

Remembrance Sunday 2025 The Revd Andy Braunston

Note

Remembrance Sunday ceremonies at civic memorials are usually led by Anglican or Church of Scotland clergy but usually involve ministers of other denominations. There is, of course, no rule saying this is the case and, in smaller villages where we are the only church, it may fall to us to lead such ceremonies. If you are to lead a civic service I suggest using the material prepared by the [Joint Liturgical Group for Churches Together in Britain and Ireland](#). Ruth Armstrong's Worship Notes for 9th November use the Lectionary Texts for the Day, these notes use readings chosen for Remembrance. Some churches prefer to mark Remembrance at the local memorial and then have a normal service, others prefer to combine the "normal" service with Acts of Remembrance; these notes are for those wishing to mark Remembrance with the entirety of the service.

Call to Worship

Come, all who look for peace today: **we come and worship.**

Come, all who seek to humbly follow God today: **we come and worship.**

Come, all who long for war and terror to cease; **we come and worship.**

Prayers of Approach, Confession, and Grace

We come before you, Eternal One,
with both thanksgiving and sorrow in our hearts.
We are thankful for all that You give us;
our liberty and safety, our nations' prosperity,
friends and family whom we love, even the freedom to worship in peace.

Yet we are sorry, Lord Jesus, that we have not used our freedom and blessings for good,
we've stood by whilst hard won rights are contested,
we've allowed national symbols that are supposed to unify
to become sources of hatred and division;
we have been silent when institutions, treaties,
and even people are demonised for fear we'll be ridiculed or cast out;
we have joined in blaming migrants for our ills,
and deflected the guilt from where it truly lies.

We are sorry.

We ask for time to change.

We ask for healing that we might be sources of truth and blessing in our divided world.

Knowing, Most Holy Spirit, that Your love drives out all fear,
and that Your grace forgives and changes us,
we ask that You help us to live as faithful disciples,
that we may be blessed to be a blessing to others,
helping beat swords into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks. Amen.

Prayer for Illumination

Send your Spirit, O God,
to break open Your Word to us,
that we may hear, understand, and obey,
Your insistent call to be peacemakers and salt for our earth. Amen

Readings

Isaiah 2: 2 – 4 | St Matthew 5:1-12

Reflection – Flag Day

The peoples of these islands have a complex relationship with flags. Traditionally Union flags would be flown on civic buildings often to mark special days, like Remembrance Day, royal occasions, and State Visits by foreign dignitaries. They'd be flown at half-mast to indicate national mourning. The Cross of St George is hung on Church of England buildings to indicate that denomination's English focus. In Scotland Saltires abound on buildings (and often on churches), sometimes alongside Union flags. In Wales national flags can be flown alongside Union ones and, of course, in the North of Ireland flags have been more contentious as they represent two different national identities – increasingly these contesting identities are found in Scotland and Wales too. In uniformed organisations flags have more meaning and are used in a range of ways to represent the organisation and the values it reflects; values often associated with the nations within which it operates.

Remembrance is a time when we expect to see flags. Communities gather around local memorials to those who have died in war, terror, and conflict just as our national and religious leaders gather in London, and around the UK, to reflect, remember, repent, and renew promises to work for peace. These flags link us with the past and with those whose lives were lost in conflicts old and new. We have all seen coffins draped in Union flags as the dead were returned from overseas wars; as Christians, after all, we know the power of sacrifice.

In recent months, however, well-funded campaigns have seen a huge increase in the unofficial flying of English and Union flags (and sometimes of Scottish Saltires and Welsh flags too). Instead of sacrifice, these flags represent a threat (either a response to a perceived peril or an actual attempt to intimidate). Instead of pride in a national identity, they urge something more monochrome. Instead of standing up to oppression, they suggest separation and withdrawal from the global community forged to ward off the spectres of war and hatred. Instead of a political neutrality, they reflect an uncomfortable direction in our national life.

Sacrifice seeks another's good; lives laid down in wars resulted in political, religious, and social freedoms that have allowed our nations to flourish. The horror of war led to international treaties and organisations dedicated to justice, peace, and conflict resolution. The United Nations, founded from the ashes of the Second World War, seeks to stop nations lifting swords against each other. What is now the European Union started as a coal and steel pact between countries that had been at war for centuries and allowed the ploughshares of peace to be forged from the steely spears of hatred. International conventions were written to assure safety to those fleeing hatred, terror, genocide, and persecution as the world had idly sat by watching the persecution of the Jews, and others, in the Nazi era. As we remember the sacrifices of the dead this Remembrance season, we should also remember the institutions, agreements, and attitudes that sprung from those sacrifices – and how they are all threatened now by those seeking to erase our civic memories.

Bedraggled flags hang now from our lampposts representing the limp empty promises of a cynical elite who weaponize our shared values for their own ends. Instead, let's proudly fly the values that transformed our nations in the decades following the Second World War; values that we still ask our young people to defend and even die for. Let's promise to speak truth, value diversity, welcome the stranger, shelter the oppressed, and be peacemakers in a world preparing for yet more war.

Affirmation of Faith

We believe in God, Creator, source of all life and love,
the One in whom we live, move and have our being:
and who calls us to be peacemakers and peacekeepers.

We believe in Jesus Christ,
Word incarnate, born of Mary, who lived as one of us,
healed the sick, raised the dead, taught the crowds,
challenged empire's rules, and rejected violence.
**For this He was betrayed and hunted down,
for this He was tried and tortured,
for this He was put to a shameful death on a cross.**

After three days He was raised from the dead,
defeating the powers of death and destruction,
calling us to a new life of love and liberation,
reconciling all creation to God's own self;
He was raised on high.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
who drives us out to proclaim Good News to the poor, liberation for the oppressed,
freedom to those in bondage to what their wealth can buy,
and who calls us to beat swords into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks.

And we believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church,
which is yet to be. Amen.

Intercessions

O Most High, we bring to You the needs of our world and of our own lives,
knowing you hear us when we pray and help us to change.

We pray, firstly, for the poor around us,
for the people of Jamaica and Cuba recovering from wind wrought devastation,
for those waking this day hungry and thirsty,
for those on the edge of our society;
 refugees demonised for seeking sanctuary and a safer life,
 those denied resources yet told to blame the wrong people,
 and for women, battered and bruised by male violence.

pause

We pray for those who mourn
 for those aching for family and friends they'll not see again,
 for those yearning for lovers and lives that could have been,
 for those living in the war torn ruins of our world,
 especially the people of Gaza longing for peace
 and the people of Israel longing for security.

pause

We pray for those who hunger and thirst for justice,
who see the world as it really is,
call us to change our lives and structures,

and to spoke evil's engines that the horror might stop.

pause

We pray, today for peacemakers and peace keepers,
for those working in the dangerous diplomacy of our world,
for leaders of nations and those who advise them,
and for the humble peacemakers on our streets who befriend the outsider,
counter the myths, and open their hearts and homes to outsiders.

pause

We pray, finally, for ourselves and those we love...

longer pause

We join all our prayers together as we pray as Jesus taught saying...Our Father...

Offertory

During this season our world thinks of sacrifice; the sacrifice of life and limb of those from around the world compelled to fight in our wars, the sacrifice of family, lovers, and friends who lived without those they loved, the sacrifice of entire countries as maps were drawn and redrawn over the years, and as political ideologies sought change without consent. As Christians we are drawn, again and again, to Jesus' sacrifice in laying down his life for the healing of the nations and seek to emulate his sacrificial love in our daily lives. One way we do that is to give; giving of our time, talent, and treasure is good for us. It's an antidote to our selfishness, it's a way of changing the world, it's a way of changing ourselves and so we're invited to give to God's work in this place, and across our nations and world. So let's give!

Eternal One,
we thank You for the sacrificial giving in this congregation and across our church.
We thank You for gifts of time and talent,
for the ways in which our individual gifts make a beautiful difference to our world,
and for gifts of money – given direct to the bank, or here in the plate,
gifts which fund ministry here and across our church,
gifts which make a difference,
gifts which change the world. Amen

Blessing

May the One who holds creation in sustaining love,
 the One who hears the cry of the poor,
 and the One who calls you to be peacemakers,
 enable you to work with creation to sustain and nurture it,
 to hear the cries of those longing for justice and peace,
 and enable you to help beat swords into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks,
 and the blessing of Almighty God,
 Father, Son, and Holy Spirit **or** Eternal Majesty, Incarnate Word, Eternal Spirit,
 be with you all, now and always, Amen.

Hymn Suggestions				
	RS	CH4	StF	MP
God! As With Silent Hearts We Bring To Mind			698	
It Is God Who Holds the Nations In the Hollow Of His Hand		705	705	
For The Healing Of The Nations	620	706	696	
Healing River of the Spirit		707		
The Right Hand of God Is Writing In Our Land	91	709	715	
I Have A Dream A Man Once Said		710		
What Shall We Pray For Those Who Died		712	721	
Come, All Who Look to God Today		713	678	
Lord For the Years	603	159	470	428
O (Our) God, Our Help In Ages Past	705	161	132	498
Pray For A World Where Every Child		265	527	
Judge Eternal, Throned in Splendour	626	264		395
Behold! The Mountain of the Lord	130	715		
Be Still, My Soul, the Lord Is On Your Side		691		
Make Me A Channel Of Your Peace	629	528	707	456
Put Peace Into Each Other's Hands	635	659	712	
God Is Our Strength and Refuge				188
It Came Upon the Midnight Clear That Glorious Song of Old	144	303	205	345
The Love Of God is Broad Like Beach and Meadow	108			

RS – Rejoice & Sing | CH4 – Church Hymnary 4 | StF – Singing the Faith | MP – Mission Praise