Remembrance Service Day 2014

This service has been prepared by Revd Kevin Jones a minister of the United Reformed Church and Chaplain to The Royal Dragoon Guards.

Introduction

We come together to remember all who have died in war, and for all who still suffer today as the result of conflict. We remember their families, their comrades and their friends.

A hundred years ago in November 1914 the First World War was only a few months old but already there had been a huge loss of life. The conflict was already world-wide, being fought on a number of different fronts, on land and at sea, and drawing people from different races across the world to the places of conflict.

On the Western Front trench warfare had begun and the First Battle of Ypres, as it became known, had been underway since October.

The effects of war were far-reaching: from the trenches to the homes in this country and across the world where the soldiers came from, and the families they left behind. And this war was to last another four years.

Opening Prayer

We pray, connected together through the love of God in remembrance

We come to you, Gracious God, at this time of remembrance and reflection, to unite our thoughts with yours. We are saddened by the horrors of war, and we think particularly today about those who died during the First World War.

We come connected across the years by stories told by our families and friends; by the War memorials in every community across this country; and by our common humanity. In our hearts and minds we try to put ourselves in the shoes of those connected to us. But imaging what it must have been like for them is difficult. Guide us to a deeper understanding so that we can understand more of our history and how to live in the right way today.

We come to you, our God, who connects to us your people through your Son Jesus Christ, and through the love you give to all people. Amen.

Prayer of Confession

We acknowledge that we are not good peace-makers.

As individuals so often we provoke each other, we try to get one up on each other and we try to always win the argument.

As communities so often we feel resentment against those who are different from us, we believe ourselves to be always in the right and we use the power and wealth we have to exploit all our advantages.

As nations often we fail to work for justice and peace, we pay lip service to the needs of the vulnerable and we try to position ourselves in places where we can tell other nations how to run their countries.

And when war comes we say how terrible it is.

Forgive us our short sightedness and our lack of humility. Help us to see clearly your way to peace and reconciliation and equip us with the power of your Spirit to make peace and justice the focus of our living. Amen.

Scripture

Isaiah 2 v2-5
Matthew 5 v1-12
Address

Act of Remembrance

Let us remember before God,

Those who died in war:
Those whom we knew, and whose memory we treasure:
with all who have lived and died
in the service of humanity.

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.  

Laurence Binyon

All: We will remember them.

The Silence

Laying of wreaths, placing of poppies, poems, photographs or other tributes may take place at this point in the service

Prayers

We pray for all who serve in the Armed Forces today: especially for those who are deployed in places of conflict. We ask for protection for them, and for wisdom and discernment as they face challenging situations. We pray for their families and friends, and ask that you will support them especially when their loved ones are far away.

We pray for peace in the world: and not simply for an end to fighting, but for lasting peace built on justice for all. We pray for governments and leaders: guide them in their decision making and give them the courage look to the needs of the vulnerable, the powerless and the marginalised. And we pray for ourselves: may we too be peace-makers in the everyday situations of conflict that we encounter.

We pray for those who struggle to remember without pain or grief: for those who have lost loved ones in war; for those who are still carry the physical or mental scars of war; for those who have feelings of guilt or regret. Help all your people to look to the future with hope, to live in the present without being trapped by guilt, and for the past not to be a burden but a means of inspiration to confront the challenges of today.

You are our God who stands alongside us, and alongside all who cry out to you in pain, sorrow, or hardship. Thank you for your presence with us now and may your Spirit inspire us to commit ourselves to resisting evil wherever we face it and working for justice, peace and freedom in our world today.

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

Blessing

May the God of love bring us comfort and strength and equip us through the power of the Holy Spirit to take on the challenges of today to strive for peace and justice.

The blessing of Almighty God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be with us all now and for evermore.  
All: Amen