

The Bride Valley Service for Sunday 8th November 2020 Remembrance Sunday

(This service includes a two minute silence. If you wish to hold your silence at around 11am, please start listening or reading at around 10.55am.) Please see the notice sheet for the phone number to use.

Welcome to this Service of Remembrance for the Bride Valley churches. This act of worship has been put together and recorded by Liz Howlett.

We find ourselves once again unable to meet one another in our churches, yet we can still join together with our brothers and sisters around the world to remember the lives lost and the sacrifices made in times of war; to pray for those who face danger in the defence of justice and to commit ourselves to serve others in the cause of peace.

We begin our time of worship by sharing Christ's peace with one another.

Jesus said, Blessed are the peacemakers:
they shall be called children of God.
We worship in the name of Christ and share his peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you
And always with you.

OPENING PRAYERS

God our Father, maker of all:
we praise you for your great work creating the world.
Give us the skill to build a society where all may thrive,
and forgive us when we use your gifts poorly.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus Christ,
Son of the living God and Prince of peace:
as we thank you for your life among us,
forgive us when we fail to live together as one family.
Help us to dwell together in love and peace,
seeking one another's welfare,
bearing one another's burdens,
and sharing one another's joys.
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Holy Spirit, generous sustainer of humanity:
give us strength to face the future,
and wisdom to learn from the past
as we remember those who have given their lives
in the service of justice and peace.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

HYMN

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.

Isaac Watts

REMEMBERING

Let us remember before God,
and commend to his sure keeping:
those who have died for their country in conflict;
those whom we know and whose memory we treasure;
and all who have lived and died in the service of humanity.

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 sun and in the morning, we will remember them.

We will remember them.

Two minutes silence is kept.

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 Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

LISTENING FOR THE WORD FROM GOD

Hear these words from Matthew's gospel

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.

Matthew 5: 1-12

REFLECTION

In the countryside of Belgium and Northern France, you will come across many war memorials – like here, in the way that remembering those who died is important but unlike here, in the way in which memorials can be found in seemingly random positions, such as in the middle of fields or by the side of a road – for over there, it is often the case that British and Allied forces were buried in the place where they died. In 2018, to mark the centenary of the end of WWI, I had the opportunity to spend a couple of weeks visiting many of the sites. One of the most moving experiences was whilst walking along a dusty track looking over fields – it all looks so much like southern English countryside! – but, on the ground in the hedge, just by a narrow gap, there was a small stone which said that this was where such and such a British soldier had met his death, as he was about to charge at the enemy through the gap in the hedge. The stone was so tiny – I think it had been put there by his family. One life - and it is important to remember.

By contrast, as any of you will know if you have seen it for yourselves, the monument at Thiepval, which is near the river Somme – that monument is colossal. It stands on raised ground, overlooking the countryside and it is completely covered in names – over 72,000 soldiers commemorated. These are the names of those who died in that area and have no known grave. The size of this memorial reflects the shocking loss of life in this one place. 72,000 lives - and it is important to remember. It is sobering and salutary to explore the battlefields of WWI: however there are rays of light and hope. Not far from Ieper (Ypres) there is a town that was outside the warzone called Poperinge and in this town is a building called Talbot House. It was run as a soldiers' club during WWI – a place where all ranks could mix freely as equals during time off from being on the front – a place where

the fighting could be forgotten for a while – and for some it became much more than this. The Warden was called Tubby Clayton, an Anglican priest, who converted the loft of the house into an Upper Room, with a carpenter's bench as an altar. Regular services were held in the Upper Room and they were often packed with soldiers – one Easter there were over 200 at one go! Tubby prepared many of the men for confirmation – and for some of them, they received their first, and only Holy Communion at Talbot House. It was a place where, in the midst of horror and bloodshed, men could draw near to God and discover that God had drawn near to them. If only this *had* been the war to end all wars. Sadly there have been very few years since the ending of WWI in which there has been no war in the world. It can be tempting to try and forget it all but there are many reasons why it is vital that we do not – here are just three... It is important to remember: we will repeat mistakes of the past if we forget. It is important to remember: we enjoy freedoms today because of sacrifices made by others. It is important to remember: every life is precious to God. Amen.

PRAYER

God of infinite mercy, we trust in your good purposes of peace for all your children.
We pray for those who face danger in the defence of justice.
Watch over those in peril;
support those who are anxious for loved ones;
gather into your eternal purpose those who will die.
Remove from the hearts of all people
the passions that keep alive the spirit of war,
and in your goodness restore peace among us;
for the sake of the Prince of peace,
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

RESPONDING IN HOPE AND COMMITMENT

The Kohima epitaph is said

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

Let us commit ourselves to responsible living and faithful service.

**God our Father, we pledge ourselves to serve you and all peoples in the cause of peace,
for the relief of want and suffering, and for the praise of your name.
Guide us by your Spirit; give us wisdom; give us courage; give us hope;
and keep us faithful now and always. Amen.**

HYMN

Brother, sister, let me serve you
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.

We are pilgrims on a journey,
and companions on the road
we are here to help each other
walk the mile and bear the load.

I will hold the Christ-light for you
in the nighttime of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you,
speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping;
when you laugh I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow,
till we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven,
we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together
of Christ's love and agony.

Brother, sister, let me serve you
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.

Words and Music Richard A M Gillard

BLESSING

Go forth into the world in peace;
be of good courage;
hold fast to that which is good;
render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the faint-hearted;
support the weak;
help the afflicted;
honour everyone;
love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit;
and the blessing of God almighty,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

Amen.