour in our hearts **all** those killed or injured as a consequence of war and conflict. We gather, not puffed up with jingoistic pride, but in this 80th anniversary year of the end of the 2nd World War, with sadness, and humility. We gather 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.) but before going any further, I have some sad news: Ruth Brown phoned me last evening to say her dad, Ralph Brown, died peacefully yesterday afternoon, at the great age of 103. So I will light a candle for Ralph as well as our chalice. Words by Rev Cliff Reed

Chalice Lighting: 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.

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 from 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 Hymn ↓

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

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*

Prayer for the week's events:

Let us pause to hold in our thoughts and prayers all those in our own church community especially the family of Ralph Brown, 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 many 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, the elderly, the disabled and the sick, find sanctuary and peace. May the countries to which they flee somehow find the strength and resources to provide what is needed.

We pray too, for all who have been affected by natural disasters: Hurricane Melissa in Jamaica and other Caribbean islands, and Typhoon Kalmaegi in the Philippines and in Vietnam, 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 30 begins on Monday. May it be a successful meeting, with a helpful outcome.

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 those within the wider community outside our doors. ...*AMEN*

I invite those of you who wish to do so, to join now in saying the Universal Prayer for Peace. The words are inside the front of the hymn books, and will also appear on the screen:

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 Hearts,
Our World,
Our Universe,
Peace ... Peace ... Peace ... *A M E N*

Story: War never has a happy ending, a Remembrance Day Story *Anon*

He was very old now, but could still stand stiffly at attention before the monument. His war, the one to end all wars, now just a fading part of history. Very few could remember, first-hand, the savageness of the ordeal that sent millions of young men to their deaths. Cannon fodder, they'd called them, sent before the guns to be mown down. The cream of a generation; almost wiped out. He was haunted by the faces of the boys he'd had to order into battle, those who'd never come back. Yet one nameless ghost brought a measure of comfort to his tormented mind. As the gun signalled the eleventh hour he was mentally transported back to the fields of Flanders.

The battle raged for over two hours, with neither side gaining any advantage. Wave after wave of soldiers were dispatched from the muddy trenches and sent 'over the top'. So many had died already that he couldn't afford to lose any more before reinforcements arrived. They might give the remnants a few more days of life. There came a slight lull in the battle due to the sheer exhaustion of the men on both sides.

During this interval, a young soldier came to him, asking to be allowed to go 'over the top'. The lad couldn't have been more than nineteen. Was this extreme bravery in the face of the enemy, or was the soldier so scared he just needed to get it over with?

"Why would you want to throw your life away soldier? It's almost certain death to go out there."

"My best friend went out over an hour ago, Captain, and he hasn't returned. I know my friend must be hurt and calling for me. I must go to him, sir, I must." There were tears in the boy's eyes, as if this were the most important thing in the world to him."

"Soldier, I'm sorry, but your friend is probably dead. What purpose would it serve to let you sacrifice your life too?"

"At least I'd know I'd tried, sir, and he'd do the same thing in my shoes, I know it."

He nearly ordered the boy back to the ranks, but those words softened his heart. He remembered the awful pain he'd felt himself when his brother had died. *He'd* never had the chance to say goodbye.

"All right soldier, you can go." Despite the horror all around them, he saw a radiant smile on the boy's face, as if a great weight had been lifted from his shoulders.

"God bless you, sir," said the soldier.

It was a long time before the guns finally fell silent and each side could gather their dead and wounded. The captain remembered the young soldier. He looked through the piles of bodies. Young men. So many it seemed unreal. When he came to the makeshift hospital, he searched carefully through the casualties and soon found the soldier, alive, but severely wounded. He knelt down beside the young man and gently laid a hand on his shoulder. "I'm so sorry, son. I knew I was wrong to let you go."

"Oh no, sir. I'm glad you did and I'm glad you're here now, so I can thank you. You see sir, I found my friend. He was badly wounded, but I was able to comfort him at the end. As I held him dying in my arms, he looked me in the eyes and said: "I knew you'd come."

The young soldier faded between consciousness and oblivion for some time before he finally slipped away. The captain stayed by his side until the end, tears streaming quietly down his cheeks. Only in war could the happy endings be so terribly sad....

As the bugle sounded "Taps", the old captain envisioned once again the young soldier's face. Looking up, he could almost hear the stone monument calling out to him: "I knew you'd come."

Story: Stop weapons – start thinking

One day, after many centuries of war and the destruction and heartbreak it causes, the most peaceful inhabitants on a planet very similar to Earth, asked a very powerful Wizard to stop all wars and bloodshed.

“It is simple” he said. “I will destroy all the weapons on this planet, so nobody will be able to fight anymore.”

“That would be great!” the people exclaimed.

One wave of the magic wand and it was done

There was peace on the planet for three days, while the majority of those who were eager to fight, sought, but could not, find any weapons. When they realised those were gone forever, they made spears from young trees and started to fight again.

When the Wizard heard this bad news, he said: “Don’t worry. I will destroy all young trees, so that they can’t be used for fighting.

After two or three days of searching fruitlessly for young trees, to make spears, the warrior people started to cut down giant trees, making batons from them, and the bloodshed started again. So, the Wizard destroyed all the big trees.... When, instead, people made knives and swords from metal, the Wizard destroyed all metal on the planet. ... But people made slings and began throwing stones at each other. So, the Wizard destroyed all the stones, too.

Then the peacekeepers began to worry: all trees have disappeared; there is no metal, no stones. There will be no vegetation soon. How will we live, what will we eat now? People will die without even fighting. No, this is the wrong solution to the problem!

The Wizard became confused: “I don’t know what to do now. I could have destroyed all humanity, but, unfortunately, that is not in my power!

The peacekeepers fell into despair; *they* didn’t know what to do. And then one clever child turned to the Wizard.

“I know what you should do. Let people see and feel, how others perceive their actions. If someone hurts somebody, let him feel that same pain, and if a person brings joy to someone, let her feel that same joy. So, none will hurt another, because they will feel the pain too and want to stop.

Everyone was inspired with the enormity of this child’s thought, and the Wizard understood. He returned all he had removed: all trees, stones and metals.

Since that day, nobody on the planet tried to hurt his neighbour, because he would have to feel the same pain too. People began to help each other, because they liked the sense of joy they felt at this moment. And they began to live in harmony and joy.

Readings: Three poems**1. 'The Man He Killed'** By Thomas Hardy

Had he and I but met
By some old ancient inn,
We should have sat us down to wet
Right many a nipperkin!

But ranged as infantry,
And staring face to face,
I shot at him as he at me,
And killed him in his place.

I shot him dead because —
Because he was my foe,
Just so: my foe of course he was;
That's clear enough; although

He thought he'd 'list, perhaps,
Off-hand like — just as I —
Was out of work — had sold his traps —
No other reason why.

Yes; quaint and curious war is!
You shoot a fellow down
You'd treat if met where any bar is,
Or help to half-a-crown.

2. 'He was a Boy of just 14' by John Oswald

Joan Frost offered this short poem as a reading some years ago. Without going into gory details, it makes us question what goes on during War, and how its glorification can mislead the young.

He was a boy of just 14,
Obsessed with the victor's story,
Set out for him upon the screen,
Beating the foe, tasting the glory,
Forever it had been his dream to fight for his country and the Queen.

Once there it was soon he found,
The cold brutality all around,
With wasted bodies on the ground,
An eternity passed, and then its all over.

Thoughts slowly filtered through,
Of Mum and Dad,
Of home, and fields of clover.

What on earth was it all for?
Purgatory to serve some demon's greed.

The glory was misunderstood of war;
Books and film both sow the seed,
Damning the young to give their lives —
At best, to return with their memories.

3. Our next reading is a powerful poem written by Primo Levi, 1919 -1987, an Italian Jewish chemist, partisan, Holocaust survivor and writer.

Shema

You who live secure
Who return at evening to find
Hot food and friendly faces:
Consider whether this is a man,
Who labours in the mud
Who knows no peace
Who fights for a crust of bread
Who dies at a yes or a no.

Consider whether this is a woman,
Without hair or name
With no more strength to remember
Eyes empty and womb cold
As a frog in winter.

Consider that this has been:
I commend these words to you.
Engrave them on your hearts
When you are in your house,
when you walk on your way,
When you go to bed, when you rise.
Repeat them to your children.
Or may your house crumble,
Disease render you powerless,
Your offspring avert their faces from you.

'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
As 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 ?' "

~ Candles of Care, Concern and Remembrance ~

Anyone here is welcome to light a candle in Remembrance, thanks or in concern for loved ones, persons known or unknown, or a cause dear to their hearts.



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 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

5 mins 34 sec

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

ADDRESS for Remembrance Sunday 2025

Once again, we gather for this annual act of Remembrance for those who have served and died in war. This special day was originally called 'Armistice Day', observed on 11th November 1919, the first Anniversary of the Armistice, the day 1st World War ended. It honoured the huge numbers who died during that war. 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 is a tiny handful of people now living who were just babes in arms at the end of that War – they would have to be at least 107 now – but someone on the bus last autumn told me of one lady then aged 110 living in a residential home in Plymouth.

Remembrance Day became a tradition throughout the 1920's and 1930's. My father, who was born 100 years ago and passed a few years ago, 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 church services and the 2 Minutes of Silence being observed very strictly. Every activity stopped, the only exception being trains in mid-journey, for reasons of safety. Some of our more senior members may remember that, as it continued until 1939, when hostilities began again

Yes, sadly, that 'War to end all wars' didn't, and only 21 years after WWI ended, another World War began. I have read that at the outbreak of the conflict in 1939, the British government paused large-scale commemorations and the annual two-minute silence was no longer honoured, presumably so as not to interfere with the war efforts. If anyone can remember differently, do please tell us.

The number of people who served in the 2nd World War, my parent's generation, inevitably becomes fewer each year, as it is now 80 years since that ended. In Europe this was celebrated as 'VE Day' on May 8th 1945, and I'm sure many of us can remember watching the 80th Anniversary commemorations of that on the TV this past summer. It was so moving to see some of the old soldiers, now in their late 90's or over a hundred, taking part as well as civilians who were children then, and are themselves now elderly!

In 1945, the first Armistice Day in 6 years was observed on Sunday, 11 November, with British soldiers and civilians taking part in what must have been hugely poignant ceremonies.

From 1946, the traditional ceremony and two-minute silence was moved from 11th November to the second *Sunday* of the month, whatever the date. It became known as 'Remembrance Sunday', a formal means of honouring the fallen of *both* World Wars in a single ceremony.

In reading a little about those times, I was surprised to discover, that the Second World War officially ended as late as 2 September 1945, when the Japanese government formally surrendered on board the USS 'Missouri' in Tokyo Bay, nearly a month after the atom bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Several more Japanese generals surrendered in Singapore in September and in Malaya in October.

The aftermath of such a complex war, rather series of wars, didn't end even then, the aftermath. Conflicts rumbled on for years in many countries, including Palestine and India. Some continue to this day.

The cessation of hostilities in autumn 1945 marked not only the end of a devastating global war but also the dawn of a new era. The immense human cost, the reshaping of national borders, the rise of new superpowers, and the establishment of international organisations like the United Nations were all profound consequences of the conflict detailed in this chronology.

Autumn 1945 saw the beginning of reparations for the wrongs done during the 2 World War, with International war crimes Trial at Nuremberg, leading to some form of justice for the millions of their victims and survivors.

Throughout 1945, there were severe food shortages across the whole of Europe. In occupied Germany, the problems were so stark that Army commanders warned of a potential famine that winter. The Allies were forced to confront a humanitarian disaster that could engulf the entire continent. They arranged aid for their former enemies, in the Berlin Airlift, when food and other vital supplies were flown in to help alleviate the worst of the problems.

The future of European empires, including British Empire, would dominate postwar affairs in Asia and beyond and many countries became independent over the next few decades.

Formation of the United Nations on 24 October 1945, when the then Soviet Union ratified the United Nations Charter, bringing the total number of signatories to 29 and marking the formal establishment of the United Nations (UN). After the failure of the League of Nations in the 1930s, there was tremendous interest – and wildly varying opinions – as to exactly how the UN might prove more successful in bringing about world peace. 80 years on, the debate continues.

Prime Minister Clement Attlee presenting the Charter of the United Nations to the House of Commons said, "It is worth noting that this declaration does not start by saying "We, the Governments". It starts by saying "We, *the peoples*". This, he continued "I think is right, because it expresses the fact that this Charter is an endeavour to put into practical form the deep feelings of all the peoples, including the fighting men who have made it possible to have a Charter at all."

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. The Ministry of Defence has confirmed that in the 80 years since the end of WW2, there have been only 2 years when not a single member of British armed forces died in military operations, 1968 and 2016.

30 years ago, in 1995, with the names of many young people in British Armed Forces sadly being added to war memorials throughout this land and overseas, the silence at

11.00am on 11th November, whatever day of the week, was reintroduced, and continues to be observed alongside Remembrance Sunday every year. This gives us all a chance to stop and think, and be grateful for their sacrifices. . I happened to be in town on 11th November last year – it was a Monday - and stopped by St Andrews when I noticed a short ceremony being held in the grounds.

So both Remembrance Sunday, on the nearest Sunday to 11 November, and Remembrance Day on 11th, honour the people who have died in all wars since 1945

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 Second World War serves as a stark reminder of the catastrophic potential of unchecked aggression and the enduring importance of international cooperation in striving for lasting peace.

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 know what is under this church! There are too many war zones around the world – let's face it, one is too many. It can feel overwhelming even for us watching from afar.

So, 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. It's open to debate, and each of us in this country still has the right and freedom to think "is this or that situation a reason to fight or not?" Is it worth fighting for freedom or a principle? 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 an 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 now and in the future.

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/iEeqHOnuPJM>