

One hundred years after the First World War

Looking back, looking forward

Accompanying worship material on the theme



The Biblical references quoted are from the NRSV

© 2018, The United Reformed Church and
Evangelische Kirche der Pfalz

The material may be used freely in the worship of the churches.
If it is used in printed form, acknowledgement of the source and
author should be given.

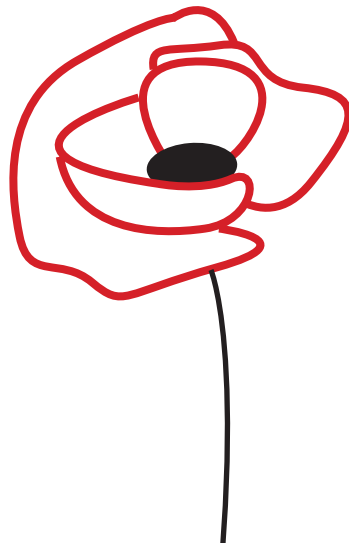
The reproduction of the material for circulation or sale
beyond a local church is prohibited without permission.
Application for permission of use should be made in writing to
Communications, The United Reformed Church, 86 Tavistock
Place, London, W1CH 9RT. Email: louise.ault@urc.org.uk

Please note: additional copyright restrictions, where applicable,
are noted throughout. If you wish to use one of these pieces,
in the first instance, please contact Louise Ault on the email
address above.

Cover image © 2014, Traude Prün

Contents

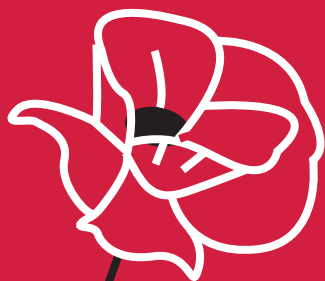
Lest we forget - an introduction	1
A meditation	2
Reflections and prayers from:	
Philip Brooks	5
Michael Jagessar	6
Simeon Mitchell	6
Elizabeth Clark	7
The Evangelische Kirche der Pfalz	7
Remembrance hymns	9
The last word	13



Lest we forget

We hope you have been inspired by reading 'One hundred years after the First World War: Looking back, looking forward', with its collection of stories, reflections and poems. This is the companion booklet, bringing worship resources which might be used during church services. This is particularly the case, as you plan for this year's Remembrance Day and the centennial commemoration of the 1918 armistice.

Once again, this is a unique offering in the way it provides material from both British and German contributors from our URC/Palatinate partnership. The following pages contain words of meditation, prayer, hymns and biblical reflection. The booklet ends with a fresh commitment to peace, written by our German friends in the Palatinate. It represents a fitting challenge to us all that, in a Europe which feels increasingly divided, peace can never be taken for granted. As the body of Christ, in our different nations, the long-standing accord between the United Reformed Church and the Evangelische Kirche der Pfalz has never been more important. May that continue to be reflected in our words, our worship and our willingness to model Christ's peace.



A meditation, reflections and prayers

A meditation

This peace candle was given to a party from Protestantische Kirchengemeinde Winnweiler on their visit to Avenue St Andrew's URC, Southampton, in September 2014. During the Sunday service the candle was lit first by the oldest member of the English congregation. The sister candle which remained at Southampton was simultaneously lit by the oldest member of the German party. Ever since the candles have been used at the beginning of the fellowship service which takes place quarterly and, in Germany, once a year on Volkstrauertag.

What follows is a suggested meditation on the peace candle based on Matthew 5:16.

'In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven'.

Pfarrer Michael Pernt-Weigel, Dekan i.R.

This is a peace candle. This candle wants to bring light and warmth into the darkness of the world. It shows a poppy. The poppy is a symbol of Remembrance Day, observed on 11 November or the Sunday after, as on 11 November 1918 the First World War came to its end. The red of the poppy reminds of the blood of those who died in action giving the earth a dark red dye. And it was poppies that first grew on the graves of the fallen; life emerging from the scene of death.



This peace candle is the gift of an English congregation to the German congregation they are linked with, given in summer 2014, 100 years after the outbreak of the First World War. Another candle - an identical sister candle - remained in England. Both being lit for fellowship Sunday, the light shines as token of the friendship which unites the descendants of former enemies.

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, light of the world, you think us capable of being salt of the earth and light of the world. We give thanks that enemies of the past could become friends of today. We give thanks that forgiveness and reconciliation are possible. We thank you for 73 years of peace in our parts of the world.

We pray: help us carry on the light of peace.

We remember before you the victims of two world wars. May what they have gone through be a warning to us today and for all to come.

May we understand: war must not be according to God's will.

We remember the victims of the national socialist tyranny. Their fate is our permanent obligation to rise and resist against racism, sadism, nationalism, servility and indifference.

We pray for the victims of war, injustice, terror and violence.

Let your spirit of peace be at work in everybody bridging over and overcoming prejudice and borders humankind are setting up against each other.

We pray there be an end of nuclear threat and atomic armament on this earth.

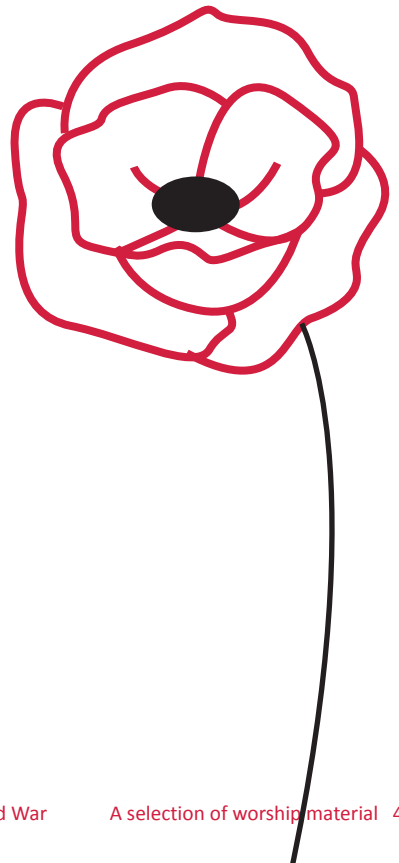
We pray for the men and women of the British Armed Forces and for the soldiers, men and women, of the Bundeswehr: may they be protected wherever their mission takes them. We command to you especially those wounded in body and soul while doing their duty and those who have lost their lives. We pray for their loved ones, give them comfort and strength. Today it is utterly unthinkable that British and German soldiers fight each other. We give deepest thanks for this victory of peace and reason.

All this we pray confidently awaiting the new heaven and the new earth promised us by our heavenly Father.

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.

Vater unser, der du bist im Himmel,
geheiligt sei dein Name;
euer Königreich komme;
Dein Wille geschehe;
auf der Erde wie im Himmel.
Gib uns heute unser tägliches Brot.
Und vergib uns unsere Schuld,
wie wir denen vergeben, die sich
gegen uns auflehnen.
Und führe uns nicht in Versuchung;
sondern erlöse uns von dem Bösen.
Denn dein ist das Königreich,
die Macht und der Ruhm,
für immer und ewig.
Amen.



Peace, but not as the world gives John 14:27

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not be afraid.

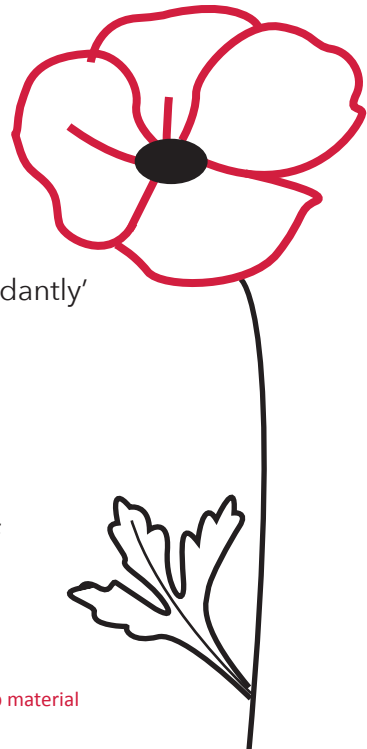
Following the loss of a serviceman in the First World War, it was the custom to send a letter of condolence, written by the soldier's commanding officer. An elderly church member once showed me the note received on the death of her uncle. It testified to his bravery and related that he had 'passed away peacefully after smoking a last cigarette'. Her uncle had asthma and had never been able to smoke. The kindly intended letter merely increased the pain and sense of loss for the family. It disguised the horror of a more violent death. When the guns of war fall silent, the physical and mental scars remain. The peace of God is a precious gift in our darkest suffering.

Loving God, we come to you in our human frailty and seek your peace. When all feels lost, encircle us in your loving arms, give us the strength to carry on. Settle our troubled hearts and help us to trust that, in your endless love, we need never be afraid.

*The Revd Philip Brooks - URC Secretary
for Ecumenical and Interfaith*

A hope greater than the allure of war John 10:10b

'I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly' 'Peace on earth, good will to all people', were words located in the context of occupation. People were desperate for a 'saviour-liberator'. The 'good news' offer of full life for all does not mean that our walls and our updated defence capability will insulate us from the evils of war. The allure of war still inhabits the imagination of whole nations. The good news, though, is that there is a movement of the heart (love) strong enough to come in weakness, neutralising fears



and offering openings towards greater understanding of each other. In offering love as antidote to the culture of death and hate, God gives rather than robs or steals. There lies our hope. This hope is grounded in God's faithfulness. It is based on the possibilities of God irrespective of how things are. It thrives even in situations that can elicit utter hopelessness – for it is based upon God breaking into our midst to transform.

Lover-of-justice-and-peace, shape our consciences and hearts according to your way of just, peaceful and loving lives. Move us beyond fear to speak with compassionate courage and to act with both conviction and humility. Give us ears, eyes, hearts and voices to discern, respond and embody hope through our actions, in private and in public. Bless us with wholeness, and through your Spirit continue to sustain us in the face of powerful forces bent on denying life.

*The Revd Dr Michael Jagessar -
URC Secretary for Global and Intercultural Ministries*

A prayer for peace

When we pray for peace,
let us not pray for
the glib peace of ignorance
or the easy peace of indifference.
But rather, we ask for
the honest peace of struggles acknowledged,
the demanding peace of forgiveness,
the longed-for peace of justice established.
Lord, grant us peace.

Mr Simeon Mitchell - URC Secretary for Church and Society

A short reflection on Micah 4:3-4

One of the first casualties of war can be the land itself as fields become battle grounds and the rhythm of agriculture is interrupted. People are fearful to work the land in case they get caught up in the fighting. Communities move to avoid conflict and food becomes scarce. We see that today as refugees flee worn torn countries unable to sustain themselves any longer.

A vision like Micah's, where communities are settled and can provide for themselves, is one we should all strive for. These words of Jesus: 'for I was hungry and you gave me food... a stranger and you welcomed me' (Matt 25:35); can challenge us afresh as we look at the world today.

Loving God

We pray for those who are uprooted by war and who seek refuge in another country, or a place that is strange to them.

When they feel rootless and alien help them to find refuge in you.

May we all value and care for our communities.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

*The Revd Elizabeth Clark - National Rural Officer for the
United Reformed and Methodist Churches*

A prayer for trust

O God, you are the source of life,

You allow us to dream of a new world,

where the water of life will flow,

the trees will bear green leaves

and nations will find healing.

Our trust is in this vision of hope.

You give us the courage

to draw strength from you now, the source of life,

O God, for ever and ever,

Amen.

from the Evangelische Kirche der Pfalz

A selection of Bible texts for personal or group study and reflection offered by the Evangelische Kirche der Pfalz

2 Kings 6:8-23

Micah 4:1-4

Matthew 5:1-10 (11-12)

John 8:31-36

John 14:27-31a

Philemon 4:6-9

1 Timothy 2:1-4

Elisha deals with the enemy

The kingdom of peace

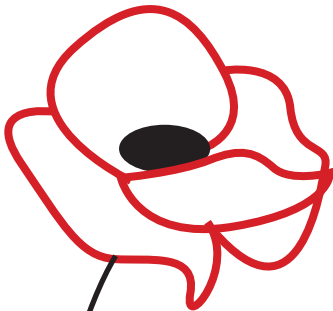
The beatitudes

The truth will make you free

My peace I give to you

The peace of God, which surpasses

God desires everyone to be saved





Remembrance hymns

A song of memory, hope and peace

Suggested tune: Lucerna Laudoniae 41 RS, 181 CH4

1. For once beauty of the Somme,
rolling hills and fertile fields,
singing birds by streams belonged,
human life and nature pealed:

*All creations' voices raised,
singing peaceful songs of praise.*

2. For the horrors of the Somme,
shells and guns and frightened men.
Whistles blew a deadly song,
noise and cries the loud refrain:

*Human voices scream and shout:
Tommy, Pomme, or Fritz and Kraut.*

*(In the second line of the chorus, the words are said, not sung,
music played more staccato)*

3. For the memories of the Somme,
deathly silence, land laid bare.
Back at home the women mourn
private wailing, public tear:

All creations' voice falls quiet ...

.....
(Musician only plays second line, fading in volume)



4. For the lessons of the Somme,
children come to learn true cost.
Swords to ploughs, their new-found psalm,
youth no more to war be lost:

*Furrows turn and skylarks sing
may God's peace on earth now ring.*

5. Yet, for healing of the Somme,
nations must from conflict cease,
Love, forgiveness be your song,
Pray and work, unite in peace:

*All creations' voices raise,
singing hopeful songs of praise.*

*Words by Martin Henninger and David Pickering
Written while visiting the Somme, May 2018*

Scripture references:

- Vs 1. singing birds by streams belong Psalm 104.12
Vs 3. women mourn, private wailing Jeremiah 31.15
Vs 4. swords to ploughs, Isaiah 2.4b

There is a PowerPoint available of the words of this hymn.
Please email Carole Sired if you would like to receive it:
carole.sired@urc.org.uk



Poppies to remember

(A hymn for Remembrance Sunday)

Suggested tune: *Onward Christian Soldiers* 543 MP

1. Poppies to remember
lives laid down in war -
hopes and bodies broken,
wounds forever raw.
Red and white and purple
tell of what's been lost,
summon us to silence
as we count the cost.

Help us to remember
now and every day
sacrifice and service,
Lord of life, we pray.

2. 'Do this to remember,'
Jesus tells his friends;
by his death securing
life that never ends.
Broken like his body,
bread on which we dine;
blood that's shed for us
recalled again in wine.

Help us to remember ...

3. Jesus, we remember
this the debt we owe;
and we pledge our service,
that the world may know
all that leads to freedom,



all that makes for peace.
Let your Kingdom come, Lord!
Let all bloodshed cease!

Help us to remember ...

*Dominic Grant - Minister of Trinity URC, Wimbledon
Words © Dominic Grant, September 2010
Reproduced by kind permission author's permission*

A note from the author: This hymn was first conceived for use at an all-age communion service on Remembrance Sunday and frames our honouring of wartime sacrifice through the lens of remembering Christ's sacrifice. It also recognises and affirms a place for the differently-coloured Remembrance poppies worn at this time, and the causes/perspectives they represent: not only the traditional red poppy for members of the armed forces and their families, but also the longstanding use of the white poppy for peace, and the more recent purple poppy for animal victims of warfare. (Animal Aid have now discontinued the promotion of the purple poppy.)



The last word

One hundred years on: A Christian commitment to peace

Our look back at the First World War, and the 100 years that have elapsed since then, has led us to a threefold recognition that:

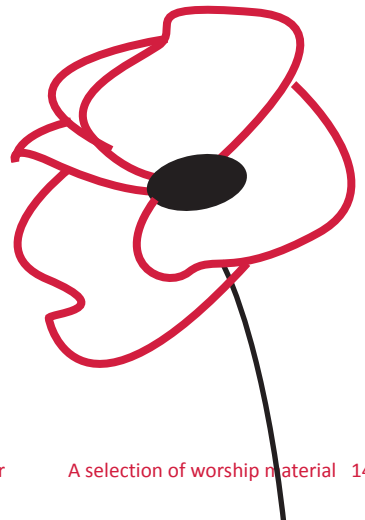
1. Peace was not possible at the time. All those involved at the time were ruled by the logic of violence, making war inevitable. But this logic proved to be a false and utterly disastrous rationale. It had already been unable to resolve the conflicts of the time and had indeed prepared the ground so that these conflicts were continued and strengthened - right up to the catastrophe of the Second World War.
2. Peace and reconciliation are possible even between former 'historical enemies'. After the catastrophe of 1945, Europe was able to find a political solution that made war between each another impossible. The European Union arose amongst those who had formerly been enemies. And there was also success in resolving the dangerous East-West conflict of the post-war period, leading to the reunion of both Germany and Europe.
3. Peace remains under threat. Despite all this, right up to today the logic of violence has lost none of its fascination. Our world is still full of conflicts today, between states themselves, internally within states, between states and terrorist organisations operating worldwide, between religions and creeds, between north and south, between poor and rich, among others. Europe is involved in all these conflicts. European colonial policies in earlier times have contributed greatly to their emergence, and they are now rebounding on Europe with, among other things, the mass exodus of refugees seeking admission into our countries - and in so doing creating new conflicts within and between the EU nations.

In this situation we Christians are reminded that Jesus Christ dismissed the logic of violence and proclaimed only the peacemakers blessed. As his followers today, we recognise afresh

that we have an obligation to peace in the face of war and that we are called to serve peace and only peace.

Thus, it is that today, one hundred years after the First World War, we make the following statement of self-commitment:

1. We commit to live peaceably in our own personal environment. We do not want to be in conflict against others, but working for them, reaching an understanding with them and a satisfactory resolution of the conflict.
2. We commit to try to carry forward those experiences of reconciliation that we have made in our personal conflicts into conflicts around us, in our church, in our society, in our state and with other states or movements.
3. We commit to be alert to recognising conflicts when they first arise, and to guard against thinking in polarised terms, which demonises an opponent.
4. We commit to take sides, but not for one of the opponents (even if we ourselves are close to them), but on behalf of a resolution of the conflict.
5. We commit to un-demonise the respective opponents, by trying to understand their motives and behaviour them, instead of stirring up agitation against them.
6. We commit to contribute towards enabling each of the parties to the conflict to consider their own motives and courses of action in a self-critical way.
7. We commit to build bridges between opponents in conflict, which can be crossed to engage in conversation and negotiation.
8. We commit to try to break the cycle of mutual retaliation by means of introducing preliminary concessions which would serve towards peace.
9. We commit to take seriously the fact that peace has not arrived when an acute conflict has ended in some way or another, but only where there is a peace accompanied by justice and where no-one lives at the expense of others, above all at the cost of the weak, the hungry, future generations



or creation itself. We therefore aim to expose and to tackle the various forms of injustice at home and throughout the world. This also means persisting in making the decision-makers in any existing or threatened conflicts aware of the victims who will bear the cost of their actions.

We have said each time 'we commit to...'

But we know very well that we are only able to fulfil all that we have committed ourselves to do, if Jesus Christ, our peacemaker gives us the strength and the freedom to do so.

And so, we end with some words from the prayer of St Francis:

O Lord, make us instruments of your peace
Where there is hatred let us bring love
Where there is injury, let us bring pardon
Where there is discord, let us bring unity
Where there is falsehood, let us bring truth
Where there is doubt, let us bring faith
Where there is despair, let us bring hope
Where there is darkness, let us bring light
Where there is sadness, let us bring joy.
Amen.

*Dr Horst Hahn Oberkirchentrat
Former Senior Church Executive, now retired*



Produced by the United Reformed Church's communication department on behalf of the ecumenical and interfaith relations office. © 2018, The United Reformed Church and Evangelische Kirche der Pfalz.



The
**United
Reformed
Church**



Evangelische Kirche
der Pfalz
(Protestantische Landeskirche)