

HOW MC &KSAT Worship Service for Remembrance Sunday

8th November 2020

THEME – ‘Peace I leave with you’

Welcome – We shall remember them!

Call to worship – *‘Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.’*

Introduction – Today, we gather to worship God and to remember those who have lived and died as they sought to serve others. On this Remembrance Sunday 2020 – we give thanks for God’s grace in Jesus, as we pray for all who still suffer as a result of conflict and all who seek to bring peace and justice to the world, in Jesus’ name.

Prayer – Almighty and eternal God, from whose love in Christ we cannot be parted, either by death or life: hear our prayers and thanksgivings for all whom we remember this day; fulfil in them the purpose of Your love; and bring us all, with them, to Your eternal joy; through Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Hymn MP 498 – O God, our help in ages past

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZjdmLstpNGE>

O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home.

(Under the shadow of Thy throne, Thy saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is Thine arm alone, and our defence is sure.)

Before the hills in order stood, or earth received her frame,
From everlasting Thou art God, to endless years the same.

A thousand ages in Thy sight are like an evening gone;
Short as the watch that ends the night before the rising sun.

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

O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,
Be Thou our guard while troubles last, and our eternal home.

Prayer of Adoration

Incomparable God, Father of each one of us, we praise and adore You. Your love is unending, Your mercy limitless, Your power infinite, Your grace unbounded. You alone give life its full and true direction; You bring good out of evil, life out of despair. On this Remembrance Sunday, we praise You for the hope of new beginnings in Christ Jesus. Faithful, gracious Father, this day, we offer You our praise, adoration and love. Almighty God, we worship You with reverent, humble and thankful hearts; in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Prayer of Confession

Father, our own human history condemns us, making plain our sinfulness. We are unable to live together in harmony and love; our self-assertion, greed, ignorance and prejudice ensure that peace is short-lived. We let pride and patriotism blind and deafen us, while justice and mercy go unheeded. We abuse Your gift of knowledge: we do not always use our technology for good, sometimes choosing destructive and inhuman courses instead.

Even within Your Church, we have failed to live out the Gospel of peace, failed to show people their true worth, failed by our unfaithfulness in praying for the world, failed by accepting injustice and so increasing tension.

Father, we need Your forgiveness. Despite the immensity of our sin, set us free from it; and may the knowledge of Your constant forgiving grace result in our striving for peace and for Your kingdom; and actively seeking the good of all.

Jesus says ‘Your sins are forgiven in my Name. Go, in My strength and with my Spirit, and sin no more’. We ask these prayers for Christ’s sake **Amen.**

Lord’s Prayer

Reading – John 15 v 9-13

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

Reflection – Remembrance Day services will be very different this year. The usual crowds, which seem to grow each year, will not be present – a sobering reminder that even 75 years after the end of World War II and over 100 years from the final days of World War I, armed conflict still robs the lives of many brave young service personnel.

As someone who is fortunate enough never to have directly experienced war, I always feel incredibly underqualified to comment on these issues. Except, I can offer the hope of the Christian story – a story, in which Jesus told His followers that the greatest love of all is to give your life for another. Jesus chose to lay down His own life, out of unending love for the world. God, as parent, went through the cruel and brutal loss of a cherished, young son, so unjustly sacrificed because of the cruelty, which humanity is still capable of today.

At its heart, the Christian message is a story of hope. Not only do we have a God who walks with us in the darkest of times, a God who feels and experiences our grief and pain personally, but also we have a God who, in Jesus, lives out the story of victory over evil. Jesus' death was not the end, but the promise of a glorious new beginning for the world.

In November 1918, after the carnage of battle had ceased, there was an interval and then poppies began to grow on Flanders fields. Each year, in our Remembrance Services, there is the finality of the Last Post, followed by the interval of two minutes of national silence – and then comes the herald of a new beginning as Reveille is sounded.

The Christian message of hope bears much similarity to these patterns. After the cruelty of the cross, there was a pause – and then on the third day, Jesus rose again. And in that hope, may we never forget the sacrifice of those who gave (and are still giving) their lives to bring about the promise of a better tomorrow for us all.

By stopping and remembering, may we continue to bear witness to that hope in Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord.

'In Flanders Fields' by John McCrae

*In Flanders fields the poppies blow, between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky the larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are the Dead. Short days ago we lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie, in Flanders fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe: to you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high. if ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow in Flanders fields.*

Hymn MP 515 – O love that wilt not let me

go <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nt69WDtYNLo>

O Love that will not let me go, I rest my weary soul in Thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe, that in Thine ocean depths its flow, may richer, fuller be.

O light that followest all my way, I yield my flickering torch to Thee;
My heart restores its borrowed ray, that in Thy sunshine's blaze its day may brighter, fairer be.

O Joy that seekest me through pain, I cannot close my heart to Thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain, and feel the promise is not vain, that morn shall tearless be.

O Cross that liftest up my head, I dare not ask to fly from Thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead, and from the ground there blossoms red life that shall endless be.

Prayer

Let us recall before God, those who have given their lives in the cause of freedom and in the service of others, especially those who are known to us.

(Silence)

They shall not grow 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.

Bugle – The Last Post <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2weDBIOTqmo>

(pause after Last Post at 1.22)

Silence for 2 minutes

Bugle – Reveille <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2weDBIOTqmo>

(start at 1.23)

Prayer – Kohima

“When You Go Home, Tell Them Of Us And Say, For Your Tomorrow, We Gave Our Today.”

Heavenly Father, on this Remembrance Sunday, we remember and pay tribute to all those who have given their lives that we might live in peace – wherever they served, they were our loved ones, our friends and our comrades. Heavenly Father, their courage never failed, and we ask Your blessing on all, in the name of Him whose courage never failed, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Almighty God, from whose love in Christ we cannot be parted, either by death or life; hear our prayers and thanksgivings for all who remember this day; fulfil in them the purpose of Your love; and bring us all, with them, to Your eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Hymn MP 456 – Make me a

channel https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=share&v=mT8bybL_DqY&app=desktop

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.

*Oh, 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.*

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.

Make me a channel of Your peace; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned
In giving to all men that we receive and in dying that we're born to eternal life.

Reading – John 14 v 15-27

If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever – the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.”

Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, “But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?”

Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

Sermon

Text: “Peace I leave with you!” (John 14v27)

How the world longs for peace – peace between nations, peace within nations, peace in friendships and fellowships, peace in our families, peace in our lives. Peace with God! However, peace comes at a price – the poppy, symbol of remembrance, reminds us of the costliness of peace – in human lives, but more in the life and death of Jesus – the red reminding us of His shed blood and the black heart of our own sinfulness. He was sacrificed to save us all! There are so many rich and poignant parallels with the soldiers and the innocent of the World Wars (and other conflicts) – the selfless sacrifices, the PALS volunteer regiments, the friends who fought together and fell together, their blood spilt on the battlefields such as Passchendaele and the Somme. The poppy symbol was chosen after 17-year old Private Cecil Roughton, picked one and pressed it in the pages of his army pocket book – it has become an symbol of hope –just as the Cross of Jesus symbolises **eternal hope, life and peace** for all. One correspondent wrote (after the conflict ceased), ‘It was as though a poppy flower had bloomed for every soldier who had fallen!’ Sadly, the deaths didn’t end there and conflicts continue to this day and people across the world are still suffering.

On this Remembrance Day, we Remember, we make our Response, and look to the Resurrection – the ‘3Rs’!

On this day we Remember – those who have died in conflicts, but also the death of Jesus Christ, God’s Son given for the world. We remember that it was love for us, which held Jesus to that cross. *‘For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes might have eternal life’ (John 3v16).*

Our Redeemer was rejected and ridiculed (more Rs!); He cried out, ‘Father, forgive them’ and God remembers, forgives us and offers us His peace. Hallelujah – what a Saviour!

So we remember – remember His love and give thanks to God – for without His death, no other would matter! As we remember, we are then called to serve Christ and to share that love, forgiveness and peace with others.

So what about our Response? On Remembrance Sunday, our armed forces may be on parade or on active service. Their military life marked out by training, preparation, obedience – with often long periods of waiting leading to intense moments of action, with the aim of bringing peace to area of conflict. Someone once said, ‘You need patience as a soldier – 95% waiting and 5% action!’ But that responding to the call-up and the preparation is all important. An army unit that arrives at the front, dressed as soldiers, but untrained and unprepared, will not be effective. Our relationship with God can’t be bought or borrowed – we need to respond to Him daily in prayer and study of His Word, if we are to become His witnesses and His peace-makers in this world. Christ’s message of peace is in our hands. How will we respond to His call?

After Jesus’ death came the Resurrection. Christians have a hope – a promised and certain future – because of Jesus’ giving of Himself in that selfless act of grace. The names neatly carved on marble monuments by those who lived, remind us of the cost of peace – a price that was paid by those who died. The peace Jesus offers is so much more than the absence of war – it is the active presence of the resurrected Christ in our lives each day. He paid the price for us and was raised to life – defeating the powers of darkness once for all – and sharing with us that ultimate victory. ‘We have a gospel to proclaim’ – a gospel which brings peace to people’s lives, to communities and to the world.

Remembrance is about the past. Response is what we do in the present. Resurrection is the certain hope of the deep and lasting peace and joy of eternal life – not just in the future, but here and now – because of Jesus.

In these present days of world unrest and turmoil, of the Covid pandemic and all that that entails, hear Jesus’ words, *‘Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid’ (John 14v27).*

Receive God’s gracious gift with thanks – and share it! **Amen**

Prayers of Intercession

Let us pray to God for the needs of the world:

Where there is war and conflict, we pray for peace and security;
Where there is injustice and oppression, we pray for justice and freedom;
Where there is hatred and distrust, we pray for harmony and understanding.

Lord in Your mercy **Hear our prayer**

We give thanks for our Queen, Royal Family and Government.

We pray for them, all world leaders and those who exercise influence over others, that they may act wisely and justly and seek the common good;

We pray for the United Nations and all international organisations working for justice and peace, that they may be strengthened and upheld by Your presence and guided by Your will.

Lord in Your mercy **Hear our prayer**

We pray for all who suffer as a result of war, in body, mind or spirit; for all who, in our present world, have lost their homes and possessions.

We pray for the families of all who have died in war; for all those caught up in conflicts in any way and all victims of war and violence.

Lord in Your mercy **Hear our prayer**

We pray for all those known to us who are ill, bereaved, lonely or anxious; for our health and care services and all working for the good of our communities.

Lord in Your mercy **Hear our prayer**

We offer these prayers through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of Your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen

Prayer of Commitment

As Jesus taught us, we commit ourselves to welcome strangers into our midst, to care for the poor, to love our neighbours as ourselves and to establish justice in our communities.

In the name of God and in the power of the Holy Spirit, we pledge ourselves to work for peace in our homes, peace in our communities and peace in our world. **Amen**

Hymn MP 4 – Abide with me <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05mfjx5>

Abide with me; fast falls the eventide; the darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide;
When other helpers fail and comforts flee, help of the helpless, oh, abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day; earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see—O Thou who changest not, abide with me.

(I need Thy presence every passing hour; what but Thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who, like Thyself, my guide and stay can be? Through cloud & sunshine, Lord, abide with me.)

I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless; ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness;
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory? I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.

Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes; shine through the gloom & point me to the skies;
Heaven's morning breaks, & earth's vain shadows flee; in life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

Final Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, teach us to live in the ways of peace and justice, to wage peace rather than war; so that we may come, by the power of the Holy Spirit, as one family, to the kingdom of the Father, where You live for ever and ever. **Amen**

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with kindness and give you His peace. **Amen**