

ORPHIR and STENNESS CHURCH,
Remembrance Day Service Sunday 13th Nov. 2022; 1110 approx, (After War Memorial Service)
Transcript

Welcome

Good morning! Wherever you have come from today, whether you come here regularly, or occasionally, or whether you are here for the first time, you are welcome to our worship on this special Remembrance Sunday. Especial welcome to friends from Maureen's funeral yesterday.

Call to Worship ("The Bidding")

We gather today to glorify God, and to give thanks, through this Act of Remembrance. Remembrance Sunday is a time for us all as a nation to acknowledge together the sacrifice of those who have gone before us this year into God's hands, whether national figures, notably the Queen, or our own loved ones; people who were important figures in our civic, military and private lives. This time allows us to focus on those whom we will miss most, while at the same time saluting those who gave their lives serving our country in the cause of the freedom we enjoy.

Call to Worship:

God is our refuge and our stronghold, a timely help in trouble. (*Psalm 46: 1*)
 Those who look to the Lord will win new strength,
 they will soar as on eagles' wings;
 they will run and not feel faint, march on and not grow weary. (*Isaiah 40: 31*)

Let us worship God:

HYMN 84 Now Israel may say, and that truly

PRAYER

Let us pray.

Eternal God, shepherd of our souls, giver of life everlasting,
 on this day, when we commemorate and commend to you
 all those who lived and died in the service of others,
 we are glad to remember that your purposes for us are good,
 that you gave Jesus Christ for the life of the world,
 and that you lead us by his Holy Spirit into the paths of righteousness and peace.

Merciful and faithful God,
 your purpose is to fold both earth and heaven in a single peace.

With sorrow we confess that. in our hearts,
 we keep alive the passions and pride that lead to hatred and to war.
 We are not worthy of your love, nor of the sacrifice made by others on our behalf.
Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Almighty God
 pardon and deliver us from all our sins, strengthen us in all goodness,
 and keep us in life eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

God of all grace,
 you declared your reconciling love and power

in the death and resurrection of our Saviour Jesus Christ.
 As we live only in your forgiveness, teach us to forgive one another.
 Heal our divisions, cast out our fears,
 renew our faith in your unchanging purpose of goodwill and peace on earth;
 through Jesus Christ our Lord,
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

CALL TO REMEMBRANCE

If you are able, will the congregation please stand.

Let us remember the kindness of God,
 and his favour to us in our time of need.
 Let us remember the courage, devotion to duty, and the self-sacrifice
 of the men and women in our armed forces;
 and of all those who supported them and suffered with them.

Let us remember those who were wounded or killed in battle,
 or in air-raids at home;
 those who were buried at sea, or far from home,
 and those whom we have known and loved, in person, or by name.

Let us remember those who were our enemies,
 whose homes and hearts are as bereft as ours.

Let us remember those whose lives still bear the scars of war;
 those who lost sight or limbs or reason; those who lost faith in God and hope for humanity.

Let us remember the continuing grace of God, whose love holds all souls in life,
 and to whom none is dead but all are alive for ever.

THE TRYST

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.

ALL: We will remember them.

Please be seated

PRAYER *Let us pray*

In memory of those who died, may we be better men and women;
 and in gratitude to God, may we live as those who are not their own
 but who are bought with a price. *Amen.*

HYMN 712 What shall we pray for those who died

READINGS:

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: *Liz will read for us from Isaiah.*

Isaiah 2:1 – 5; NRSVA: *The Future House of God*

The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.
 In days to come, the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the
 mountains, and shall be raised above the hills;

all the nations shall stream to it.

Many peoples shall come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob;

that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.'

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples;

they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks;

nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord! Amen.

Reflection 1:

When I start preparing a Message, I often ask myself, 'What can I say about this particular subject that has not been said before?' and the answer is usually, 'Little or nothing'. When I ask that question about Remembrance Sunday, tragically, the answer is different. It is different because, although we come every year to stand at the War Memorial, and to gather in the Kirk to remember, and to give thanks for the casualties of human conflict in its widest sense, and to pray that there may be an end to wars and the devastation they bring, the abiding, ongoing tragedy is that *warfare continues* as it has done in many places for many years, and erupts in new places. It is tragically and abundantly clear that throughout the world men and women, nations and governments, are unable to do whatever it takes to achieve, and to keep, a lasting peace with one another.

War continues in many parts of the world: in Ukraine, and in Sudan, Nigeria, and throughout Africa; Yemen, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Colombia, Haiti – the list goes on and on. The underlying reasons are complex, and involve competition for power and authority - political, territorial, economic - and all complicated by entrenched nepotism, mismanagement, and corruption, racial and religious affiliations and many other factors. People do not seem to be able to get on together.

As far as I've been able to find out, the British armed forces are not deployed anywhere in a combat role at the present time, but the British Army is actively engaged worldwide in operational duties ranging from peacekeeping to providing humanitarian aid, from training others to enforcing anti-terrorism measures to helping combat the international drugs trade. They need our continuing prayerful support. Lest we forget.

15 New Testament Lessons: Catherine will read:

Ephesians 4: 25 - 5:2: Rules for the New Life

So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbours, for we are members of one another. Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil. Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labour and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. *Amen*

John 15: 9 – 17:

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and

abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

Reflection 2:

When my mother was in a care home suffering from dementia, I made up for her an album of family photographs to help her try to recall some things from her past by re-awakening memories that had been almost, but not quite, forgotten. Maybe some of you have done something similar. Looking through the book with her, occasionally I hesitated at some picture which reminded me of something I would rather forget.

But I *need to* remember and never forget the past, with memories good and bad, because it is part of my family history and part of my identity. I guess all of you will have good and not so good memories as well.

It is the same for nations. As we gather on this Remembrance Sunday with our poppies, we remember two world wars and the other conflicts since then, and give thanks for all of those who gave their lives so that we could live in peace. Willingly or not, they made the ultimate sacrifice, and we do well to continue to give thanks, and to honour them. We also give thanks for our armed forces who are too often in action, too often in danger. They continue to take risks so that others may be free.

From the Christian perspective, looking back reminds us of people who really did try to love one another as Jesus loved his disciples, people carrying out acts of bravery and sacrifice, people even laying down their lives for others. But we also find people turning away from the brave and the good and the selfless, and choosing instead to hurt others. We have all heard of the unspeakable evil that mankind can inflict on others: concentration camps, gas chambers and all the rest are part of our history too, and, tragically, war, torture, atrocity and genocide continue to be inflicted on many people in many places even today. We remember the familiar warning: *"Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it."*

Today, as we remember, let us also pray that the mistakes of yesterday may not be repeated tomorrow.

In this Prayer for Remembrance Day I use a prayer by John Birch

Let us pray:

As your Spirit once hovered over the waters of a dark earth,
bringing light and life into a glorious new day,
so spread that same brightness once more over this earth,
into the shadows of hearts,
and into stubbornness of minds that see no further than self, and have no regard for life.
Bring light into our darkness, a new dawn within our hearts, Creator God, we pray.

Loving God,
we do not know why anyone should feel they have a given right,
through senseless violence, to end the lives of others, and sow such grief and pain.

But of this we are certain: it does not come from you.
 Be close to all who grieve;
 ease the suffering of those affected by such atrocities,
 and through love shown, and sown, through communities,
 bring an increasing measure of healing and release.

Be with the forgotten people, forced from their homes for so many reasons,
 living now on foreign soil in temporary shelters,
 relying on charitable giving for food to eat, warmth, life.
 Merciful God, bring an end to their suffering and distress.
 May their children grow up knowing where they belong,
 and may this world show them the difference love can bring.

God of love,
 be with those who live in constant fear,
 not knowing when or where the next bomb may fall, or if this day is to be their last;
 those who struggle to find food and water amidst the rubble of a place called home,
 and who live among the dead.
 May these precious people know that their cries are heard, that this world does care;
 and may they be released from the pain and suffering that is, until now, their daily bread.
 Pour your love, as a flowing stream of life-giving water over a fragile world, grown dry and weak,
 and satisfy its thirst.
 In the name of Christ we ask. Amen.
 (*John Birch; slightly edited.*)

Contemporary Reading:

Shortly after losing a friend in Ypres in 1915, a Canadian doctor, Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae was inspired by the sight of poppies growing in battle-scarred fields to write his now famous poem 'In Flanders Fields'. Olivia will read it for us.

In Flanders Fields

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.

Reflection 3:

At our War Memorial today, and at War Memorials throughout the country, and all over the world, we observed two minutes' silence in which we stood to remember. Today in church we have come to remember.

When we remember those who died in war, we remember the most appalling evil. The deaths of service personnel, and the deaths of civilians, are part of the terrible cost of war. Yet still the world has not learned to avoid it. War still goes on, in Ukraine and elsewhere. We remember, and we say sorry to God for human conflicts that have brought about so many deaths.

It is often said that we remember the dead, but forget the living. Many came back from the wars to face unemployment and deprivation. Today we still have people injured in the Falklands War, and in N. Ireland, and Afghanistan and Iraq, and, as our understanding of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder increases, we recognise the prolonged agony of some who survived and came back.

In our traditional version of the Lord's Prayer we pray the words, 'Deliver us from evil.' Each time we say them we should hold in mind all those in any way affected by the evil of warfare.

'Deliver us from evil.' When we pray these words, we need to remember that God does not blame us or seek to punish us. Jesus came to forgive, and to demonstrate to us that there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God. To forgive is not to take away painful memories and try to pretend that they didn't happen. To forgive is to heal, to restore, and to bring us back in reconciliation into a loving relationship with our God. To do this, we remember that, like so many who died in war, Jesus gave his life for us. When he died for us on the cross, Jesus was saying, "There is nothing in all the world that you can do to me that will stop me loving you. I love you like that." And what Jesus says, God says. This is the infinite love of God.

Today, as we remember, let us also pray that the mistakes of yesterday may not be repeated tomorrow. 'Deliver us from evil'.

Prayers of Intercession

Let us pray:

God of power and love,
bless our country and commonwealth.
Give wisdom and strength to King Charles,
govern those who make the laws, guide those who direct our common life,
and grant that together we may fulfil our service for the welfare of the whole people
and for your praise and glory.

Bless all members of the armed forces.

Defend them in danger, give them courage to meet all occasions with discipline and loyalty,
that they may serve the cause of justice and peace to the honour of your name.

Bless our young people.

May they never see the flames of war, or know the depths of cruelty
to which men and women can sink.

Grant that, in their generation, they may be faithful soldiers and servants of Jesus Christ.

Bless our friends,
and bless those who were our enemies,
who suffered or are still suffering from war.

Grant that your love may reach out to the wounded, the disabled, the mentally distressed,
and those whose faith has been shaken by what they have seen and endured.

Comfort all who mourn the death of loved ones, and all who this day
miss the comradeship of friends.

In all the world bless those who are homeless, the refugees, those who are hungry,
those who have lost their livelihood or security.
Help us to pledge ourselves to comfort, support, and encourage others,
that all may live in a world where evil and poverty are done away
and where human life reflects the radiance of your kingdom.

Bless those in authority in every land.
Give them wisdom to know, and courage to do, what is right.
Encourage those who work for peace, who strive to improve international relations,
who seek new ways of reconciling people of different race, colour, and creed.

Bless your Church throughout the world.
By your Holy Spirit, draw the scattered flock of Christ into a visible unity,
and make your Church a sign of hope to our divided world.
Grant that we who bear your Son's name may be instruments of your peace
in our homes, our nation, and our world.

And now,
rejoicing in the communion of saints,
we remember those whom you have gathered from the storm of war
into the peace of your presence,
giving thanks for those whom we have known,
whose memory we treasure.
May the example of their devotion inspire us,
that we may be taught to live by those who learned to die.
And at the last, grant that we, being faithful till death,
may receive with them the crown of life that never fades;
through Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose words we pray, saying:
*Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.*

During the next hymn please bring the offering to the Chancel

HYMN 266 God the Omnipotent! King who ordainest

DEDICATION of OFFERING

Gracious God,
Mindful of the sacrifices that have been made, and continue to be made, on our behalf,
we bring these offerings, tokens of our commitment.
We offer you our talents, our time, our lives, and all that we possess,
asking that through your grace they may be transformed into means of your life-giving freedom
for all. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Tailpiece

There Will Be Peace: by David Roberts

There will be peace:
when attitudes change;
when self-interest

is seen as part of common interest;
 when old wrongs, old scores, old mistakes
 are deleted from the account;
 when the aim becomes co-operation and mutual benefit
 rather than revenge
 or seizing maximum personal or group gain;
 when justice and equality before the law
 become the basis of government;
 when basic freedoms exist;
 when leaders - political, religious, educational - and the police and media
 wholeheartedly embrace the concepts of justice, equality, freedom, tolerance, and reconciliation
 as a basis for renewal;
 when parents teach their children new ways to think about people.
 There will be peace:
 when enemies become fellow human beings.

HYMN 706 For the healing of the nations

After the Blessing, please remain standing for the National Anthem.

BLESSING

And now,
 God grant to the living, grace; to the departed, rest;
 to the Church, the King, the Commonwealth, and all people, peace and concord;
 and to us and all his servants life everlasting.
 And the blessing of God almighty,
 Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
 be with you all. Amen.

NATIONAL ANTHEM (Hy 703 v.1)