A Service for Remembrance Sunday, November 8th 2026

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, 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.)

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 Green Book 198 'For 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, 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. We think especially of Tessa Hall and her family following the death of her husband Peter.

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 killed, injured in the recent train crash in Spain, for their grieving families, and all the rescue workers, and midics who had to deal with the aftermath. who have been affected by natural disasters We pray too, for the future health of our home, planet Earth, amid warnings by climate experts as COP 31 (31st United Nations Climate Change Conference) begins on Monday at the Antalya Expo Center in Türkey. 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

Story 'The Medals in the Wooden Box'

Tommy was nine years old. After school he liked to sit on the bench in the park, looking out to sea, near the War Memorial. That's where Mr. Harris always was — an old man with a kind smile, a flat cap, and a walking stick that tapped softly on the ground.

One chilly November afternoon, Mr. Harris had a small wooden box on his lap. The lid was carved with the Union Flag. When Tommy asked what was inside, Mr. Harris opened it slowly.

Inside were shiny medals, each one catching the pale autumn light. Some were gold, some silver, one was shaped like a star, and one had a ribbon striped red, white, and blue.

"These," Mr. Harris said, "are from a time long ago, when I was a young man. I wore them on my chest during parades, but they're not just metal — they're memories."

Tommy's eyes widened. "Memories of what?"

Mr. Harris told him about helping his friends during a war, about long nights in the cold, and about the joy of coming home. Some of his friends had not been so lucky and never came home. Mr Harris spoke gently, not about the battles, but about kindness; sharing food, carrying letters, and looking after each other.

Then Mr. Harris closed the box and pushed it toward Tommy.

"I want you to have these," he said.

Tommy shook his head. "But they're yours!"

"They were mine," Mr. Harris replied, "but now they can remind you, and others, that bravery isn't just about fighting. It's about caring for people, even when it's hard."

Tommy took the box carefully, feeling its weight. It wasn't heavy because of the metal—it was heavy because of the stories inside.

“Come and stand with me by the Memorial, just for a minute”, said Mr Harris. So the two of them stood there quietly, the old soldier, who had lived a long life after the war was over, and the young boy just starting his life.

That Sunday, Tommy wore one of the medals on his jacket to the Remembrance Day Service. When people asked about it, he told them about Mr. Harris, standing quietly at the Memorial, and how bravery can be quiet, gentle, and full of love.

And somewhere on the bench, Mr. Harris smiled, knowing the memories would live on.

1st Readings: **The Beatitudes – Matthew 5:2-12**
In Matthew 5:2-12, Jesus begins His Sermon on the Mount by teaching:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.
Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are you when people insult, persecute, or falsely speak evil against you because of me; rejoice, for your reward is great in heaven, as the prophets were persecuted before you.

2nd Readings: A) ‘Nefarious War’ by Li Po c.750

‘Nefarious War’ by Li Po c.750 CE
Last year we fought by the head-stream of the So-Kan,
This year we are fighting on the Tsung-ho road.
We have washed our armour in the waves of the Chiao-chi lake,
We have pastured our horses on Tien-shan's snowy slopes.
The long, long war goes on ten thousand miles from home.
Our three armies are worn and grown old.

The barbarian does man-slaughter for plowing;
On his yellow sand-plains nothing has been seen but blanched skulls and bones.
Where the Chin emperor built the walls against the Tartars,
There the defenders of Han are burning beacon fires.
The beacon fires burn and never go out.
There is no end to war!--

In the battlefield men grapple each other and die;
The horses of the vanquished utter lamentable cries to heaven,
While ravens and kites peck at human entrails,
Carry them up in their flight, and hang them on the branches of dead trees.
So, men are scattered and smeared over the desert grass,
And the generals have accomplished nothing.

Oh, nefarious war! I see why arms
Were so seldom used by the benign sovereigns

B) ‘The Dumb Soldier’ by Robert Louis Stevenson
Delphine read this at our recent Poetry group, and was going to read it here today, but sadly is in hospital recovoering from an accident. So our thanks and wishes for a speedy recovery go to Delphine. And thanks to Linda who will read it on her behalf.

When the grass was closely mown,
Walking on the lawn alone,
In the turf a hole I found
And hid a soldier underground.

Spring and daisies came apace;
Grasses hide my hiding place;
Grasses run like a green sea
O'er the lawn up to my knee.

Under grass alone he lies,
Looking up with leaden eyes,
Scarlet coat and pointed gun,
To the stars and to the sun.

When the grass is ripe like grain,
When the scythe is stoned again,
When the lawn is shaven clear,
Then my hole shall reappear.

I shall find him, never fear,
I shall find my grenadier;
But for all that's gone and come,
I shall find my soldier dumb.

He has lived, a little thing,
In the grassy woods of spring;
Done, if he could tell me true,
Just as I should like to do.

He has seen the starry hours
And the springing of the flowers;
And the fairy things that pass
In the forests of the grass.

In the silence he has heard
Talking bee and ladybird,
And the butterfly has flown
O'er him as he lay alone.

Not a word will he disclose,
Not a word of all he knows.
I must lay him on the shelf,
And make up the tale myself.

2nd Hymn: Green 101 ‘Dear Lord & Father’ 3 min 25secs

2nd Prayers: Universal Peace Prayer
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

Meditative reading:
'Maybe we should remember' by 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 and wish tree ~
Anyone here is welcome to light a candle in Remembrance of someone dear who has died this past year, or any year, or someone who died as a result of war/conflict, or in concern for loved ones, persons known or unknown, or a cause dear to their hearts.

Secondly: If you would like to put something into words, there is a basket with paper tags, which will be passed round. Take one and write your thoughts on it. At the end of the service, tie it to the little white tree on your way out to coffee. No need to put your name to it.

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Time for personal prayer and reflection with Music:

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**
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ADDRESS

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, and there are fewer each year from the Second World War – anyone who was in the forces then would be almost 100 years old. But there have been many conflicts in which this country has been involved, including the Suez crisis, 70 years ago, and more recently, in Northern Ireland, the Falklands, Iraq, Afghanistan ….

Remembrance Day became a tradition throughout the 1920's and 1930's. My father, who was born just over 100 years ago and died in 2017, 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 over 80 years since that ended.
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.

In 1946, 80 years ago, 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.

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. Since its end, there have been numerous campaigns,conflicts, wars, call them what you will. Many still rage around the world today - The end result is the same – destruction of lives, livlihoods and property, causing human misery and damaging the environment we share with other species which are innocent of such misdemeanours.

War is nothing new, of course. Li Po, the 8th Century Chinese poet wrote of its horrors in what he called ‘Nefarious war’. Ultimately, he writes, the ‘generals accomplish nothing’ and finishes his poem by observing he understands why benign rulers so seldom took up arms against others.

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 then, we don’t know what is under this church! More UXB have been discovered in other parts of Plymouth, some only a few months ago. It is only thanks to the highly trained and courageous disposal experts that there was no damage to people or property. As Mr Harris in our story which Ann read earlier said,” Bravery isn’t just about fighting. It’s about caring

for people, even when it's hard." War brings out both extremes of human behaviour – the very worst and the very best. All too often the countless small acts of compassion, and kindness don't make any headlines, remembered only by those immediately present, like the old soldier in the story. He was wise enough to acknowledge that, and for that to be passed to the next generation to carry that thought like a beacon to light the way to better times.

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 on our TV's, or i-players ... . War is becoming more hi tech too, with remotely controlled weapons having disasterous far reaching effects on those on the receiving end, and also for those operating the tech.and the weapons. As a speaker on Radio 4 said only this week, the people operating the tech watch the target areas from afar, often for weeks, getting to know the local people's routines almost as though they were their own famuly or friends, and then watching the effects on them when the weapons are used. What effects this will have on *their* mental and spiritual well being, now and in the future, is incalculable.

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? Its open to debate. Several ex- Services personnel, including my father, and both my late partners, went and did their duty. They and others I have asked more recently, all admitted they didn't like war, wouldn't have chosen to go – many were 'signed up' - and wouldn't wish to do it again. We won't find much support from veterans, as we now call them, on going to war, most regarding it as the last option.

Each one 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 principal? The right to join together in peaceful protest? .... It is an individual choice, and only you know what feels right at any particular time but wait - - - -

Until very recently, people in this country were free to make peaceful protests, but in these swiftly changing times, alas, we seem to be losing this. When people, often of retirement age, sitting peacefully in our capital city, holding a piece of cardboard protesting against genocidal actions by a state upon civilians, are arrested.

Are we to become a nation of people who do not speak out for any group of people not approved of by 'the authorities' as in Martin Niemöller's poem?

> "First they came for the Communists
> And I did not speak out
> Because I was not a Communist
> Then they came for the Socialists
> And I did not speak out
> Because I was not a Socialist
> Then they came for the trade unionists
> And I did not speak out
> Because I was not a trade unionist
> Then they came for the Jews
> And I did not speak out
> Because I was not a Jew
> Then they came for me
> And there was no one left
> To speak out for me"

It is an insult to people of our parents' and grandparents' generations that the freedom for which many laid down their lives, the freedom of thougth and conscience, the freedom to speak out on behalf of othrs, or a worthy cause, is being eroded. It is more important than ever that we hold onto these hard won rights! With rights come responsibilities, the responsibility to guard these freedoms, so that every Remembrance Day, everyone in this country is free to choose to attend a Service like the one taking place right now on the Hoe, or in a church, like St Andrew's, or in a church like ours, which values individual freedom of belief and conscience, **or** not to attend any, if that is their choice. And on any other day of the year, to excercise the right to freedom of thought and belief and peaceful protest, providing it harms no-one.

War brings out both extremes of human behaviour – the very worst and the very best. All too often the countless small acts of compassion, and kindness don't make any headlines, remembered only by those immediately present, like the old soldier in the story. He was wise enough to acknowledge that, and for that to be passed to the next generation to carry like a beacon to light the way to better times.

As we move towards the end of today's Service of Remembrance, let us carry that thought with us into every day ahead – to truly honour the memory of all who have served and those who serve now, whether in the forces, or as civilians in many other ways, all of us working towards the common good of humanity and this precious planet we all share, that there may one day, be true peace amongst all nations. *AMEN*

Final Hymn: Green no 226 'Song of peace'

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: 'Hymn for the Fallen' from 'Saving Private Ryan' **6 mins 8 secs**