



**Chet Valley Churches**



**Remembrance Sunday.  
Morning Worship**

**14<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

## The Gathering

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. We meet in the presence of God. We commit ourselves to work in penitence and faith for reconciliation between the nations, that all people may, together, live in freedom, justice, and peace.

We pray for all who in bereavement, disability and pain continue to suffer the consequences of fighting and terror. We remember with thanksgiving and sorrow those whose lives, in world wars and conflicts past and present, have been given and taken away.

### ♪ Hymn: *All My Hope on God is Founded*

**All my hope on God is founded, all my trust he shall renew;  
He, my guide through changing order, only good and only true:  
God unknown, he alone calls my heart to be his own.**

**Pride of man and earthly glory, sword and crown betray his trust;  
All that human toil can fashion, tower and temple, fall to dust.  
But God's power, hour by hour, is my temple and my tower.**

**Day by day our mighty giver grants to us his gifts of love;  
In his will our souls find pleasure, leading to our home above:  
Love shall stand at his hand, joy shall wait for his command.**

**Still from Earth to God eternal sacrifice of praise be done;  
High above all praises praising for the gift of Christ his Son:  
Hear Christ's call, one and all—we who follow shall not fall.**

### 🙏 Confession

Jesus saw the city and wept over it, because it did not recognise the time of God's coming. We confess our part in the self-centeredness, blindness, and sin of the life of our world.

**Lord God, we have done evil in your sight.  
We are sorry and repent.  
Have mercy on us according to your love.  
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.  
Renew a right spirit within us  
and restore us to the joy of your salvation,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**



May Almighty God, who sent his Son into the world to save sinners, bring you pardon and peace, now and forever. **Amen.**

## **Psalm 23**

The Lord is my shepherd; therefore can I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures and leads me beside still waters. He shall refresh my soul and guide me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me; you have anointed my head with oil and my cup shall be full.

Surely goodness and loving mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

## **Silence for Two Minutes**

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.

## **Reading: John 15: 9-17**

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

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I 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.

You 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. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

 Love

## Talk [Belinda & Members of Wednesday Group]

November is the month for remembering—from remembering All Saints and All Souls through to remembering the fifth of November and finally coming to Remembrance Sunday, it can be a poignant or even painful time of year.

Remembering is at the heart of the Christian faith: at the last supper Jesus told his disciples: 'do this in memory of me'. So, remembering is good; it reminds us of who we are and what our unique story is. Memories can be heart-warming, taking us back to a time of happiness, or important events in our lives. But memories can also be difficult to deal with, particularly when they stir up long dead emotions. I asked some members of the Wednesday afternoon group about their particular memories of war and the effect that it had on them. First of all, we hear from Audrey:

*My father was a schoolmaster in West Ham and at the outbreak of the war in September 1939 his school was evacuated—he went with a party of boys to Crudwell in Wiltshire, where my mother and I joined him. We stayed in four different houses in just over three years and did not feel welcome in one of them, but the cat was sent by train to join us! I went to the village school at first, with several classes in one room, but later I moved to the Grammar school in Malmesbury, cycling four and a half miles.*

*We had to carry gas masks and petrol and food was rationed, but my father was a good shot and used to get us a rabbit or two. Convoys of army vehicles used to drive through Crudwell—on one occasion someone altered the signs and sent them the wrong way! Father joined the Home Guard and Mother sold savings stamps for the war effort. At Christmas, Father organised the boys to give an entertainment evening, and I played Cinderella in the village school production.*

Audrey's family had a quiet war then, with some of the elements that have made Dad's Army such an enduringly popular comedy. Nevertheless, it is a story of lives disrupted and inevitable change. When we look at the countries around the world today that are experiencing conflict we see something much less benign, lives overturned and refugees fleeing with nothing but the bare essentials to live on—if that. Margaret's family had a rather more dramatic time:

*Margaret tells of being with her family in their bomb shelter in the garage, which was under her bedroom. One night they were sleeping there, though the pounding of the ack-ack guns meant that sleep was fitful. Suddenly three*

*incendiary bombs fell on her bedroom roof, went through it and also through her bedroom floor, and landed in the bomb shelter. Her father managed to bundle them out of the shelter and then miraculously put out the fires and the bombs never exploded.*

Houses bombed, lives shattered. My father remembers a family who lived just round the corner from his family home in Norwich who were all killed in one raid. Just gone. There must be many families around the world who have similarly disappeared in more recent wars. When we recall the awful events this autumn in Afghanistan and the desperation that some experienced—those people clinging to aeroplanes in a forlorn attempt to get away—we are left feeling helpless and implicated in the tragedy, by the very fact that we are witnessing it. Many have found these last few months heart wrenching. What has this Remembrance Sunday to tell us about the current conflicts?

Maybe it is that we are all part of the human family and when one part is hurt, everything hurts. As John Donne, Dean of St Paul's wrote in a devotion, "any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind." Being a Christian is never an isolated experience. We were all baptised into one body. We are involved. Daphne's involvement was very personal:

*Our younger son, Matthew, was in the Royal Horse Artillery for five and a half years. He spent over three years in Bosnia from the year 2000, and then Kosovo. Two days before he left the lads in the troop were issued with their 'dog tags', inscribed with their surname and army number, to be worn day and night in case of injury or death in the field of conflict. Matt was 18 and a half. They flew from RAF Brize Norton in a Hercules transport and we heard infrequently via phone and 'blues', which I've kept. It was a continuous worry, but the small prayer group we belonged to helped us.*

*Matt had lots of times in Bosnia- he drove BC's land rover to dodgy meetings between the Serbs and the Croats, when he had to wait outside for a quick getaway if they kicked up rough. He used to be cheerful and jokey when we spoke to him on the phone, but we heard about the other side of things when he came home a few times for rest and relaxation. There were snipers everywhere and it was all heavily mined.*

*He came home in one piece physically, but the mental side is more complicated.*

We are only now learning more about the effect of post-traumatic stress and the harm it can do, lasting harm if it is not properly dealt with. For too long we have expected people to just ‘get on with it’. Remembrance Sunday can be a time to encourage others to talk and share their experiences—sometimes things they have not spoken about for years, or thrust to the back of their memory to avoid facing things that have damaged them. Jesus taught us that it is when we are true friends, loving one another, that God’s work can be done. Perhaps those of us who have not been in the front line of conflict or whose lives have not been turned upside down by war—those of us who ‘only stand and wait’—could spend some time today praying for those who still bear the scars of war.

The Christian message is also one of hope and reconciliation. To end with we hear Kathie’s reflections on a life changing event in her family, and with the promise of renewal and restoration that is always there for those of us who dare to call ourselves friends of Jesus.

*Our family was very affected by the Second World War. I choose to share the most tragic event. A ‘telegram boy’ knocked on our door in Ealing, London. My parents were both at home and as a seven-year-old child I witnessed my parents opening the telegram, which read that my brother, aged 22, was ‘missing, believed killed’. He had been posted to India, where he was to fight in the Burma campaign as a fighter pilot in the RAF. My parents, sister and I all bore the emotional scars of this tragic loss. I still remember vividly my parents’ grief as they read this telegram. The date was 22nd November 1942.*

*After the war my father retired and we moved to Norfolk. He died of a heart attack on 22nd November 1950. I felt the grief deeply, but on 20th November 1960 I gave birth to twin sons—two new lives for the loss of two precious souls. God has truly blessed me. ‘Weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning’ Psalm 30, verse 5.*

### **♪ Hymn: O God Our Help in Ages Past**

**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.**

## **Prayers**

Let us pray for all who suffer as a result of a conflict and ask that God may give us peace. For the service men and women who have died in the violence of war, each one remembered by and known to God.  
May God give peace. **God give peace.**

For those who love them in death as in life, offering our grief and sadness of our loss. May God give peace. **God give peace.**

For all members of the armed forces who are in danger this day, remembering family, friends and all who pray for their safe return.  
May God give peace. **God give peace.**

For civilian women, children, and men whose lives are disfigured by war or terror, calling to mind in penitence the anger and hatreds of humanity.  
May God give peace. **God give peace.**

For peace-makers and peace-keepers, who seek to keep this world sincere and free. May God give peace. **God give peace.**

For all who bear the burden and privilege of leadership, political, military, and religious; asking for gifts of wisdom and resolve in the search for reconciliation and peace. May God give peace. **God give peace.**

O God of truth and justice, we hold before you those whose memory we cherish, and those whose names we will never know. Help us to lift our eyes above the torment of this broken world and grant us the grace to pray for those who wish us harm. As we honour the past, may we put our faith in your future; for you are the source of life and hope, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## **The Lord's Prayer**

**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.**

## **Act of Commitment**

Let us pledge ourselves anew to the service of God and our fellow men and women; that we may help, encourage, and comfort others, and support those working for the relief of the needy, and for the peace and welfare of the nations.

**Lord God our Father, we pledge ourselves to serve you and all humankind, 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: Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God**

**Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, And all these things shall be added unto you. Allelu, alleluia.**

**Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word That proceeds from the mouth of God. Allelu, alleluia.**

**Ask and it shall be given unto you; seek and ye shall find; Knock and the door shall be opened unto you. Allelu, alleluia.**

Merciful God, we offer to you the fears in us that have not yet been cast out by love. May we accept the hope you have placed in the hearts of all people, and live lives of justice, courage, and mercy, through Jesus Christ our risen redeemer. **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 blessing of God almighty the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Go in the light and peace of Christ. **Thanks be to God.**

