



AT HOME SERVICE

Sunday 9th November 2025

Remembrance Sunday

compiled by Melvyn Cooke

Call to Worship

On a day like no other, we come not only to church,
but to stand before the God of peace, and make our peace.

We come, not singly or in twos or threes, but with all who remember, to make a contrite act of human solidarity.

We are intent that this day should not pass without a deepening pause, and we take time for reflection on the causes, horrors and enduring chaos and suffering of war.

And we will not leave this place until our minds have considered what we might do to edge out discord, prejudice, and dismay, and to allow love, hope and kindness to flourish in every barren, sterile place.

So, contritely, soberly, but emboldened by the gift of hope, let us worship God.

Hymn

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 defense 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 guide while troubles last, and our eternal home!

Isacc Watts (1674-1748)

Prayer

Loving Father, I come to you as I am.

I don't come perfectly. I bring all that I am, including those areas of darkness that I see in myself.

I bring my heart, beating with love for those I cherish but so easily closed to those who are different.

I bring my suspicion of people who represent the unknown.

I bring my tendency to cling to certainty over curiosity.

I bring the walls that I put up between me and my neighbour.

I bring the closed fortress that I construct around my heart.

Reduce it to rubble, Lord. Tear those walls down.

Help me to lean into curiosity, rather than withdraw into certainty.
Help me to love my neighbour, whatever their race, gender, age, nationality, social status, sexual orientation, religion, and all those things that cause me to judge another person before I even know them.
Give me the grace and courage to accept the differences I see in people and love them in your name.
I ask that you shine your light in my heart, and obliterate the darkness. Amen

Reading: 1 Corinthians 13

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Poem for Remembrance

Church bells ring out, our heads are bowed,
Soft rain provides a gentle shroud;
Familiar words sound crisp and clear,
And all the people gathered here
Respond with their remembrance,

In spoken, solemn reverence...
So many names engraved in stone,
Yet, scanning them, I feel alone,
Silent among the shuffling crowd,
Grief stricken, but immensely proud of such brave men, who, freed from pain
In Heaven's light, we'll meet again...

Stephen Pearson

Reflection by Ailsa Whorton Chaplain to the Forces (Army)

My work is with the British Army and the beginning of the year saw the regiment deployed to Canada, Texas and Kuwait. Many are currently serving a long tour of duty in Poland. Others have and will be dispersed to other places across the world; some of course will have remained at home on camp. Army life is difficult, and the pace of change is relentless not only for soldiers and officers but also for their families.

I'm conscious now of changing seasons. A warm and mild winter drove into a cooler, wet spring and then summer with ever-changing weather which often makes boundaries between the seasons blurred, and undefined. But autumn, I think is different. It's slower. It gets darker slowly in the evenings, the air cools over time and the colours change around us at an easy pace from green to rich reds, golds and copper. It's a beautiful time of year

At this time of the year, we both turn the clocks back an hour and, on this day, recall the sacrifice of so many. We might like to think ‘if only we could turn back the clock of time’, but we cannot turn the clock back. But we can remember. Because all too often it is too easy to forget the price of peace. Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday give us time to stop, to remember. We stop the clock. Not literally. But for two minutes in the year, we are given the opportunity to reflect. To be still and remember the significant loss of life that conflict and war have caused. We come together as a nation to give thanks, and the silence gathers us into a shared emotion which for those who have lost loved ones, is almost unbearable. And it is those we loved and all those lost that we remember today.

There is a time for everything we are told in Ecclesiastes, including a time to kill, a time for war and a time for peace. We know that sadly to secure that peace, there sometimes must be conflict, and that comes with terrible consequences. But the passage also mentions a time to love. Love, a beautiful sound, just the four letters, but such a powerful word. And no matter what you believe, we know as human beings, that love endures as Paul writes in his letter to the Corinthians. Throughout all eternity love will never end, love reigns supreme, and the greatest is love. Unlike a poppy which will fall to the ground, wither, and decay, God’s love for us and our love for all those we remember today will not fall, wither or decay. Love will endure. The two minutes of silence we observe is barely enough time for the chatter of our minds to settle, but all the same, as we sit or stand together, we have an invitation to find space in the busyness of our own lives, for a silent opening to all that war has meant for our country and for those who have died fighting for it. As we join in that collective silence, what we do is stop our own clocks and become quiet just for a moment to bear witness to what happened. We don’t need to figure it out or think about how it can be put right, but I know that compassion will emerge, and along with this, God’s love for us all.

Prayers

Come, Holy Spirit. As I open my hands to you, I also open my heart to you. And in this posture of openness, I confess.

I confess taking peace for granted.

Pause.

I confess retreating to the comfort of passivity.

Pause.

I confess seeing images of rockets and rubble and carrying on like it was normal.

Pause.

I confess the times when I have witnessed conflict in my own life and done nothing.

Pause.

I confess choosing despair, escalation or indifference over peace.

Pause.

I confess running away from reconciliation because it seemed too hard.

Pause.

I confess leaving the peacemaking to others.

Pause.

I confess only seeing the world as it is, not as it could be.

Pause.

I confess not leaving space for you, Prince of Peace, in my life.

Pause.

Come, Holy Spirit. I am weak and I need you. Amen

Hymn

1] Peace in our time, O Lord,
To all the peoples - peace!
Peace surely based upon thy will
And built in righteousness.
Thy power alone can break
The fetters that enchain
The sorely stricken soul of life,
And make it live again.

2] Too long mistrust and fear
Have held our souls in thrall;
Sweep through the earth, keen Breath of Heaven,
And sound a nobler call!
Come, as thou didst of old,
In love so great that men
Shall cast aside all other gods
And turn to thee again.

3] O shall we never learn
The truth all time has taught,
That without God as architect
Our building comes to naught?
Lord, help us, and inspire
Our hearts and lives that we
May build, with all thy wondrous gifts,
A Kingdom meet for thee.

4] Peace in our time, O Lord,
To all the peoples-peace!
Peace that shall build a glad new world,
And make for life's increase.
O, living Christ, who still
Dost all our burdens share,
Come now and dwell within the hearts
Of all men everywhere.

John Oxenham (1852-1941)

Blessing

May the warmth of Christ heal you,
The eyes of Christ gaze on you,
And the peace of Christ shine through you
Today and evermore.

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