

Sunday 8 November 2020

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use whilst we are unable to use Methodist Church premises. If you are well enough why not spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.

Opening Prayer

Remembrance Sunday is a time to remember those who lost their lives in the conflicts of the 1st and 2nd world wars and to remember all those whose lives were changed by those conflicts and the many conflicts since. It is also a time to remember all those around the world whose lives have been lost or changed because of the conflicts of the world since 1945/6. Today, many people within this nation and around the world will gather at Memorials on which are engraved the names of those who did not return to the community from which they left. It will be a different form of remembrance today due to the Covid 19 restrictions but people will still gather to remember. As we do so today we pray for all who continue to work for peace within our divided and fractured world.

Hymn: For the healing of the nations.

StF 696, HP 409

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYFwJita_uAM

For the healing of the nations,
Lord, we pray with one accord;
for a just and equal sharing
of the things that earth affords.
To a life of love in action
help us rise and pledge our word.

Lead us forward into freedom;
from despair your world release,
that, redeemed from war and hatred,

all may come and go in peace.
Show us how through care and goodness
fear will die and hope increase.

All that kills abundant living,
let it from the earth be banned;
pride of status, race, or schooling,
dogmas that obscure your plan.
In our common quest for justice
may we hallow life's brief span.

You, Creator-God, have written
your great name on humankind;
for our growing in your likeness
bring the life of Christ to mind;
that by our response and service
earth its destiny may find.

Fred Kaan (1929-2009)

Let us pray together

The tradition of taking time to hold a silence of remembrance at the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month came about at the end of the Great War of 1914 – 1918 and Church services of Remembrance have taken place on the nearest Sunday since that time. The tradition is still followed today and is part of our worship at home on this Remembrance Sunday. Later on in today's service we will be using words spoken at the first Remembrance Sunday and which are still used today.

For our opening prayer we say the words of Alan Gaunt's hymn 'We pray for peace'

We pray for peace, but not the easy peace
built on compliancy and not the truth of God.
We pray for real peace, the peace God's love
alone can seal

We pray for peace, but not the cruel peace leaving God's poor bereft and dying in distress;
We pray for real peace, enriching all the human race.

We pray for peace, and not the evil peace defending unjust laws and nursing prejudice,
But for the real peace of justice, mercy, truth and love.

We pray for peace, holy communion with Christ our risen Lord and every living thing;
God's will fulfilled on earth and all creation reconciled.

We pray for peace, and, for the sake of peace, look to the risen Christ who gives the grace we need to serve the cause of peace and make our own self-sacrifice.

God give us peace, if you withdraw your love there is no peace for us, nor any hope of it.
With you to lead us on, through death or tumult, peace will come.
Amen

The Lord's Prayer
Our Father

Today's Reading from the Old Testament
Micah 4 v 1 – 4

Today's Gospel Reading: John 15 v 9 – 17

Time to Reflect

It is important for us as human beings to have moments in our busy lives when we look back at the history which has moulded our individual and collective story. Today we look back at the story of the conflicts that have been, and remain part of, our human experience. We remember particularly the wars that engulfed the world in the 20th Century as we reflect on how these and further conflicts have shaped our world today. History tells us something of the background to the emerging conflicts of the 20th and 21st Centuries. We have the opportunity to respond to that story by seeking not to repeat

the conflicts of the past and to join in the hoped for peace which was sought by those who were involved in the conflicts which ended in 1918 and 1945/6. Micah's vision of 'beating swords into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks' has still to be realised but that doesn't mean it is lost, for the vision remains and as Christians we recognise that God continues to challenge us to seek God's justice and peace for all within the world.

We live in a fast-changing world in which many conflicts remain which means that the ways of peace and justice remain fragile. That fragility is seen in the story of many individuals who lost their lives in the conflicts of the 20th century and in our time. We remember them all as individuals and remind ourselves year by year of the challenges which bring about conflicts within and between nations and remain mindful of how we can work for peace today. The causes of conflict are many, but the causes of peace are many too, in a world divided by inequality and injustice, where those with the least are usually the most affected by the conflicts going on around them.

As Christians we seek that way of justice and peace which Jesus shares with us and with our world. 'Greater love has no one than this but to lay down their life for their friends', he says. There have been, and continue to be, many acts of self giving in time of conflict. There are those who have refused to stand by when others are persecuted, peacemakers have died in the cause that they were so passionate about, individuals have taken the place of those who are about to die, lives have been changed for the better as a consequence of some having given up their lives so that others might live.

We see that in our reading today. Jesus was caught up in the politics and practice of his day. He too was brought into the conflicts of his day and was taken from a place of peace to the violence of the cross. To lay down his life though was not just for his friends around

him at the time but for all of us, for all time, for ever. Perhaps it is in Jesus' act of self-giving love that the rumour of war is subsumed into the deep rumour of peace, echoing through the centuries, coming to us in the midst of the clamour and disorientation of the conflicts in today's world. We are remembering today a complex area of human experience which has shaped people and nations and which continues to do so today.

Perhaps we can reflect further today on Micah's vision where 'nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid'. We're not there yet but today we remember the sacrifice of many in the past who brought peace to their world in their time, as we work for peace in our lives, the life of our community and the life of the world today. May we always hold close and share that rumour of peace which comes from God who upholds those we remember today. God's love casts out all fear - that place of peace is worth working for and sharing with our world today, which is a fitting way to remember all those who gave their lives in the service of others.

Take a time to sit quietly

An act of Remembrance

Today is the day when we remember those who died in the First and Second world wars and in conflicts since. Their memory is treasured by families throughout this nation and across the world. If you would like to join in the traditional words used on this Remembrance Sunday please do so now.

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. We will remember them.

We keep a time of silence

Our prayers

Jesus, come among us as bringer of hope. We pray for the life of the world, for its diversity of culture and experience and life and faith. We pray for this world, for its leaders, and pray that all may work for justice and peace throughout the world.

Jesus come among us as bringer of healing. We pray for those whose lives have been and continue to be affected because of the conflicts of our world. We pray for those who through their skill in medicine bring healing to many people. We pray for all those who work in the conflict zones of the world as they seek to bring medical care in difficult circumstances.

Jesus come among us as bringer of light. We pray for hope for our world. We give thanks for the many people who bring light and hope into their world. We pray for the Church as we seek to discover more of the hope that God sets before us. We pray that the light of the risen Christ will give hope, as light shining in the darkness.

Jesus come among us as bringer of peace. In the unresolved questions that this day brings, may we find peace. In bringing the memories of those who have died, may we find peace. In the world in which we live today, may we find peace.

We bring our prayers in Jesus name. Amen

Hymn: Listen to Graham Kendrick's song 'Beauty for Brokenness' StF 693 or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dYadhF9J-d4>

Beauty for brokenness,
hope for despair,
Lord, in your suffering world

this is our prayer.

Bread for the children,
justice, joy, peace,
sunrise to sunset,
your kingdom increase!

Shelter for fragile lives,
cures for their ills,
work for all people,
trade for their skills;
land for the dispossessed,
rights for the weak,
voices to plead the cause
of those who can't speak.

God of the poor,
friend of the weak,
give us compassion we pray:
melt our cold hearts,
let tears fall like rain;
come, change our love
from a spark to a flame.

Refuge from cruel wars,
havens from fear,
cities for sanctuary,
freedoms to share.
Peace to the killing-fields,
scorched earth to green,
Christ for the bitterness,
his cross for the pain.

Rest for the ravaged earth,
oceans and streams
plundered and poisoned --
our future, our dreams.
Lord, end our madness,
carelessness, greed;
make us content with
the things that we need.

Lighten our darkness,
breathe on this flame
until your justice burns
brightly again;
until the nations
learn of your ways,
seek your salvation
and bring you their praise.

Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)

A prayer of blessing

Creator God, we commit to you the needs of the whole world. Where there is hatred, give love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is distrust, faith; where there is sorrow, hope, where there is darkness, light. And may the blessing and peace of God remain with us, with those for whom we have prayed, and all we remember today who are and have been caught up in the conflicts of this world. Amen.

Original Materials by Philip Wagstaff

All

Hymns reproduced under CCLI 1144191.

Local Churches please insert CCLI No here

Micah 4 v 1 – 4

In days to come
the mountain of the Lord's house
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be raised up above the hills.
Peoples shall stream to it,
² and many nations 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.
³ He shall judge between many peoples,
and shall arbitrate between strong nations
far away;
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;
⁴ but they shall all sit under their own vines
and under their own fig trees,
and no one shall make them afraid;
for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has
spoken.

John 15 v 9 - 17

⁹As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. ¹⁰If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

¹² 'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵I 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. ¹⁶You 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. ¹⁷I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.