

**ORPHIR and STENNESS CHURCH**  
**Remembrance Day Service Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2023.**  
**Morning Service 1105 approx**  
**Transcript**  
***(Separate service War Memorial Service 1055)***

**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.

**Call to Worship ("*The Bidding*")**

We gather today to glorify God, and, through this Act of Remembrance, to give thanks for all those who gave their lives serving our country in the cause of the freedom we enjoy. Remembrance Sunday is a time for us all, as a nation, to remember them; a time to remember also all those, whether national figures, important figures in our civic, military life, or those whom we will miss most, our own loved ones, who have gone before us this year into God's hands.

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.

***L: Lord, have mercy.***

***All: 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 you 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 with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder;  
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.***

### **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.*

***Please be seated***

**HYMN 712** What shall we pray for those who died

### **READINGS:**

**New Testament Lesson: *Kathryn will read for us today:***

**Ephesians 6: 10-18:** *Translation by Tom Wright in The New Testament for Everyone*  
***God's complete armour***

What else is there to say? Just this: be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his power.  
Put on God's complete armour. Then you'll be able to stand firm against the devil's trickery.  
The warfare we're engaged in, you see, isn't against flesh and blood. It's against the leaders,

against the authorities, against the powers that rule the world in this dark age, against the wicked spiritual elements in the heavenly places.

For this reason, you must take up God's complete armour. Then, when wickedness grabs its moment, you'll be able to withstand, to do what needs to be done, and still to be on your feet when it's all over. So stand firm! Put the belt of truth round your waist; put on justice as your breastplate; for shoes on your feet, ready for battle, take the good news of peace. With it all, take the shield of faith; if you've got that, you'll be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is God's word.

Pray on every occasion in the spirit, with every type of prayer and intercession. You'll need to keep awake and alert for this, with all perseverance and intercession for all God's holy ones. *Amen.*

### **Reflection 1:**

When I start preparing a Message, I often ask myself, 'What can I say about this 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. 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, 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 we speak*, just as it has done in many places for many years, and it erupts in new places. It is abundantly – tragically – 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.

It's different because, even since I spoke to you about this last year, the list of places at war seems to get longer. The war between Russia and Ukraine continues, pushed out of the headlines by the horrible full-scale war going on in Gaza that continues to slaughter more and more innocent people. Whatever the causes of all these conflicts, it seems that one side always blames the other, and each accuses the other of atrocities and war crimes.

War continues in Ukraine, and in Sudan, Nigeria, and throughout Africa; in Yemen, Lebanon, Afghanistan – 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 they are 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.*

### **Kathryn will read from St, Matthew's Gospel**

**Matthew 5:38-48:** (*New Testament for Everyone*)

#### ***Loving your enemies:***

"You heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you: don't use violence to resist evil! Instead, when someone hits you on the right cheek, turn the other one towards him. When someone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have

your cloak, too. And when someone forces you to go one mile, go a second one with him. Give to anyone who asks you, and don't refuse someone who wants to borrow from you.

"You heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: love your enemies! Pray for people who persecute you! That way, you'll be children of your father in heaven! After all, he makes his sun rise on bad and good alike, and sends rain both on the upright and on the unjust. Look at it like this: if you love those who love you, do you expect a special reward? Even tax-collectors do that, don't they? And if you only greet your own family, what's so special about that? Even Gentiles do that, don't they? Well then: you must be perfect, just as your heavenly father is perfect."

**Amen.** *Thanks be to God.*

## **Reflection 2:**

I was looking through a lot of old photographs recently. They brought back a lot of happy memories, but I found also some reminders of less happy times, things perhaps I would rather forget. Yet I *need to* remember *all* these memories, good and bad, because they are part of my family history and part of my identity. I guess all of you could tell a similar story.

It's the same for nations. We gather on this Remembrance Sunday, with our poppies, to remember two world wars and many other conflicts since then, and to give thanks for all of those who gave their lives so that we could live in peace. Willingly or not, knowingly or not, they made the ultimate sacrifice, and we 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. We also find people turning away from the brave and the good and the selfless, and choosing instead to hurt others. We've all heard about 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. Politicians dream up phrases like '*collateral damage*' when they mean wholesale slaughter of innocent people. We remember the familiar warning: "*Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it.*"

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 Northern 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. (If you want to know how bad that can be, read BBC Reporter Fergal Keane's book, *The Madness: A Memoir of War, Fear and PTSD*. It's not an easy read).

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 Bruce Prewer (ed)***

***Let us pray:***

**[Remembrance Day Prayer** by Bruce Prewer, ed.]

O God, our eternal dwelling place,

Grant us your comfort as we come before you now on this sweet-sour day of remembrance.

We remember that mighty host of young men and women who sacrificed their lives, and those who offered up their physical or mental health, in the hope of justice and peace on earth.

Lord, hear our prayers:

For those who are our sons or daughters, husbands or wives, mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, cousins, grandparents, uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews, neighbours or friends, for those who are only names to us: we remember with solemn thanksgiving.

For all who enlisted eagerly, with the energy and hopes of youth; for those who feared the cost, but nonetheless went off to give of their best; and those who, for ethical reasons, went reluctantly, yet, under fire, sacrificed their own lives for their comrades.

For all those who are poignantly listed as '*missing in action*', on land, sea and in air, those for whom there is no known place of burial or memorial stone; and for those 'loners' who had neither family nor friend to mourn their loss.

For our fallen enemies, we also pray: those who served their nation dutifully and valiantly, and others who were compelled to fight in conflicts and battles they believed to be morally wrong, and for all their loved ones who continue to mourn their loss.

God of the crucified Jesus, you alone can fully understand and bless those veterans among us, or known to us, who have returned home from war, leaving behind the mortal remains of some of their comrades, buried in foreign soil. May we respect their painful memories, and work beside them as they labour to keep alive the dream of peace on earth and goodwill among humankind.

For your love's sake. Amen.

### **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.

Thank you Olivia .....

**Choir:** the Choir will sing 'For your glory'.

### **Reflection 3:**

*Thanks to Kathryn for providing this item, by an unknown author, from a Facebook page called The Storyteller. It reads:*

"My husband, Richard, never really talked much about his time in Vietnam, other than he had been shot by a sniper. However, he did have a rather grainy, 8 x 10 black and white photo he had taken at a USO show of Ann Margret, with Bob Hope in the background, which was one of his treasures.

A few years ago, Ann Margret was doing a book signing at a local bookstore. Richard wanted to see if he could get her to sign the treasured photo, so he arrived at the bookstore at 12 o'clock for the 7:30 signing.

When I got there after work, the queue went all the way around the bookstore, circled the parking lot, and disappeared behind a parking garage. Before her appearance, bookstore employees announced that Ann Margret would sign only her book, and no memorabilia would be permitted.

Richard was disappointed, but wanted to show her the photo, and let her know how much those shows meant to lonely GI's so far from home. Ann Margret came out, looking as beautiful as ever and, as second in line, it was soon Richard's turn.

He presented the book for her signature, and then took out the photo. When he did so, there were many shouts from the employees that she would not sign it. Richard said, *"I understand. I just wanted her to see it."*

She took one look at the photo, tears welled up in her eyes and she said, "This is one of my gentlemen from Vietnam and I most certainly will sign his photo. I know what these men did for their country and I always have time for 'my gentlemen.'"

With that, she pulled Richard across the table and planted a big kiss on him. She then made quite a to-do about the bravery of the young men she had met over the years, how much she admired them, and how much she appreciated them. There weren't too many dry eyes among those close enough to hear. She then posed for pictures, and acted as if he were the only one there.

That night was a turning point for him. He walked a little straighter and, for the first time in years, was proud to have been a Veteran. I'll never forget Ann Margret for her graciousness, and how much that small act of kindness meant to my husband.

Later at dinner, Richard was very quiet. When I asked if he'd like to talk about it, my big, strong husband broke down in tears.

***"That's the first time anyone ever thanked me for my time in the Army," he said.***

I now make it a point to say, 'Thank you' to every person I come across who served in our Armed Forces. Freedom does not come cheap and I am grateful for all those who have served their country.

*~ Original Author Unknown ."*

### **Prayers of Intercession**

#### **Let us pray:**

God of power and love,  
bless our country and commonwealth.

Give wisdom and strength to the King, 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.*

*After our final hymn and the Blessing, please remain standing for the National Anthem.*

### **HYMN 706 For the healing of the nations**

#### **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: God Save the Kiing: (Hy 703 v.1)**