

twelvebaskets



ORDINARY 33B

A complete Sunday service ready to use
for worship and inspire ideas in your church

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Remembrance Sunday - Year B

14th November 2021



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

81 STF – Now thank we all our God OR

455 STF – All my hope on God is founded

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

131 STF – By a monument of marble, or a simple wooden cross OR

133 STF – To be a soldier, to fight for peace till war shall end

Readings: 1 Samuel 1:4-20; Hebrews 10:11-14, 19-25; Mark 13:1-8

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

134 STF – Christ, whose glory fills the skies OR

707 STF – Make me a channel of your peace

What am I being called to?

Hymn:

693 STF – Beauty for brokenness, hope for despair OR

696 STF – For the healing of the nations, Lord, we pray with one accord

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

56 STF – King of glory, King of peace OR

503 STF – Love divine, all loves excelling

Blessing

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Call to worship

Gracious God, we are coming into your presence,
May we know a glimpse of the divine in our hearts,
and minds, and whole loves.

Come amongst us, move amongst us now, by your Spirit.

Amen.¹

Hymn:

81 STF – Now thank we all our God OR

455 STF – All my hope on God is founded

Opening Prayers

Prayer for Remembrance Sunday

‘At the going down of the sun and in the morning; we will remember them.’

Loving God, we come this morning to remember.

We come together with our individual and collective memories.

We remember that you are with us, indeed that you have called us here.

We come with memories that are painful and difficult, we come with debates and politics that are complex, we come with our limited understanding of wars past and present.

Loving God, we come to remember those who have died in wars, and we come to give thanks for the gift of life.

Amen.²

We say together the Lord’s Prayer

All Age Talk

Today is a special and important day – it is what we call Remembrance Sunday.
What do you think we are remembering on Remembrance Sunday?

[Take a few suggestions, encouraging people to think not just about the World Wars, but also about all wars happening now, about those involved in all sorts of conflict].

And that is why many people wear a poppy, isn’t it – to remind us about the loss of so many people over the years, in so many different wars around the world. And

¹ Call to Worship written by Tim Baker

² Taken from Prayers for Remembrance by Christine Dutton

remembrance is important, it is an acknowledgement that the world we live in today was partly shaped by the wars that have been fought and the way people gave up everything.

However, today is not just meant to be a day for Remembrance – in fact, if that is all it is, then it is an insult to the memory of so many people who have died in war.

Today also needs to be about peace. As we remember all those who have died, we need to be changed by that, and to want to change the world.

There are still wars going on today, there are still people across the world who are living in fear because of fighting, guns, weapons, shooting and violence. Is there something we can do?

It isn't easy to pray for peace, when we have so much violence around us, but we see in Jesus someone who was totally committed to the way of non-violence. He never used weapons or attacked anyone, he never fired a gun or drew a sword – his life is an example of how we can all live seeking to be people of peace. Jesus said in his famous sermon on the Mount – blessed are the peacemakers.

What are the ways we can be a peace-makers today? Perhaps just take a moment, think about it, and share it with someone sitting near you – how can you be a more peaceful person?

[Give people a moment to do this].

Peace isn't just about an absence of war – though it would be good if we could get to that too in our world – rather, peace is about a sort of wholeness, a way of living together where we can work together, even if we disagree. Perhaps we do need to campaign for peace, and there are lots of political and other campaigns you can join if that is what you feel you need to do. But all of us can live with peace in our hearts, all of us can hear Jesus' invitation to make peace with those we are living and working with.

As you remember, whether you are wearing a poppy or not, as we hear the famous poetry, listen to the brass bands, and weep for those who have died in war, let us also seek to change the world – to make peace possible.

Let us pray.

Lord, in a world of so much violence, we pray for peace. Help us, as we live and move and act in your world, to be people who bring peace a little closer, help us to make peace happen where we are, in our families, schools, workplaces, shops, villages, towns and cities. Then, perhaps, we can build a peaceful world, in Jesus' name.

Amen.

[You may wish, at this point or instead of this talk, to hold a short conversation about what Remembrance Sunday means to you and your church, or invite a testimony from someone who has served in the army or in a peace-keeping situation and could talk about the role of their faith in this situation].³

Hymn:

131 STF – By a monument of marble, or a simple wooden cross OR

133 STF – To be a soldier, to fight for peace till war shall end

Readings: 1 Samuel 1:4-20; Hebrews 10:11-14, 19-25; Mark 13:1-8

Reflections on the reading

This Remembrance day is a day of ceremony. Many similar ceremonies are taking place throughout the country, indeed throughout the world. So let's think for a moment about ceremonies. In particular, ceremonies, held in the setting of a Church - an institution well used to capturing our sentiments on the special days of our lives. Think for a moment about your first experience of a church ceremony.

For myself, it was when as a young teenager, I went to an uncle's wedding in an old Norman church near where we lived. For me, not being from a church-going family, it was little more than an interesting spectacle. The meaning more or less passed me by. Some of it was in an archaic form of English and so formal that I felt excluded. It went right over my head. But I knew it was important because of the way the people particularly those who were up at the front were dressed and how they conducted themselves in the various components of the ceremony.

It was, a good spectacle – but not, for me, having a lot of meaning.

My reaction to my second experience of a church wedding ceremony was better. It was when two of my friends, made their lifelong commitment. It was still an interesting spectacle, but by then I understood more of what was going on. I realized it was a public declaration of two people's lifelong commitment to each other, and that the words and actions were intended to reinforce that commitment. So, I had moved on from the ceremony being merely a spectacle to being an engagement of the participants, mind and spirit as well.

Then, of course, came my wedding, at a small Baptist chapel. This engaged me even more. It engaged the whole of my being. My senses, my emotions, my mind and my spirit.

Now let's think about today's remembrance ceremonies. I suspect they follow much the same pattern. The servicemen around the country today will know all about ceremonies and ceremonial duties. To start with it's an irksome duty, lots of polishing,

³ All Age Talk written by All We Can

cleaning and rehearsing. Some would have seen it as a complete waste of time. But once, they have seen action, been wounded or lost comrades, the importance of it becomes clearer. The sounding of the bugles, the reading of the poetry, the singing of the well known and well loved hymns, and of course the laying of the wreaths, becomes meaningful for them and eventually it engages the whole of their being.

On this Remembrance day, I invite you to think about all church services, for they are all ceremonial acts of remembrance, of one sort or another. I wonder if you can work out where you are with them.

Are they just an interesting spectacle that you attend out of duty? Or do they engage your mind too? Is there a meaning in them for you?

And have you had experiences, which so engage the whole of your being that you feel drawn to participate in church ceremonies? Maybe some event in your life has deeply affected you. Or maybe you have simply a sincere deep down commitment to God which draws you to worship alongside others on a regular basis.

It is important to realise that Jesus left us without specific instructions on how to conduct church services - hence the wide variety of worship styles offered by different groups of his people. You will find no details of when and where to meet in the New Testament. No formal liturgy. No specific music of any type or style.

But nonetheless he did leave a ceremony - and a remembrance ceremony at that. I quote from St Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians Chapter 11 verses 22 -26:

“For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes ”

This is why all churches have such a ceremony, which incorporates that instruction in various ways, and at various frequencies. It goes under a variety of names - Holy Communion, Mass, the sacrament, the Lord’s Supper, the breaking of bread and so on. In some churches this ceremony is available daily whilst in others it is seen as so special, that it requires much careful preparation, and only happens once a year. In all churches it is a reminder of what Jesus did for us.

I know in my experience that this ceremony of the Lord's supper followed the same pattern as those other ceremonies mentioned above. First a spectacle, then a more meaningful experience and finally something which engaged the whole of me. Indeed all church services – baptisms, funerals, weddings as well as routine Sunday morning services, in my life, have followed that pattern.

So I leave you with a challenge. What about you? Where are you with church ceremonies in general and Remembrance Day services in particular?⁴

[Pause].

That reflection, written by Colin Smith, invites a reflection with church services and ceremonies. It seems a good fit with today's gospel reading, in which Jesus talks about the destruction of the temple and the bringing about of the 'end times'. All the ceremonies, all the habits, all the earthly buildings and systems we have become used to, will fade away. And what then are we left with?

The experiences of living through a pandemic have had a similar impact on us – haven't they? So many of the things we came to take for granted were taken away. What then are we left with?

How are those earthly things changing and transforming us at a spiritual level? How are they deepening our connection with the divine? How are they helping us to seek peace and pursue it? As the Psalmist says.

Make me a channel of your peace, O God. In a world torn apart by war. Make each of us a little channel of that peace.

Hymn:

134 STF – Christ, whose glory fills the skies OR

707 STF – Make me a channel of your peace

What are you being called to?

Remembrance Sunday always calls to mind the need for us to be champions of peace – we remember in order to seek a world in which war is no longer necessary, in which violence will not destroy relationships and claim lives, to seek peace and pursue it.

So today, what you are being invited into, is a journey towards peace. Find out more about organisations pursuing a peace agenda, pray, sign petitions, find out about the history of non-violence and non-violent protest – as currently embodied by organisations like Shane Claiborne's The Simple Way in the US.

Of course, there is a great deal still to be done as we hope for world peace – at times it certainly feels as if we are going backwards. But the act of Remembrance Sunday is an important tool for us if we want to build a better world. Perhaps it can help us 'begin with me' – help us to remember the stories we know about Christ, remember our experiences of God, and remember the best versions of ourselves that we want to be.

⁴ Reflection written by Colin Smith Baker

There is much work to be done, but as one of the characters in JRR Tolkien's 'The Lord of the Rings' says: 'it's the job that never gets started, as takes longest to finish'.

Let's start the work of peace and transformation again today, in Jesus' name.

Hymn:

693 STF – Beauty for brokenness, hope for despair OR

696 STF – For the healing of the nations, Lord, we pray with one accord

Prayers of intercession

As we pray today I invite you to use your poppy, either by detaching it or holding it where it is. If you don't have a poppy with you, please picture one in your mind.

First, we hold one of the petals of the poppy. Father, the red of this petal is like the red of the blood shed by so many in the wars of the last century. We remember members of our family who were directly involved in those wars, some in the armed forces, some left behind. We remember injury, trauma, death, courage, fear – lives changed forever.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Now we take hold of another petal on our poppy. In doing so, we hold before God the violence and warfare of our own times – the simmering violence in our world today, the open hostilities and threat of terrorism. We pray, Father, that you will give us politicians and military leaders equal to the huge tasks they face – wise in judgement, calm in spirit, makers of peace.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Now we touch the centre of the poppy, the place where the seeds are kept, ready for new life. Lord, take the seeds of peace which lie in the hearts of your people everywhere, and cast them generously over every continent and nation. Let those seeds germinate, grow and flourish. Beat our swords into ploughshares, our spears into pruning hooks and our weapons of mass destruction into technologies for peace.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Now we hold the green leaf (or the green stem) and remember the green and growing hope which comes from faith alone, faith in a God for whom everything is possible, even in the darkest hour. May hope guide our politics, our nation, our thinking and our lives. May hope draw us ever nearer to that day when the world shall be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

In your mercy, forgive our foolish ways,
In your mercy, help us to listen before we fight,
In your mercy, hold back the men of war,
In your mercy, save the innocent,
In your mercy, hear us,

In your mercy,
In your mercy.

Amen.⁵

We will now take up the offering.

Blessing the offering

Your grace to us has been given to us, and we are truly thankful.
Now we take a moment to return all that we have to you – we offer you our gifts this day, as a token of all that we give to you, Lord Jesus.
Come and use us now, for your Kingdom.
Amen.⁶

Hymn:

56 STF – King of glory, King of peace OR
503 STF – Love divine, all loves excelling

Blessing

May the God who mourns with his people, the Son who sacrificed his own life that we might experience the depths of God's love and the Holy Spirit whose presence of peace never leaves us, bless us all today, tomorrow and forever.

Amen.⁷

⁵ Prayers of intercession taken from Glimpses of Glory by David Adam

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker