

Dorset South & West Written Service – Sunday 14th November 2021
‘Love, Hope & Peace – We will Remember Them ...’ by Revd John Yarrien

Call to Worship

Lord, lest we forget,
we come this morning to remind ourselves of the debt we owe to so many.

Speak to us of the life made possible through their selfless service, so that we may learn to cherish more the things they died for – liberty, justice and peace.

For their sacrifice, and our freedom, we will remember them. Amen.

Hymn: - STF 338 – There is a redeemer

1 There is a Redeemer,
Jesus, God’s own Son,
precious Lamb of God, Messiah,
Holy One.

*Thank you, O my Father,
for giving us your Son,
and leaving your Spirit
till the work on earth is done.*

2 Jesus my Redeemer,
name above all names,
precious Lamb of God, Messiah,
O for sinners slain.

3 When I stand in glory
I will see his face,
and there I’ll serve my King for ever
in that holy place.

vv. 1–2 Melody Green (b. 1946)
v. 3 Keith Green (1953–1982)
Words and Music: © 1982 Birdwing Music

Prayer of Confession

Let us remember before God, the sins of division and conflict in our own lives, as we pray our prayers of confession:

God of Peace, lead us in the ways of peace
For all our attempts to control and triumph over others...**Lord forgive us**
For our trust in might and in violence...**Lord forgive us**
For our hidden hatred and prejudices ...**Lord forgive us**
For turning a blind eye to evil ...**Lord forgive us**
For our standing by whilst others suffer ...**Lord forgive us**
For our silence when peace is challenged ...**Lord forgive us**

(We pause for a few moments to bring the confessions of our hearts and minds to God)

Almighty God, who has promised to forgive all who truly repent, grant us forgiveness and absolution from all our sins, time to amend our lives, peace in all our dealings, and love in our hearts;
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, we pray. Amen

Act of Remembrance: -

Ninety per cent of deaths in modern armed conflict are civilian, half of these are children. So, we remember today all victims, of all wars, past and present.

Those who suffered or were killed as a result of war... **We Remember them**
Those who suffered or were executed because they refused to kill in war. . . **We Remember them**

All people bereaved because of war. . . **We Remember them**
All those who are refugees due to war. . . **We Remember them**
Those suffering injury through war. . . **We Remember them**
People suffering disease through war. . . **We Remember them**
Children made orphans through war. . . **We Remember them**
All who become homeless due to war. . . **We Remember them**
Those people starving due to war. . . **We Remember them**
Those people enduring mental trauma due to war. . . **We Remember them**
All people made destitute because of war. . . **We Remember them**
Amen

Let us commemorate before God all those who, for the defence of freedom, the cause of peace and service of others, died in time of war.

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.

TWO MINUTES SILENCE

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

Readings:

**In Flanders Fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place;
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 you break faith with us who die,
We shall not sleep
Though poppies grow in Flanders Fields.**

John 15: 9 – 17

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ¹² My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. ¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other.

Sermon: "Growing and Remembering"

Have an image of the Poppy in mind: The Petals - The Seeds - The Stem

So, today we thank God for the encouragement of his word, the safety and freedom we know today bought with the sacrifices of so many, over many years. **“love each other as I have loved you”** . . .

Early we heard John Mcrae’s famous Remembrance Poem called “in Flanders Fields”. Its an icredibly powerful piece, which gives the backdrop to this Remembrance Sunday, of lives lost and sacrificed by many people, in many wars over the years. It also speaks powerfully of our need to take up the Torch of Peace and Love. “Loved and were loved” as Mcrae puts it, picks up a central theme in our reading from John’s gospel this morning – **This is my Command “love one another”**.

So with the poppy in mind and in Flanders Fields ringing in our ears lets dive into the reading this morning.

Coming from an Army family, where I have grown up with the cut and thrust of a military way of life, it is sometimes hard to reconcile the willingness of our service personnel, to put their lives at risk in every day on operations, with Christ’s command to ‘Love one another as I have loved you’.

To realise, even within the most pressured situations, the Love Christ speaks of and our service men and women’s professionalism go hand in hand. *“No One has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends”* says Jesus. God I believe, and you may disagree and that is ok, honours the self-sacrifice and dedication of those who sincerely, and indeed devoutly, believed they were doing their duty, for King, Queen and Country. And when you see Christ’s word that there is no greater love than to lay down your life for your friends, it is even more remarkable that people, every day, are doing that on the Flanders Field’s of our day, at home and abroad.

But our passage this morning, doesn’t talk of war or galantry, but simply of LOVE. I think the passage recognises that this is not a world that makes loving ourselves and our neighbours easy. Indeed it is a world of wickedness, pain and division, and it often feels like love has been banished to the history books. The command to love is given by the one, Jesus Christ, who has done everything that love can do, in this world and in the kingdom of God. And Jesus issues this command to love one another, because love is the greatest thing he and we can do in our **world today, tomorrow, always**.

He has come to make us more human, not less. He has come to give us freedom and joy. He has come so that we can bear fruit that will last. Love makes both the lover and the beloved more truly human. It is a personal relationship of love and loyalty to the one who has loved us more than we can begin to imagine. And the test of that love and loyalty remains the simple, profound, dangerous and difficult command: *Love one another*.

I love the fact that you can’t legislate for love. But God, through Jesus Christ, can command you to love. Love is a humbling thing. I am sure that we can all think of a moment when another person’s love for us or our love for another has totally, in that moment, melted away all else around us. When we think of God and love, there is a huge humility in the knowledge that God loves us no matter what we have done or not done.

Christ, profoundly gets that point across by that simple phrase: *“You Didn’t Choose me, I chose you”*. God chose each one of us, to be his people. God chose to love us, through sending his son Jesus Christ, God commands us to love him, ourselves and our neighbours, as he first loves us.

So how does this all tie together, today and for us here at Dorset South and West Circuit? Let’s come back to the poppy image I asked you to have in mind at the beginning. Through the resurrection of Christ, all sacrifice, all life, and all that has potential of life (resting in the seeds) is free, and is redeemed. We are called, this Remembrance Sunday, to remember. We remember by loving God and loving one another. We should in all that we do, seek to love God, to show God’s love to one another, and to our community by being welcoming and accepting of all people who walk through our doors.

Love is not easy, it requires us to do what might seem beyond us, to love no matter what, to love and to be in community with people from outside of our norms, outside of our experience, outside of our backgrounds – but to love them none-the-less. We don't choose the people that walk through these doors, God chooses them, and loves them all the same. And now by the grace of this passage, he commands and calls us to love one another, as he loves us. The reward for that love is the unimaginable freedom of Eternal Life, with God, as exquisitely verbalised by John in the reading from Revelation.

Our God will give them the light, Friend or Foe, Neighbour or Stranger. We will love one another. We will strive for peace in our world. **WE WILL REMEMBER THEM.** Amen

Prayer:

Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, let us bring forgiveness; where there is doubt, let us offer faith; where there is darkness, let us bring light; where there is despair, let us offer hope; where there is sadness, let us bring joy. Amen

Lords Prayer

As our Saviour taught his disciples, we pray:

Our Father, who art in heaven,

Hallowed be thy name;

Thy kingdom come; thy will be done;

On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,

The power and the glory,

For ever and ever. Amen.

Offering: -

Lord and giver of every good thing,

We bring to you our

Lives and gifts for your kingdom.

All for transformation through your grace and love,

Made known in Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen.**

Blessing

God grant to the living grace,

To the departed rest,

To the Church, the Queen, the Commonwealth, and all people, unity, peace and concord,

And to us and all God's servants, life everlasting.

And the blessings of God Almighty,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you all,

With those you love, and those you are called to love, in the name of Christ. Amen.

