



Worship for Remembrance Sunday (complete text. A video version is also online)
Keep safe. Keep caring. Keep praying.

*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.*

(There will be 1 minute's silence on the video)

THE PREPARATION

Call to worship

We are glad that you could join us in this service for Remembrance Sunday. More details about the service shortly, but we begin with the traditional hymn 'O God our help in ages past'. – Singing the Faith 132.

Hymn: StF 132 – O God our help in ages past

- 1. O God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
our shelter from the stormy blast,
and our eternal home.**
- 2. Under the shadow of thy throne
thy saints have dwelt secure;
sufficient is thine arm alone,
and our defence is sure.**
- 3. Before the hills in order stood
or earth received her frame,
from everlasting thou art God,
to endless years the same.**
- 4. A thousand ages in thy sight
are like an evening gone,**

**short as the watch that ends the night
before the rising sun.**

- 5. Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
bears all its sons away;
they fly forgotten, as a dream
dies at the opening day.**
- 6. 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.**

Isaac Watts (1674–1748)

Opening Prayers

FATHER GOD, we come in the name of your Son, Jesus our Lord, who shared our living, our loving and our dying, and now is with you in eternity.

We bring before you our proud remembrances, and our anguish, for those whose lives have been taken in warfare -- on the battlefield or at home.

We pray for all whom we love who have passed from this world. Thank you for our dear memories, both those that make us weep and those that make us smile.

Bless you for the assurance of our Christian faith that your love enfolds us all, here and hereafter. May that hope burn ever brighter within us as we worship.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Let us join in the Lord's Prayer, whose words were often shared by those held in our memories.

**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**

This service for Christians of all denominations, or none, has been prepared with love by members of the South Warwickshire Methodist Circuit. The preacher is the Rev. Jemima Strain, who serves the Methodist and United Reformed church at Leamington. Passages from the Bible are read by Keith Hicks of Fenny Compton Methodist Church and Andrew Steele of Henley-in-Arden's church. The worship leader is Stafford Mortimer from the Mickleton congregation. The service has been created online and in print by Kate Tennyson

Our next hymn places alongside our memories of war our longings for peace.

Hymn: StF 698 God! As with silent hearts

**1. God! As with silent hearts we bring to mind
how hate and war diminish humankind,
we pause — and seek in worship to increase
our knowledge of the things that make for
peace.**

- 2. Hallow our will as humbly we recall
the lives of those who gave and give their
all.
We thank you, Lord, for women, children,
men
who seek to serve in love, today as then.**
- 3. Give us deep faith to comfort those who
mourn,
high hope to share with all the newly born,
strong love in our pursuit of human worth:
'lest we forget' the future of this earth.**
- 4. So, Prince of Peace, disarm our trust in
power,
teach us to coax the plant of peace to
flower.
May we, im-passioned by your living Word,
remember forward to a world restored.**

Fred Kaan (1929–2009)

Prayer of thanksgiving

WE GIVE THANKS, O God, for the many blessings
of this life:

for health and strength and all our powers of
body and mind;

for our homes and loved ones and for the
pleasure of friendship;

for our work and opportunities of service;
for the beauty and bounty of the world of
nature;

for the kindness, generosity and sympathy
shown to us by so many along life's journey.

We give special thanks for the freedoms won for
us by others:

freedom from tyranny;

from servitude;

from ignorance;

from poverty.

Give us thankful hearts, O God, for all your
goodness and help us by the way that we live to

repay some of the debt we owe; for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Prayer of confession

FATHER, if we have forgotten those who paid the ultimate sacrifice on the battlefield, please forgive us.

If we have forgotten those who in wartime cared for their families and carried on with their work, despite the privations and anxieties they endured, please forgive us.

If we fail to pursue today those things that make for peace, please forgive us.

If we are aggressive in what we say, in what we put online, or in physical acts, please forgive us.

Silence

LORD, we know you to be merciful to those who truly repent: pardon and deliver us from all our sins, confirm and strengthen us in all goodness, and keep us in life eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

In our prayers we have been speaking to God.

What does he want to say to us?

Let us listen for him in the Scripture readings and the sermon. In between will be a hymn of reflection.

Psalms 46 (NRSVA)

God's Defence of His City and People

¹God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.

²Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;

³though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

Selah

⁴There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,

the holy habitation of the Most High.

⁵God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;

God will help it when the morning dawns.

⁶The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter;

he utters his voice, the earth melts.

⁷The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Selah

⁸Come, behold the works of the Lord;
see what desolations he has brought on the earth.

⁹He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.

¹⁰'Be still, and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth.'

¹¹The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Selah

Revelation 22:1-5 (NRSVA)

The River of Life

¹Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ²through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship

him; ⁴they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign for ever and ever.

Matthew 5:43-48 (NRSVA)

Love for Enemies

⁴³'You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy." ⁴⁴But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. ⁴⁶For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax-collectors do the same? ⁴⁷And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Hymn: StF 468 – I was on your mind

- 1. I was on your mind
long before you formed the earth.
By your grace you gave me life;
I was on your mind.**
- 2. Take me by the hand,
lead me down your paths of truth.
Mark my ways with peace and love;
I am on your mind.**
- 3. You know all my thoughts and ways,
show me more of yours.
All I am is all I have,
in this gift of life.**

Mick Dalton

Sermon

November often feels like the month of remembering. Taking time to remember the past so it can inform the present and the future. Remembering the sacrifice that others have made for us. Remembering the causalities of war and praying for peace in a world that continually has conflict.

The River of Life

During Sabbatical this year I had the opportunity to join in one of our country's newest obsessions- Open Water Swimming. Most of us have enjoyed the thrill of an energising dip in the sea. Well, here in the midlands we aren't blessed with being close to the coast. But we are, however, surrounded by rivers and lakes.

I've decided there are two types of people who open water swim. Those who purchase a wet suit and train for a triathlon or an open water swimming event. And those who like to go for a swimble (swim + amble). You may have guessed; I fall into the latter group. But it's not just the spectacular views and connecting to nature, it's now proven to boost your immune system, enhance your happiness and a variety of other health benefits of being in cold water.

So far, I have had a dip in 4 places across the area that our circuit covers: The Old Bathing Place in Stratford; the river Avon close to Warwick Castle; Compton Verney's lake and the Avon at Guys Cliff just downstream from the Saxon Mill.

During a 5-day silent retreat I also reflected on some of the water passages found in the bible. So, as I read this passage from Revelation 22 it reminded me of the words of Jesus meeting the woman at the well

John 4: ¹³Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

Then into context:

Revelation: ¹Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ²down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.’

The main difference between rivers and lakes in the summer is the temperature of the water. But there was also a visible difference noticing the clarity of the water. You can often see through the water in the river and sometimes right the way down to the river floor. Whereas you can't see your hand stretched out in front of you when swimming in a lake. One rule of open water swimming is, if there is living growing plantation and animals, it's one of the signs that the water is safe and clean enough to swim. (It's not hard to work out my fury towards a recent vote that allows water companies to allow sewage into our beautiful rivers and seas).

So, reading the imagery of the river of water of life, as clear as crystal and the tree of life that grows close by for the healing of the nations. Healing and restoring the whole of creation. How still urgent and vital is this message of peace in our world. Even though we take time to remember and come together in silence, I'm not so sure we have learnt from our mistakes of the

past. There has never yet been a time that we have learnt to live with peace on earth.

In our Gospel reading for today Jesus calls us to love our enemy. This passage comes in the context of the sermon on the mount. And just before Jesus has been talking about turning the other cheek and going an extra mile. It's almost like he is saying 'you have treated people right on the outside, good, now let's go deeper'.

I struggle each time I read or hear this passage. It reminds me of my failings and how many times I struggle to love those whom I love, to say nothing of the struggle I have in loving those who have hurt me or avenged me. It's certainly easier to love those whom I love and that can even be a struggle at times. But God calls us to love our enemy.

Jesus quotes from the Jewish Torah in Leviticus where it has said 'Love your neighbour', But Jesus has just changed the parameters of what that means.

Showing us that God's deepest nature is overflowing love.

God calls us to no vengeance at all, but reflecting the astonishing patient love of God.

What would it mean to reflect God's generous love despite the pressure and provocation, despite your own anger, hurts and frustrations?

Jesus opened up a new way of being human, so that those who follow him might discover it.

Love your enemy. Recognise their humanity. Love your opponent. Love those who stand across the other side of the political or religious divide. Love those who interpret the bible differently to you.

On our remembrance service we remember that war is terrible and never an end in itself, but always as a last resort to try to establish peace.

It makes a difference when we see our commonality as one. Standing together as humans.

God heals. He heals both individuals and nations. God heals through prayer, compassion, listening, trust, friendship, touch and tears. God heals through love. And ultimately wants to restore our broken world and he starts with us as individuals offering us love and forgiveness.

As we remember the sacrifice of war, we pray for peace.

We remember the sacrifice of Jesus; may we know the love and peace that he brings and the gift he offers each of us in living water. And may we offer that gift of living water to all those whom we meet. Amen.

Hymn: Amazing Love (Graham Kendrick)

**My Lord what love is this
That pays so dearly?
That I, the guilty one
May go free**

**Amazing love, oh what sacrifice
The Son of God given for me
My debt He pays and my death He dies
That I might live
That I might live**

**And so they watched Him die
Despised, rejected
But oh, the blood He shed
Flowed for me**

**Amazing love, oh what sacrifice
The Son of God given for me
My debt He pays and my death He dies
That I might live**

**That I might live
That I might live
That I might live**

**And now this love of Christ
Shall flow like rivers
Come wash your guilt away,
Live again**

**Amazing love, oh what sacrifice
The Son of God given for me
My debt He pays and my death He dies
That I might live
That I might live
That I might live!**

Graham Kendrick (b1950)

THE RESPONSE

Prayers of intercession

Lord Jesus, in the power of your Holy Spirit lead all your people forward, from remembrance of things past to a vision of the future.

Bless those who work for peace between nations.

May their voices be heard in public assemblies and their painstaking work behind closed doors bear fruit.

Strengthen the resolve of all who in their houses of prayer have glimpsed your Father's love and now work for peace between communities of faith.

May the pursuit of holiness always be humane, and the holiness of humanity never forgotten.

Give power to those who call on us to make peace with the natural world.

Our earnest plea is that the targets of COP26 be turned into early realities.

Save us from the brutal selfishness that pollutes and destroys your Father's beautiful creation.

Bless especially our young people, whose clear

vision and uncompromising values offer hope for the planet.

We pray in your name, for you are the Prince of Peace.

Amen

THE DISMISSAL

The Offering & prayer

Our worship ends with a dedication of our monetary gifts, a blessing, and a hymn that celebrates the joy that is known now by those in heaven and to which we journey as pilgrims here below.

LORD JESUS, give us a generous spirit,
and may our gifts this past week
to charities, to the Church and to the community
go where we cannot go
to demonstrate your love in word and deed.

Amen

Prayer & blessing

The Lord bless us and keep us; the Lord lift up his countenance upon us and give us peace; the Lord make his face to shine upon us and be gracious unto us.

Amen. Amen.

Hymn: StF 747 – Give me the wings of faith

- 1. Give me the wings of faith to rise
within the veil, and see
the saints above, how great their joys,
how bright their glories be.**
- 2. Once they were mourners here below,
and poured out sighs and tears;
they wrestled hard, as we do now,
with sins and doubts and fears.**
- 3. I ask them whence their victory came;
they, with united breath,**

**ascribe their conquest to the Lamb,
their triumph to his death.**

- 4. They marked the footsteps that he trod;
his zeal inspired their breast;
and, following their incarnate God,
possess the promised rest.**
- 5. Our glorious Leader claims our praise
for his own pattern given;
while the long cloud of witnesses
show the same path to heaven.**

Isaac Watts (1674–1748)

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StF 698 God! As with silent hearts

Fred Kaan (1929–2009)

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StF 468 – I was on your mind

Mick Dalton

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Amazing Love

Graham Kendrick (b1950)

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Isaac Watts (1674–1748)

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