

Remembrance Sunday

(Micah 4:1-5, Matthew 5:3-10, Revelation 21:1-4)

Invitation To Worship

Praise Of God

‘O God, our help in ages past’

Listening To God

Prayer To God

PowerPoint Presentation ~ *We will remember them*

Two Minutes Silence

‘**They shall not grow old...**’

Praise Of God

‘Give me the power to bring peace’

Introduction

Poppies grow naturally wherever soil has been disturbed. The battles fought in Belgium and France during the First World War were so fierce that the soil was churned up and poppies bloomed as they had never done before. When the fighting stopped, it wasn't long before the battlefields were covered with poppies. Since the 1920s, people have used the poppy as a symbol to remember those who were killed in the First World War, then in the Second World War and then in wars since 1945.

In the First World War something unique happened in 1914 that it turned the whole idea of war on its head. At Christmas time that year, in a place where bloodshed and death were commonplace and the mud and the enemy were fought with equal vigour, the German and English troops embraced the Christmas spirit. An unofficial ceasefire was declared and, in one of the truest acts of goodwill, soldiers from both sides set aside their weapons and enmity and met in ‘no-man’s-land’. They decorated the area around their trenches, sang carols and exchanged gifts. This unofficial ceasefire actually went on for some weeks. It was only when the German troops were relieved by other platoons that the fighting started again. The authorities were incensed that soldiers had been fraternising with the enemy and were disgusted by this ‘outbreak’ of peace!

Thanksgiving To God

Praise Of God

‘Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided’

Listening To God

Micah 4:1-5

Matthew 5:3-10

Listening To God

Harry Patch's story

Harry Patch was born in 1898 – so he's now 109 – and is one of the few remaining survivors of the First World War. He is the last surviving British soldier to serve in the line of trenches known as the Western Front. He was a private in the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, and fought at the Third Battle of Ypres also known as the Battle of Passchendaele.

After the war, he became a plumber and, during World War Two, a fireman. Throughout all this time, Harry did not speak about his experiences in the trenches during the First World War, and it was only when he reached 100 years old that he started to tell his story. Like so many others who took part, the war was a distant, but horrific memory and was too painful to relive – an old song of the time goes, 'And when they ask us how dangerous it was, we'll never tell them, no, we'll never tell them.'

In November 2004, at the age of 106, Harry went back to the battlefields in Belgium and was introduced to the 108-year-old German Charles Kuentz, who had fought for the German army at the Battle of Passchendaele. Their meeting was warm and they exchanged gifts. Patch said, 'I was a bit doubtful before meeting a German soldier. Herr Kuentz is a very nice gentleman however. He is all for a united Europe and peace – and so am I.'

War is a time of great crisis and brings instability, sadness and grief to the countries involved. The soldiers who fight are sometimes unsure of the real reasons for the war, not fully understanding why they have to fight and kill soldiers from another army. War is nearly always declared by governments in the case of international conflicts, or by powerful factions in the case of civil wars. Ordinary people, like Harry Patch, like the thousands of people living in refugee camps in Darfur and Chad (because of the conflict in Sudan), are caught 'in the middle'.

Harry continues, 'Why should the British government call me up and take me out to a battlefield to shoot a man I never knew, whose language I couldn't speak? All those lives lost for a war finished over a table. Now what is the sense in that? It's just an argument between two governments...

I don't think it is possible to truly explain the bond that is forged between a soldier in the trenches and his fellow soldiers. There you all are, no matter

what your life in civvy street, covered in lice, desperately hungry, eking out the small treats – the ounce of tobacco, the biscuit. You relied on him and he on you, never really thinking that it was just the same for the enemy. But it was. It was every bit as bad.’

(Words of Harry Patch, taken from Last Post by Max Arthur – used by kind permission of the author)

This was true of Israel and Judah, the countries to which Micah was prophesying. The leaders of the two countries had disobeyed God and led their nations away from him. War would be forced on these countries because of the actions of their leaders. What a strange mixture of doom and hope there is in Micah’s prophecy. Both death and destruction and hope for restoration are promised.

Read Micah 4:1-5 again, projecting v 3. When God is finally worshipped for who he is and people obey him, wars will end and there will be no need for weapons. Micah tells us that God will sort out fighting and disagreement and the instruments of war will be will instead be used to provide for people. Fear, confusion and killing will all cease. ***Show pictures of artwork made by artists who turn weapons into pieces of art.***

Jesus’ words in our second reading mean that this time has not yet come. Not everyone obeys God’s laws and worships him at the moment. People still grieve, are treated badly for doing right, need to be merciful and need to make peace. Throughout his ministry Jesus said and did many things that challenged the accepted ways of doing things. He placed a great emphasis on serving rather than being served and he reached out to the outcasts of society, valuing those who were deemed worthless. These verses are the essence of Jesus – being merciful, obeying God, being humble, being pure and making peace. If we were all like Jesus, then war and fighting would fade away. But we’re not. We live in a world still full of sin, and so conflict continues.

Praise Of God

‘Christ is the world’s true light’

Prayer To God

Lord, where neighbour is set against neighbour,
please bring peace.

We will remember them as we pray.

Where the weak and helpless are beaten by the mighty,
please bring justice.

We will remember them as we pray.

Where children are forced to fight,
please bring freedom.

We will remember them as we pray.
Where hatred means that war and revenge continues,
please bring forgiveness.
We will remember them as we pray.
Where people depend on their own strength and beliefs
rather than depending on you,
please bring humility.
We will remember them as we pray.
We remember such countries, such people, such places
as we pray to you, Jesus, Prince of Peace,
for peace throughout the world. Amen.

Responding To God

Read aloud Revelation 21: 1-4.

Offering, Song and Prayer

“Make me a channel of your peace”

Receiving God’s Blessing

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood, as to understand;
to be loved, as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.
Amen.

Praise Of God

‘Christ is the world’s true light’

Prayer To God