

10th November 2024 – Morning Service

Remembrance

Rev Alan Combes

Introduction

Remembrance Sunday is a special day set aside to remember all those men and women who were killed during the two World Wars and other conflicts. Special services are held at war memorials and churches all over Britain and the national ceremony takes place at the Cenotaph in Whitehall, London.

Throughout the world the poppy is associated with the remembrance of those who died in order that we may be free, but how many of us are aware of the reason why the poppy became the symbol of remembrance?

Flanders in Belgium saw the most concentrated and bloodiest fighting of the First World War and there was complete devastation - buildings, roads trees and natural life simply disappeared. Where once there were homes and farms there was now a sea of mud - a grave for the dead where men still lived and fought. Only one other living thing survived - the poppy flowering each year with the coming of the warm weather, which brought life, hope, colour and reassurance to those still fighting. That is why we are wearing poppies and why poppy wreaths are laid each year on this Memorial day.

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; | 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

Opening Prayers of Confession

God who is peace, we stand by, allowing our governments to proclaim war. God who is peace, we buy food produced by exploited labour, goods crafted by children, financial products profiting from arms sales and environmental destruction. God who is peace, forgive us for our silence and complicity, for our living as part of an unjust system. God of the Cross of Christ – we are sorry for our passion for power and for war. Grant us forgiveness in his name. May we know that gift of grace through faith and may our response be to seek justice and become peacemakers. **Amen.**

Reading: Isaiah 52:7

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, Your God reigns.

Gathering & Remembering

The Royal British Legion asks communities across Britain to come together, join together and remember together the service and sacrifice, friendship and collaboration of the men and women of Britain, the Commonwealth and Allied nations who have fought together. The collaboration of Britain with our Commonwealth friends and Allied nations in both world wars and since, continues to shape our society today. Many communities, whose ancestors served side by side, now live side by side in a multicultural Britain.

God is our refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble. Psalm 46.1

I lift up my eyes to the hills – from whence will my help come? My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth. Psalm 121.1-2

We meet in the presence of God. We commit ourselves to work in penitence and faith for reconciliation between the nations, that all people may, together, live in freedom, justice and peace. We pray for all who in bereavement, disability and pain continue to suffer the consequences of fighting and terror. We remember with thanksgiving and sorrow those whose lives, in world wars and conflicts past and present, have been given and taken away.

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. **We will remember them.**

[2 minutes Silence]

Jesus says: Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. John 14:27

Ever-living God, we remember those whom you have gathered from the storm of war into the peace of your presence; may that same peace calm our fears, bring justice to all peoples and establish harmony among the nations, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

StF 51 – Great is thy faithfulness

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1) Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father
There is no shadow of turning with thee
Thou changest not, thy compassions
they fail not;
As thou hast been thou for ever wilt be: | 2) Summer and winter, and springtime
and harvest,
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To thy great faithfulness, mercy and love: |
| Ch) <i>Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness
Morning by morning new mercies I see
All I have needed thy hand hath provided
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me.</i> | 3) Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope
for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside! |

Thomas O Chisholm

Reading: Matthew 5:1–12

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will 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 revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

Reflection – Voices from Hiroshima and Nagasaki (1945)

When the bombs exploded, heat, light, gamma radiation and pressure were all released, burning many people beyond recognition and simply obliterating others. Hundreds received mass cremation and others died unrecorded after fleeing to the country and mountains.

The word 'Hibakusha' is the Japanese term for the victims of these bombings. These stories tell something of the horror of the moment and the prolonged suffering caused. Other stories are just too horrific to share...

*It was a very hot morning on 6th August. The sun was shining brightly, I was polishing a pair of sunglasses. Suddenly there was a flash – a blazing light – that turned the sky into a furnace. For a moment I could not open my eyes. Then I grabbed my helmet and ran to the window, thinking that it was a small bomb. I looked out and saw a boy die before my eyes. At first I thought the bomb had only hit our plant. Then the blast pushed me back into the room which began to cave in on top of me ... I crawled out from under the rubble to try and help others. But there were very few who could be helped. About 1,500 of the workers were already dead, another 500 would die the next day. Within an hour there were between 10,000 and 30,000 charred bodies floating in the river. **Masanori Sadanaga – abridged***

*On August 9th Mikiko Yamada, then a 16-year-old student nurse, was on her way home to Isahaya, 30 kilometres west of Nagasaki city. She went to Nagasaki and stayed for a week, helping the injured and removing corpses, at a distance of 2.5 kilometres from the epicentre. Speaking of her memories she says, "no words can describe the terrible sight of the dead and injured". While engaged in first-aid activities she began to develop acute illness which was followed over the years by the onset of more than ten complex diseases that spread all over her body. Later she married and suffered eight miscarriages before being able to bear a son. She says, "I want everybody to understand that many Hibakusha are still suffering in this way, simply from the secondary radiation of the ravaged city. **Hibakusha, edited and published by the Japanese Confederation of A and H -bomb Sufferers Organizations***

*To remember the past is to commit oneself to the future. To remember Hiroshima is to abhor nuclear war. To remember Hiroshima is to commit oneself to peace. Let us promise our fellow human beings that we will work untiringly for disarmament and the banishment of all nuclear weapons; let us replace violence and hate with confidence and caring. Peace must always be the aim; peace pursued and protected in all circumstances. Let us embark upon the steep and difficult path of peace. **Pope John Paul II***

Prayers of Intercession

Let us pray for all who suffer as a result of conflict, and ask that God may give us peace:

For service men and women who have died in the violence of war, each one remembered by and known to God; May God give peace; **God give peace**

For those who love them in death as in life, offering the distress of our grief and the sadness of our loss; May God give peace; **God give peace**

For all members of the armed forces who are in danger this day, remembering family, friends and all who pray for their safe return; May God give peace; **God give peace**

For civilian women, children and men whose lives are disfigured by war or terror, calling to mind in penitence the anger and hatreds of humanity; May God give peace; **God give peace**

For peace-makers and peace-keepers, who seek to keep this world secure and free; May God give peace; **God give peace**

For all who bear the burden and privilege of leadership, political, military and religious; asking for gifts of wisdom and resolve in the search for reconciliation and peace. May God give peace; **God give peace**

O God of truth and justice, we hold before you those whose memory we cherish, and those whose names we will never know. Help us to lift our eyes above the torment of this broken world, and grant us the grace to pray for those who wish us harm. As we honour the past, may we put our faith in your future; for you are the source of life and hope, now and for ever. **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.**

The Kohima Epitaph

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

Act of Commitment

Let us commit ourselves to responsible living and faithful service.

Will you strive for all that makes for peace? **We will**

Will you seek to heal the wounds of war? **We will**

Will you work for a just future for all humanity? **We will**

Merciful God, we offer to you the fears in us that have not yet been cast out by love: May we accept the hope you have placed in the hearts of all people, and live lives of justice, courage and mercy; through Jesus Christ our risen Redeemer. **Amen**

StF 681 – Community of Christ

- 1) Community of Christ,
Who make the Cross your own,
Live out your creed and risk your life
For God alone:
The God who wears your face,
To whom all worlds belong,
Whose children are of every race
And every song.
- 2) Community of Christ,
Look past the Church's door
And see the refugee, the hungry,
And the poor.
Take hands with the oppressed,
The jobless in your street,
Take towel and water, that you wash
Your neighbour's feet.
- 3) Community of Christ,
Through whom the word must sound -
Cry out for justice and for peace
The whole world round:
Disarm the powers that war
And all that can destroy,
Turn bombs to bread, and tears of anguish
Into joy.
- 4) When menace melts away,
So shall God's will be done,
The climate of the world be peace
And Christ its Sun;
Our currency be love
And kindness our law,
Our food and faith be shared as one
For evermore.

Shirley Erena Murray © 1992 Hope Publishing Company

CCL No. 515642

Blessing

God grant to the living grace, to the departed rest, to the Church, the King, the Commonwealth and all people, unity, peace and concord, and to us and all God's servants, life everlasting.
And the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you all and remain with you always.
Amen