

Dear friends,

This week I am sending you some of the prayers and hymns which we shall have at Seaton Methodist Church this Sunday and hope that you find them helpful on this day of commemoration of all who have given their lives for their country and their fellow humans.

Every blessing, Margaret

Almighty God, we are here now to remember and learn – to remember the lessons of the past: the cost of war and the price of peace; the scope of human depravity but also the extent of human self-sacrifice. Help us to learn those lessons – to live and work for peace – to fight only what is evil and corrupt – to serve and not to count the cost – to give our all in the cause of a better world.

Almighty God – we remember all that you have done – your creative acts – your mighty deeds throughout history – your dealings with your people – your gift of Christ – and your love experienced daily in our lives. Forgive us that we so often, and so easily, do forget. We fail to remember your sovereign and transforming power – to remember you in the good times as well as the bad – to see you in the fellowship of your Church – to count our many blessings; indeed, we forget to recognise your hand at work in every moment of our lives.

Almighty God, through all things you remember us – help us always to remember you.

Remind us of all that we owe, lest we forget. We ask this in the name of Christ. Amen.

Foreign Field. [Unravelling the Mysteries by Marjorie Dobson. Copyright 2019 Stainer and Bell]

In mud-bespattered ranks men marched through foreign fields – fields once fertile as the farms at home. Their hopes, once high, soon shattered by mud, gas, guns, barbed wire and no-man's land. The fields were wet with rain and scarlet blood and vomit – peppered with shells, bullets, bodies and trenches. No grass or crops remained – no trees or hedges stood – no animals roamed, except for injured horses in those days when mounted cavalry believed they still had purpose.

And the columns of men kept coming.

And more ranks of men were dying till the day the war was over.

More than a century passes – and fields, now fertile once more, are peppered with scarlet poppies – but still sown with seeds of war as shrapnel and shells, once buried deep, yield to the turning of the plough's strong blade. Nature turns back the pages of time, but the scars of battle run deep.

And pristine rows of headstones march in orderly perfection around the sites of former battles, while massive monuments announce the names of those who have no grave.

And people still keep coming to commemorate the dying and to pray for peace for the living as the poppy petals flutter.

Within the lines of another Marjorie Dobson poem – *One Hundred years Ago* – she wrote lines which is true of all caught up in conflict now as then:

'How brave they were.....who fought the fight and then, watching their comrades die, went on to fight again.

Waste – [by G. A. Studdert Kennedy. The Bumper Book of Resources Volume One – www.kevinmayhew.com]

Waste of Muscle, waste of Brain,

Waste of Patience, waste of Pain.

Waste of manhood, waste of Wealth.
Waste of Blood, and waste of Tears.
Waste of Youth's most precious years.
Waste of ways the saints have trod.
Waste of Glory – waste of God.
War!

The words to 'Lest We Forget' written by Michael Forster and sung to the tune 'Finlandia' which is also used for 'Be still my soul'.

1 Lest we forget, O God of love, remind us
how you detest the spectacle of war;
let us recall the errors now behind us,
firmly resolved to tread that path no more.
When passions rage, when fear and hatred blind us,
lest we forget, O God, let us recall.

2 Lest we forget the agony and slaughter
that lie behind the victor's public face.
let us recall the tears of wives and daughters,
the broken dreams fine words cannot replace.
Let not our hopes dissolve in fire and water;
lest we forget, O God, let us recall.

3 Lest we forget the rapid escalation,
beyond our pow'r to forecast or control,
let us recall how nuclear conflagration
scarred for all time creation's very soul
Then fire with hope the hearts of ev'ry nation;
lest we forget, O God, let us recall.

4 Lest we forget the power and the glory
that brought us through the desert and the grave,
let us recall your people's ancient story –
the pow'r of love to reconcile and save.
Love has redeemed the world from pain and fury;
lest we forget, O God, let us recall.

Prayer: [Bumper Book of Resources – Book One, Copyright 2015]

Loving God, we are reminded today of how easy it is to speak of peace, yet how difficult it is to pursue it – of how straightforward it sounds to talk of breaking down barriers, yet how demanding it is to actually live as peacemakers. Yet we are reminded also that this is what you want from us – to live in such a way that we heal wounds rather than create them – that we unite rather than divide – that we reconcile rather than separate.

Lord, we confess things within us which make for conflict – pride, greed, envy, intolerance, our nursing of petty grievances, our unwillingness to forgive, our preoccupation with self and lack of time for others; so much that we are often as guilty of as any other.

For our share in the world's pain, Lord, we are sorry.
Rescue us from all that keeps us apart and put a new spirit within us – a spirit of love and openness,
acceptance and understanding, healing and reconciliation.
May the peace we pray for 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.
We pray in the name of Christ, Our Lord and saviour. Amen.

ACT OF REMEMBRANCE

We remember all who have given their lives in the service of humankind, all who have given their lives
for freedom, justice and the hope of peace.

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.

When you go home, tell them of us say: 'For your tomorrow we gave our today.'

.....
Lord, we honour before you today in this act of remembrance, all who have given their lives in war for
the defence of this nation and for the principles of freedom, justice and humanity.
We realise with solemn gratitude that many of the good things we now enjoy have been paid for by the
service and sacrifice of those who have gone before us.
Help us always to show respect for their memory, both by preserving the benefits they have
bequeathed to us and by passing them on in our turn to future generations.
We pray for all those who still mourn the loss of loved ones through the conflict – and we pray for
those who are this very day caught up in the pain and loss in conflicts across the world which
separate families, friends and neighbours – and which destroy homes, possessions and whole
towns and villages.
We ask for your energy and grace for them - and for all who go to their aid in rebuilding their stricken
lives and communities.
Lord, forgive us the fear, hatred, greed & selfishness which can so easily lead to war & teach us a
better way.
Give us a true love of peace and justice & make us more willing to share with others the resources of
this planet.
Help us to see one another as members of one human family with one Father in heaven and give us
the will to work not only for the good of our own people, but for the good of all.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer: 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.

Tears of Victory

For over 80 years in Britain, we have enjoyed peace. There have, of course, been confrontations
involving British forces but civilians at home have been largely untouched by the fighting –
though still, of course, there have been those whose lives have been changed through loss or
terrible injury. There is a danger that we shall come to take peace for granted, forgetting the
price at which it was won and the ease with which it could be lost. This year we have
commemorated VE and VJ days 80 years on. At the time there was much celebration and
dancing – but not for everyone. I found this piece in *Prayers for All Seasons written by Nick
Fawcett – copyright 1998 Nick Fawcett.*

There were crowds in the streets of London the day that peace was signed – they sang in exultation – they danced, they wined, they dined – for the dreadful war was over, the slaughter at an end, and now the broken world could slowly start to mend.

But among the celebrations, the cheerful happy cries, a multitude were weeping – no laughter in their eyes. For these there was no reason to share the festive mood – their hearts were bowed with sorrow, their every thought subdued. For while the throng around them gave vent to shouts of joy – they grieved a loving husband, they mourned their precious boy. They thought of dads or brothers – of cousins, nephews too – of uncles, colleagues, trusted friends – so many men and women they once knew.

So when some talk of glory, of mighty deeds once done, think also of the suffering with which it all was won. And when they speak of victory upon that glorious day, remember all those buried in fields so far away.

It's true that time's a healer – and it was all so long ago – it's true we've learned to live with those we once called foe; but many are still haunted by thoughts of those they lost – still struggling with their feelings, still counting out the cost.

So if you would pay tribute and honour those who fell, then work for peace and justice, and make your freedom tell.

There is no way more fitting we can repay the debt – nor better way of saying that we will not forget.

The words to 'O God, our help in ages past' written by Isaac Watts [1674-1748] StF 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.

Close: In a world still torn by conflicts – send us out as makers of peace.

In a world of destruction – send us out as menders and builders.

In a world of hurt – send us out as healers.

Where worlds are ending – send us out with faith in new beginnings. Amen.