

9th November 2025 – Morning Service

Remembrance Sunday

Rev Peter Bradley

Call to Worship

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. (Psalm 46: 1)

StF 117 – Sing praise to God

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| 1) Sing praise to God who reigns above,
The God of all creation,
The God of power, the God of love,
The God of our salvation;
With healing balm my soul he fills,
And every faithless murmur stills:
To God all praise and glory! | 3) The Lord is never far away,
But, through all grief distressing,
An ever-present help and stay,
Our peace, and joy, and blessing;
As with a mother's tender hand,
He leads his own, his chosen band:
To God all praise and glory! |
| 2) What God's almighty power has made
That will he ever cherish,
And will, unfailing, soon and late,
With loving-kindness nourish;
And where he rules in kingly might
There all is just and all is right:
To God all praise and glory! | 4) O you who name Christ's holy name,
Give God all praise and glory:
O you who own his power, proclaim
Aloud the wondrous story.
Cast each false idol from its throne,
The Lord is God, and he alone:
To God all praise and glory! |

Johann Jakob Shütz, Frances Elizabeth Coz & Honor Mary Thwaites © Michael Thwaites

Prayer of Adoration and Confession

God of love, you make the sun rise and the rain fall on the good and the evil alike. You show no partiality; you have no favourites. You are a stronghold for the oppressed; you do not overlook the cry of the afflicted. We worship and adore you. May we sense your healing presence on this day of remembrance; and may we know your reconciling love, now and always; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen.**

Forgive us, God of compassion, for our share in the sin of the world. Your Son our Saviour taught us that we should love our enemies. We confess that hatred and hostility have often driven out love. Your Son our Saviour taught us to love one another as he loved us. We confess that selfishness and pride have often driven out love. Forgive our failure to do good, our compromise with evil, our feeble efforts for justice and peace, and our hard, unmerciful hearts. Grant us such awareness of your limitless grace that we may be agents of your reconciling love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Act of Remembrance

Brothers and sisters, as we remember in silence before God those who died in two world wars and in various conflicts since, let us commend their souls anew to his eternal mercy; and let us pray that he would grant us grace to serve him faithfully to our life's end, to the honour and glory of his most holy name.

Two Minutes silence

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 pray:

Almighty and everlasting Lord, God of the spirits of all flesh, and lover of all whom you have made: we commend to your loving care the souls of our brothers who we have remembered before you, asking you to grant that they may rest in peace; and we most humbly pray that we may have grace to serve you

faithfully all our days, and come at last with them to the eternal joys of your heavenly kingdom: through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

StF 132 – O God our help in ages past

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| 1) O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home; | 5) The busy tribes of flesh and blood,
With all their cares and fears,
Are carried downward by the flood,
And lost in following years. |
| 2) Under the shadow of thy throne
Thy saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is thine arm alone,
And our defence is sure. | 6) Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
Bears all its sons away;
They fly forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day. |
| 3) Before the hills in order stood
Or earth received her frame,
From everlasting thou art God,
To endless years the same. | 7) 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. |
| 4) A thousand ages in thy sight
Are like an evening gone,
Short as the watch that ends the night
Before the rising sun. | |

Isaac Watts

Reading: Romans 8: 31-35, 37-39 (NIV)

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?

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

StF 706 – Longing for light

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| 1) Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
Light for the world to see. | 3) Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
Shared until all are fed. |
| Ch) <i>Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your Church gathered today.</i> | 4) Longing for shelter, many are homeless.
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others,
Walls made of living stone. |
| 2) Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has power to save us.
Make us your living voice. | 5) Many the gifts, many the people,
Many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
Making your kingdom come. |

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Reading: Luke 20: 27-38 (NIV)

Some of the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Jesus with a question. “Teacher,” they said, “Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. Now there were seven brothers. The first one married a woman and died childless. The second and then the third married her, and in the same way the seven died, leaving no children. Finally, the woman died too. Now then, at the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?”

Jesus replied, “The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are considered worthy of taking part in the age to come and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God’s children, since they are children of the resurrection. But in the account of the burning bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord ‘the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive.”

Sermon

Our God is the God of the living, not the dead, for to him all are alive. (Luke 20: 38)

This is Remembrance Sunday – a day when we struggle to find a balance between faith, national pride, the brute realities of the world and, for some, deep personal loss. For Ministers, Remembrance Sunday is something of a blessing and a nightmare. It is a day on which all our minds almost inevitably turn to deep questions of life and death. On this day we are open to reflect on issues that for much of the year we push to the back of our minds – and for precisely that reason the preacher feels their inadequacy. Well, I know that I do.

And just because it is a day that raises deep issues, there is always a danger that we will forget that this day was and is, first and foremost, about the victims of conflict – not least among whom are those who serve in the armed forces.

After the Second World War, military commanders analysing the events of the war discovered something which quite astonished them: most soldiers try to avoid killing. In fact, repeated observations suggested that up to 75% of soldiers, given the chance to fire at another human being, often didn’t take it. Not because they were cowards, certainly not that, but because they found themselves reluctant or even incapable of pulling the trigger to end the life of the human being in front of them.

Violence, even in defence of our own lives or the lives of others, comes at a cost.

The late Rev. David Lawrence wrote a small book a few years ago, in which he recounted many of his experiences during his ministry. He wrote: Many Ministers will have come across unforgettable stories of those who served in times of conflict. For me, the one above all which sticks in my mind was that of a man named Ian. In his seventies, a wonderful handyman, he was always wandering around the Church with some tool or other looking for something that needed fixing. I visited him and his wife one day, and for some reason the conversation turned to the Second World war.

I learned that Ian had served in tanks. After a while he began to tell a story of a particular day when the tank in which he was serving had come unexpectedly on an enemy tank. It was one of those situations where it came down to which crew reacted quicker, and it was the crew of Ian’s tank. They ranged their gun on the other machine and fired a shell. And then they watched as the other crew, badly wounded, made a desperate escape from the now burning tank. And the memory still haunted Ian. What was I to say? Me, whose closest experience of war was watching *Saving Private Ryan* and *The Great Escape*. What I did say

was that it was a terrible thing to have been forced to do, but the fact that he still recalled it with pain was proof that humanity and compassion were very much alive within him.

Well, the conversation moved on and Ian volunteered to go and make a cup of tea. When he had left the room, his wife turned to me with a look of astonishment. In all the years since the war her husband had never once spoken of that day and of the events that had clearly burdened his mind for more than 40 years.

To serve in the armed forces in time of conflict is to embark on a journey which few of us can even imagine – and a far longer journey than the mere miles that separate you from your loved ones. You are asked to become, in many ways, a different person. In a sense, you lay down your life from the moment you follow the call of duty. Some find that they can never quite take up that life again. Some never get the chance. Those who do return, like Ian in David Lawence's story, bear the deep wounds and scars of war. And not all of these wounds are visible.

So today, we honour those who served and serve, and regardless of our views on any particular conflict, we accept the responsibility that comes with the fact that they served and serve in our name. We pray for them and for all who are caught up in conflict.

We mourn those who are lost and grieve with families and loved ones of whatever side, and remind ourselves of Jesus' words in our text: Our God is a God of the living, not of the dead, for to him all are alive. And we join our prayers to theirs in the longing for peace and safe return, for a better way of ordering our world. That is our task, the task laid on us in the moment we accept the offer of their service, and even of their lives. We are to strive to build a world without enmity, a world where injustice and greed and glib labels do not cost people their lives. To do any less would be a betrayal too terrible to contemplate.

Jesus allowed himself to be made the perfect victim so that he might stand alongside the victims, and so that he might have the right to offer costly forgiveness to people like us, who have created a world in which there are so many victims.

And so, we commend those whose wounds are visible to us, and those whose wounds are not, to the love and forgiveness of the One who alone can give them true healing. **Amen.**

StF 707 – Make me a channel of your peace

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| 1) Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me bring your love;
Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord;
And where there's doubt, true faith in you: | 2) Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope;
Where there is darkness, only light;
And where there's sadness, ever joy: |
| Ch) <i>O Master, grant that I may never seek
So much to be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved, as to love with all my soul.</i> | 3) Make me a channel of your peace.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
In giving unto all that we receive,
And in dying that we're born to eternal life. |

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Prayers of Intercession

On this Remembrance Sunday, we remember past wars and conflicts: those who fought in them; those who lived through them; those who died in them.

Silence

We pray for the victims of past wars, remembering before you, loving God, those who died in battle, or from consequences of injury or disease, and those who mourned or still; mourn them. We remember those permanently maimed or disabled, and those psychologically scarred or disturbed. We pray for an end to the suffering of war.

Silence

We pray for the victims of current conflicts, remembering before you, loving God, children trained to hate and fight, families turned into homeless refugees, and lands laid waste and made barren. We remember those blinded and crippled and those driven insane by nightmare experiences. We pray for an end to the destructive hatred of war.

Silence

We pray for the peace of the world, remembering before you, loving God, areas where there is armed conflict, and all those who are working for peace. We remember that you have called us to strive together for the coming of your kingdom of love and peace. We pray that you will equip us for the task with the faith that knows that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ.

In the name of Jesus, Prince of Peace. **Amen.**

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.**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. **Amen.**

StF 696 – For the healing of the nations

1) For the healing of the nations,
Lord, 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.

2) Lead us forward 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.

3) All that kills abundant living,
Let it from the earth be banned;
Pride of status, race, or schooling,
Dogmas that obscure your plan.
In our common quest for justice
May we hallow life's brief span.

4) You, Creator-God, have written
Your great name on humankind;
For our growing in your likeness
Bring the life of Christ to mind;
That by our response and service
Earth its destiny may find.

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The Grace

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and evermore. **Amen.**