

## 2022 13<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER – REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

### Call to worship:

We carry with us the remembrances of disasters, large and small, global and local, national and personal. Each, in its own way, changes our world for ever. As we come to Remembrance Sunday, may we lay all our losses before God, trusting that we will be led to new life and fresh hope for the future.

Loving God, source of healing and hope, strengthen us for life's challenges. Help us to trust the future to you, and to remember the courage of those who have faced adversity with faith.

God of all ages, trusting in the light of your love – trusting in the permanence of your peace – trusting in the strength of your security – trusting in the promises of your kingdom, we bring you our prayers. Remembering those we love – those we miss – and those whose lives are a struggle. **Amen.**

### The words to 'For the healing of the nations' written by Fred Kaan [1929-2009] Singing the Faith 696

1 For the healing of the nations, Lord, we pray with one accord;  
for a just and equal sharing of the things that earth affords.  
To a life of love in action help us rise and pledge our word.

2 Lead us forward into freedom; from despair your world release,  
that, redeemed from war and hatred, all may come and go in peace.  
Show us how through care and goodness fear will die and hope increase.

3 All that kills abundant living, let it from the earth be banned;  
pride of status, race, or schooling, dogmas that obscure your plan.  
In our common quest for justice may we hallow life's brief span.

4 You, Creator God, have written your great name on humankind;  
for our growing in your likeness bring the life of Christ to mind;  
that by our response and service earth its destiny may find.

### Prayers:

Holy God, you are the creator of all – so we trust you for our world and beyond.  
Lord Jesus, you are the prince of peace – so we trust that one day wars will end.  
Holy Spirit, you are the breath of life – so we trust you for all creatures and all creation.  
Holy God, even in the midst of the most difficult of times, we trust you for eternity. **Amen.**

God of yesterday, today, and tomorrow, when our world is falling apart and we turn away from you,  
forgive us and help us to trust in you.  
When the whole world is being torn apart and we despair – forgive us and help us to trust in you.  
When the whole universe is out of kilter and we fear the worst – forgive us and help us to trust in you.  
Help us to stand firm, speak truth, and serve you, today and tomorrow, in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Lord Jesus, though your words are sometimes tough, you are gentle with us as we grapple with their meaning.  
Though the world is divided in so many ways, you would unite us.  
Though it sometimes seems to us that our lives cannot be mended, you give us hope, reassuring us that our lives and our world are in your hands – always. **Amen.**

Our Father who art in heaven hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come and 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.**

### **Luke 21: 5-19. The Destruction of the Temple and Signs of the End Times. [The Message]**

One day people were standing around talking about the Temple, remarking how beautiful it was, the splendour of its stonework and memorial gifts. Jesus said, "All this you are admiring so much – the time is coming when every stone in that building will end up in a heap of rubble."

They asked him: "Teacher, when is this going to happen? What clue will we get that it is about to take place?"

He said: "Watch out for the doomsday deceivers. Many leaders are going to show up with forged identities, claiming 'I'm the One' or 'The end is near'. Don't fall for any of that. When you hear of wars and uprisings, keep your head, and don't panic. This is routine history and no sign of the end."

He went on, "Nation will fight nation and ruler fight ruler, over and over. Huge earthquakes will occur in various places. There will be famines. You will think at times that the very sky is falling.

But before any of this happens, they will arrest you, and hunt you down, and drag you to court and jail. It will go from bad to worse, dog-eat-dog – everyone at your throat because you carry my name. You will end up on the witness stand, called to testify. Make up your mind right now not to worry about it. I will give you the words and wisdom that reduce all your accusers to stammers and stutters.

You'll even be turned in by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends. Some of you will be killed. There is no telling who will hate you because of me. Even so, every detail of your body and soul – even the hairs of your head – is in my care; nothing of you will be lost. Staying with it – that is what is required. Stay with it till the end. You will not be sorry for you will be saved."

### **Comment:**

Jesus was never one to promise that there would always be good times. He was well aware of the troubles which beset our fallen world – both personal and national.

There were some people admiring the Temple and its sheer beauty – and it was hardly surprising. There had been rebuilding going on for 50 years and it was becoming more and more splendid. The cloisters and the columns were made of pure white marble. There was a vine made of gold and each cluster of grapes was as tall as a man! The historian, Josephus, in his book *The War of the Jews*, wrote that the front of the Temple was 'covered all over with plates of gold'.....and at the first rising of the sun, reflected a fiery splendour – and those who looked straight at it would have to look away, just as if they were looking straight at the sun. For strangers coming upon the area, while they were still a way away, would see the Temple as if it was a mountain covered with snow, for the parts of it that were not gilt, they were exceeding white.'

It is hardly surprising, then, that it was so admired – but, as always with beautiful objects and places, there was a danger that people began to worship the beauty of the symbols of worship, and not the true subject. Jesus could sense the troubles ahead. In their attempt to make him a king, the people would already be showing signs of political unrest and Jesus could see a disaster in the making should there be a head-on clash with the Romans.

Indeed, the Temple was not finished till AD 64 and in just two years strife had already broken out and by AD70 Jerusalem had fallen, the Temple was destroyed as was the city. Over a million Jews died in this conflict and a further 97,000 were taken away as captives.

Jesus knew that there would always be wars and rumours of wars – always be earthquakes and other natural disasters. Indeed, they are still rife – and don't the media glory in it all! Just because we are Christians doesn't mean that we shall escape all this – the man-made or the natural disasters, the

persecution, or the imprisonments, but Jesus tells us not to be terrified, but to use the time to witness – to know for ourselves that he is always with us throughout all the troubles. And though we may not survive, we shall not truly perish – for us death is not the last thing. Now that truly is Good News! We are not alone for our God is always with us– even in the very dark days – and he gives us the power to endure through the gift of eternal life.

At Remembrance we recall all those who have died or been maimed in war – the great World Wars and the many between them, and since – culminating just now with that in Ukraine. We hear the stories from earlier wars – and we recall the bravery, the courage, the selflessness of so many. Nowadays, we see the horrors of war brought to us daily by the media – we see the dreadful waste of lives – we see the towns laid waste and realise the toll on the people both now and to come. We see the heroism – we see how ordinary people step up and give of themselves to save their neighbour.

Sometimes it can all seem truly despairing – will the warmongers of the world ever learn that starting war is never right. Will they ever learn that just because they want something, they cannot just grab it from others. As Jesus warned, it has gone on through history. So we continue to honour those who fought for freedom and against tyranny – and we must work for peace.

### **ACT OF REMEMBRANCE**

**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.**

**We will remember them.**

**When you go home, tell them of us and say,**

**For your tomorrow, we gave our today.**

### **Meditation of a listener to Jesus [Nick Fawcett – An Amazing Man C]**

Wars? Insurrections? Earthquakes, famine, and plague?

I thought Jesus came to bring an end to such things – to make a better world, free from pain and sorrow. But here he was talking as though it were part of God's plan, necessary for the fulfilment of his purpose. What was going on? How did it fit together?

I wrestled with such questions for years afterwards – the disasters and calamities of this world more than once threatening my newfound faith. But finally I understood.

God doesn't will such things – in fact, they cut as deep into his heart as ours – but there's no quick fix to spirit them away, for they are part of the fabric of life – integral to the world as we know it – and unless he destroys all that, and us with it, we must learn to live with them as best we can.

There have always been wars – always been catastrophes – and so it will be until the time comes for a new heaven and a new earth, when heartbreak and suffering will be no more.

Don't despair, then, in the trials and traumas of this world, seeing in them reason to doubt his love.

See in them rather proof of how much we need him, and keep faith that, come what may, one day his will shall be done and his kingdom come.

### **Prayers:**

We want to believe, Lord, to trust in your purpose, but we find it hard sometimes for so much seems to deny your love.

We see people broken by sickness, violence, and disaster – lives blighted by poverty and hunger – a world scarred by greed, injustice, and war – and we wonder why you let it be.

Teach us that you not only feel our pain but long to answer it; that, however hard it is to see, you are always at work, seeking to bring good out of evil, hope from despair, life after death.  
Help us, then, to keep faith, trusting that in the fullness of time your kingdom will come on earth, just as it is in heaven. **Amen.**

Living God, this is a time to remember – we remember the awful cost of war – we remember the millions who gave their lives for the cause of freedom – we remember the courage and heroism, fear and pain, grief and tragedy of so many.

We remember all this and much more besides – the ones who still mourn the ones they have lost – those whose lives are blighted by war – those scarred in body, mind, or spirit – those for whom warfare has meant life can never be the same again.

We remember in our prayers those in the armed forces, charged with keeping the peace in countries across the world – their work often involving months away from family and friends – and often in danger themselves, some never coming home again.

Lord, give wisdom to all who work for peace, so that a more secure future may be ensured for all.

Give courage to those who strive for justice, so that the causes of conflict may be overcome.

Give strength to those who seek to break down barriers, that divisions over race, colour, creed and culture may be ended.

Grant that wherever war, or the threat of war, continues to haunt lives, a way of reconciliation may be found, and harmony established between people and nations.

So, living God, we remember the cost of war and the price of peace.

Help us to go on remembering, tomorrow and every day – and help us to do all in our power to work for your kingdom, here on earth.

At the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember them, in the name of Christ. **Amen.**

### **The words to 'O God our help in ages past' written by Isaac Watts [1674-1748] Singing the Faith 132**

1 O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,  
our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home.

2 Under the shadow of thy throne thy saints have dwelt secure;  
sufficient is thine arm alone, and our defence is sure.

3 before the hills in order stood, or earth received her frame,  
from everlasting thou art God, to endless years the same.

4 A thousand ages in thy sight are like an evening gone,  
short as the watch that ends the night before the rising sun.

5 The busy tribes of flesh and blood, with all their cares and fears,  
are carried downward by the flood and lost in following years.

6 Time, like an ever-rolling stream, bears all its sons away;  
they fly forgotten, as a dream dies at the opening day.

7 O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,  
be thou our guard while life shall last, and our eternal home.

### **Closing Prayer and Blessing:**

Loving God, may the peace for which we pray begin here and now in our hearts, and so may we be instruments of your peace, bringing healing to our broken world, and harmony between nations.

And may the blessing of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be with us and with all in your troubled world, this day and throughout eternity. **Amen**