

**Circuit Zoom Service for Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> November, 2022, Remembrance Sunday & the Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time Prepared by the Revd. Alan Haine**

**Note:** If for any reason you need to change the order in which the items come in this service, please feel free to do so: e.g. if you wish to observe the two minutes' silence as near as possible to 11.0. a.m.

**Call to Worship** (from Psalm 46): Come and see what the Lord has done. See what amazing things God has done on earth. God stops wars all over the world; God breaks bows, destroys spears, and sets shields on fire. "Stop fighting," the Lord says, "and know that I am God, supreme among the nations, supreme over the world." So let us praise God who is the Lord of peace and whose Kingdom will only fully come when war is overcome by love.

**Hymn: 722 (Singing the Faith) When mountains that we thought secure**  
**No video Available**

<p>1 When mountains that we thought secure lie crumbled where we stand and pain and helplessness endure — all from another's hand — help us to bear the prophet's mark, to stand apart from hate and witness to the Father's call for justice in the land.</p> <p>2 God is our strength and refuge still though all the earth give way ; our help at every time of ill, the light of our dark day. And as his people in the world we bear the scars of grief, but echo faith's resounding note — and still for justice pray.</p>	<p>3 There is a place of holiness where God makes warfare cease. There is a day of hopefulness, a promised time of peace. So, here today, we bear the pain of inhumanity, but pledge our lives to live for truth so justice may increase.</p> <p>Gareth Hill (<i>b.</i> 1956)</p>
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**Or 188 (Mission Praise) God is our strength and refuge**

**Or 783 (Hymns & Psalms) Thy kingdom come, O God**

**Prayer of Adoration and Confession:**

Loving Father, we live in a world where so often people try to get what they want by hurting each other: by making war rather than being peacemakers. But we praise You now for those people alive in our world today who are trying to be peacemakers: trying to show Your love and to bring together those who have had a disagreement or who are even fighting each other. We thank You especially for people we have known who have spread peace and love and who have tried to follow the way of Jesus. For during His earthly life Jesus was always someone who tried to spread real peace by what He said and by what He did. We remember how He healed the sick and how He reached out to people from whom others turned away, helping them to find a peace they had never known before. And so we praise You, Lord God, because Jesus was even willing to die on the Cross to make it possible for people everywhere to know You love them and to begin to live in peace with You and with the people around them.

On this Remembrance Sunday we remember so many others throughout history who have given their lives in the hope of making this world a better place.

Help us now to thank You for what they have done for us and even more for what Jesus has done for us. And yet, Father, it is not enough for us to say we are thankful: we must also show our thanks by the way we live, by being those who are channels of Your love and peace wherever we go. How sorry we are that so often we do not live like that and that instead we hurt others as we try to get what we want and in effect make war rather than spreading peace. May we know Your forgiveness now and also may we know Jesus' help to become real peacemakers: those who like Jesus give all we can to make our part of the world a more loving place. We offer all these prayers in the Name of Jesus Christ **our Lord. Amen.**

**Declaration of Forgiveness:** The Lord Jesus says to each one of us: “Your sins are forgiven, so go in peace to sin no more.” **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

**The Lord's Prayer**

**Reflection/Introduction to Two Minutes Silence:**

In a few minutes we shall be standing to be silent for two minutes to remember those who have given their lives in war, those who have been injured and those who miss the victims of war. Today of course is the Sunday nearest 11<sup>th</sup> November, the day when the First World War ended at the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour of the morning. I have no difficulty remembering the 11<sup>th</sup> November because it happens to be my birthday, although I don't go back quite as far as 11th November 1918 when the First World War ended. The first time the two minutes' silence was observed was on 11<sup>th</sup> November a year later in 1919, 103 years ago this year.

The Manchester Guardian newspaper reported what happened then: “The first stroke of eleven produced a magical effect...The tram cars glided into stillness, motors ceased to cough and fume and stopped dead, and the mighty-limbed dray horses, hunched back upon their loads and stopped also, seeming to do it of their own volition.

“Someone took off his hat, and with a nervous hesitancy the rest of the men bowed their heads also. Here and there an old soldier could be detected slipping unconsciously into the posture of ‘attention’. An elderly woman wiped her eyes, and the man beside her looked white and stern. Everyone stood very still... The hush deepened. It had spread over the whole city and become so pronounced as to impress one with a sense of audibility. It was a silence which was almost pain...And the spirit of memory brooded over it all.”

Those people back in 1919 could remember so many friends and family who'd been killed in the war. Sadly, as we all know only too well, wars have continued since 1918 and are still going on today, not least in Ukraine, and all too many have been killed in these wars.

Some of us sharing in this service may ourselves remember people who have been killed or injured in war. Others of us may not have such memories, but, whoever we are, we all need to be those who work for peace and live in peace. We should begin this quest for peace right where we are with those people that we find it hard to like.

Jesus was someone who always sought to bring true peace to the people He met, so may we seek to follow His way. For it is only if ordinary people like you and me try to spread peace that our world can become a happier and better place.

Jesus gave His life on the cross to bring true peace: and if we are to follow where He has led, we too may have to make sacrifices and give of ourselves. But in whatever ways we can, let us seek to be channels of peace to the people we meet.

**Hymn: 712 (Singing the Faith) Put peace into each other's hands**

**or 776 (Hymns & Psalms) Make me a channel of Your peace**

[Make me a channel of your peace - YouTube](#)

<p>1 Put peace into each other's hands and like a treasure hold it, protect it like a candle-flame, with tenderness enfold it.</p> <p>2 Put peace into each other's hands with loving expectation ; be gentle in your words and ways, in touch with God's creation.</p> <p>3 Put peace into each other's hands like bread we break for sharing ; look people warmly in the eye : our life is meant for caring.</p>	<p>4 As at Communion, shape your hands into a waiting cradle ; the gift of Christ receive, revere, united round the table.</p> <p>5 Put Christ into each other's hands, he is love's deepest measure ; in love make peace, give peace a chance, and share it like a treasure.</p> <p>Fred Kaan (1929–2009)</p>
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**Two Minutes' Silence:**

**Leader:** During the silence some of us will have our own memories of wars and the suffering they cause,

but those of us who can't remember wars ourselves can ask our Lord Jesus to help us to be those who seek to live in peace with everyone around us. Can I now invite everyone who is able to stand, please?

--Silence--

**After the silence, someone reads:** "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."

**People: We will remember them**

**Leader:** We remember Ukraine, we remember Yemen, we remember Afghanistan, we remember Palestine, we remember so many places in our world still plagued by war. Lord, we ask that you will guide the leaders of the world so that they may count the cost of war and seek to make peace. Help us to follow that same path in our own lives, to be true followers of Jesus and show that we follow Jesus by the love we share with others. We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Hymn: 132 (Singing the Faith) or 358 (Hymns & Psalms) O God , our help in ages past**  
[ST ANNE-O GOD, OUR HELP IN AGES PAST - YouTube](#)

<p>1 O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home.</p> <p>2 Under the shadow of thy throne thy saints have dwelt secure ; sufficient is thine arm alone, and our defence is sure.</p> <p>3 Before the hills in order stood or earth received her frame, from everlasting thou art God, to endless years the same.</p> <p>4 A thousand ages in thy sight are like an evening gone, short as the watch that ends the night before the rising sun.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>6 Time, like an ever-rolling stream, bears all its sons away ; they fly forgotten, as a dream dies at the opening day.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Isaac Watts (1674–1748)</p>
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**1<sup>st</sup> Lesson: 2 Thessalonians 3, verses 6 to 13**

**Introduction to Lesson:** Paul is concerned that some of the Thessalonians are living in idleness rather than working hard. Perhaps they had misunderstood the previous letter from him as meaning that they should give up work because the Lord Jesus was coming back soon. But the best way to be ready for Jesus, whenever He comes, is to be engaged in the Lord's work.

**Responsive Reading: 820 (Singing the Faith)**

**Introduction to Reading:** This is actually Psalm 98, a psalm that looks forward to God's coming judgement but which also celebrates God's victory which is not one involving war, but one gained through love and faithfulness.

**Gospel: St. Luke 21, verses 5 to 19**

**Introduction to Lesson:** Jesus speaks of the coming destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and of the hard times which lie ahead for those who follow Him. When these times arrive, it may seem like the end of the world, but in fact God will still be with them. They must simply carry on doing the tasks and living the way that Jesus has taught them.

**Sermon: Preparing for the End**

Sometimes people ask me what did I do before I became a minister. Did I ever have a “real job”? The honest answer to that question is “no”: I went straight from university into training for ministry, so I never really made an honest living out in the big wide world. True, I have given a talk entitled “Real Jobs I Have Done” about the jobs I did whilst waiting to go to university and then in my holidays from college. Yet sometimes even now people I meet outside the Church still ask me what I really did for a living as if being a minister for 40 years was not enough. I have to say to them that with at least two churches to look after as minister as well as other responsibilities as the Superintendent of a Circuit, there wasn’t much time to do anything else, even if I had wanted to do more.

Yet in some Christian churches they don’t think it is right to have ministers who do no other work apart from Christian ministry. When I was serving in Bristol 40 years ago now there was an independent church very near to one of my churches. Their pastor worked as a teacher and did not receive any money from the Church. It was not so easy when there was a funeral because he had to get time off school, but he tried to maintain the principle, which came from the apostle Paul, of not being paid for his ministry.

For Paul was quite adamant that he did not want to burden his fellow-Christians with paying for his keep. Several times in his letters he stresses the fact that he never demanded any support from the churches he dealt with, but that he made his own living. In our reading from 2 Thessalonians he made just this point when he wrote concerning Timothy, Silas and himself: “We were not idle when we were with you, and we did not eat anyone’s bread without paying for it; but with toil and labour we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you.”

The book of Acts in the New Testament tells us that Paul’s trade was tentmaking and that that was what he did to earn his keep. I must say I don’t think I would be any use at that at all. As I remember, needlework at primary school was torture to me and I used to spend most of the lesson each week trying in vain to thread the needle.

But in 2 Thessalonians Paul refers to his own situation because he was concerned about the fact that some of the members of the Church in Thessalonica were living in idleness.

Why were they doing that? Were they just lazy? Paul calls them “busybodies”, so perhaps they liked meddling in other people’s business, but weren’t so keen on doing their own. The usual explanation is that they had misunderstood the first letter of Paul to the Thessalonians which told them to prepare for Jesus’ return and for the end of the world, as if Christ was coming very soon. So some of the Thessalonians gave up their normal work in order to be ready to greet Jesus when He came. Throughout history there have been times when some Christians and Christian sects have acted in a similar way.

In about the year 1000 A.D., some Christians thought that the Book of Revelation implied that Jesus would return 1,000 years after His original coming to the world and so they gave up work and climbed the nearest mountain waiting for Him. They had a long wait as did others at the time of the Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries who thought God was so active in the revival of religion that Jesus must come back soon. Yet again they were sadly disappointed. The Jehovah’s Witnesses originally believed that Jesus would return in the year 1914 and so they got ready for that, but since then the date has repeatedly been put off as Christ has not returned.

I can understand why some Christians in 2022 wonder if Christ may return soon because of the terrible situation the world is in, what with Covid, climate change and global warming and, last but by no means least, the war in Ukraine and its terrible consequences not only for Ukraine, but for the whole world because of its effects on trade. Yes on this Remembrance Sunday it is tragic for us to remember that, after all the wars of the last 100 years or so, wars are still going on with such horrific effects. Could this indeed be a sign that the Lord Jesus is about to make His Second Coming?

In our Gospel reading Jesus Himself was talking about all sorts of trials that were to happen to the world and to the Church, so that people would think Jesus was about to return. Some would even claim to be Jesus returned to the world, but Jesus told His followers to ignore such people. He said that His followers should be prepared for persecution and all sorts of difficulties while they were waiting for Him to return. They were to be faithful witnesses to Him, but He did not say they should give up their ordinary work.

In his Second Letter to the Thessalonians, Paul made it quite clear that, if his readers had thought he meant them to give up work in order to prepare for Jesus’ return, they had been quite mistaken. On the contrary, Paul expected them to follow his example not only in witnessing to their faith, but also in working hard to earn their own keep.

That verse where Paul says “Anyone unwilling to work should not eat” has often been taken out of context to justify harsh measures against those who are unemployed. As always, we need to see scripture in context

for not only was Paul talking to Christians who expected Jesus to return very soon, but also in those days, people were living in a different economic situation where you could usually get a job fairly easily. It might not be a very good job, but you could get one as a servant or doing some menial tasks.

2,000 years later in the United Kingdom, we live in a very different situation. If people lose a job today, it may be in an area which is devoted almost exclusively to one line of work. Think of when the coal mines closed. In most of those areas, there was hardly any other work. In general it was not the case that those former miners were unwilling to work, but simply that there were no jobs available unless they moved far away from the area where they had lived all their lives. Some of them did move, but it meant considerable sacrifice both for them and their families.

Not so many years ago, the experts were forecasting that a time would soon arrive when, to enable everybody to have a job, working hours would be drastically cut for many people. It doesn't seem to have happened like that at all, does it? And in recent years they have raised the retirement age and we seem to be short of workers even though unemployment has gone down.

But certainly most people are not working so many hours as the average person did 100 years ago. Most people have more leisure time than they did. Yet Christians ever since St. Paul have often found it difficult to accept that it is good to have free time. Often it has seemed that to be a good person means working not only hard, but all the hours God sends.

Those of us who are Protestant Christians are said to have a particular work ethic which involves the idea that working hard and long pleases God, but that having holidays and taking free time is idling and wasting time. John Wesley was very much of this opinion. He himself never stopped very long in any place because he always had to be moving on. He travelled well over 200,000 miles and preached over 40,000 sermons. Samuel Johnson, the 18<sup>th</sup> century wit and writer who was a convinced Christian loved to speak to John Wesley, but wrote: "John Wesley's conversation is good, but he is never at leisure. He is always obliged to go at a certain hour. This is very disagreeable to a man who loves to fold his legs and have out his talk, as I do."

But what he did himself, John Wesley also expected of the Methodist people, especially of those who were preachers. In his "12 Rules of a Helper" the very first is "Be diligent, never be unemployed a moment, never be triflingly employed. Never while away time, nor spend any more time at any place than is strictly necessary."

That way of living was passed onto Methodist ministers down the years. In the 1960's at my training college, the principal was Dr. Flemington. That was before my time, but I later heard stories about him. Apparently if any student was absent from morning prayers, Dr. Flemington would go round to their room with a thermometer since the only valid excuse for not being in prayers was being ill. My Superintendent Minister in the first Circuit where I served as a minister was Arnold Morris. Arnold was a wonderful man, a superb pastor with a great sense of humour, but he used to say he didn't believe in holidays. He rarely took a real holiday because of this feeling that he had to go on working all the time.

Historically Methodists have often tended to be like Martha in the New Testament who worked so hard to entertain the Lord when he came to her house as compared to her sister Mary who preferred to sit at Jesus' feet and simply listen to Him. Yes, Methodists have often been those who always had to be doing something or else they felt they had failed.

I'm not sure if this is still as true as it once was, but those of you who have been brought up as Methodists may have come across this in others and maybe have been affected yourselves. This Puritan attitude certainly has its strong points, but there is surely a need to see that there is a time for leisure and for ceasing from activity for a time. We all need a break or a holiday at some point or the pressure will be too much for us. We need time to be with our friends and families which will do them good and do us good too. As Christians we need not only to be active in well-doing like Martha, but also to find time to be still and quiet with the Lord like Mary.

Going back to our Gospel reading, perhaps we need to ask ourselves what we should be doing to prepare for Jesus' return? If we thought He was coming tomorrow or even tonight, how should we get ready? By working as hard as possible at our daily tasks? By doing His work? By worship? By being with friends and families and enjoying the world God has made? A case could be made for each of those things. In our Gospel Jesus forecast the destruction of the Temple-building, but we are living through a time when the institution of the Church in this country seems to be disintegrating. So you could argue that we should be spending our time keeping the Church going and, more than that, reaching out to others to share with them the faith which means so much to us. Certainly, whatever we do, we must be faithful to the Lord, as Jesus

urged His first disciples in the Gospel. But I am sure that the Lord is not only concerned with what happens in the Church and what happens where we work. No, the Lord is concerned with the whole of our lives, including our family relationships and our friends as well as our own physical and mental well-being. To be prepared for the Lord, in the end means keeping those two great commandments to love God and to love our neighbours as we love ourselves. That last one means looking after ourselves rather than pushing ourselves beyond the limit so that we are no use to God or anyone else. It means keeping everything in proportion, giving the right amount of time to Christian witness and service, the right amount of time to work and the right amount of time for ourselves and our families and friends.

Well, after this sermon you may feel that I should have got a real job rather than become a minister. But most of the churches have continued to take the line that there should be those who are paid enough to live on so that they can give all their working time to serving the Church and its witness. Personally I'm glad of that because I don't know what I would have done if I had had to earn my living as well as caring for the Church (although I certainly would not have become a tentmaker).

Paul was certainly right in encouraging the Thessalonians not to be idle, but that does not mean that we have to do nothing but work or that it is sinful to have leisure time. We Christians should enjoy our free time and should encourage others to use their leisure well by the example we set.

If Jesus returns tomorrow, He will not expect us to be working for our living or doing something very holy at that precise moment, but He will expect us to be those who show our love for God, for our neighbour and for ourselves in the way we use the whole of our time.

And remember in the end our hopes do not depend on our works or our achievements at all. That is the very opposite of the Gospel. For the Gospel says that we live by faith in Christ, the one who has already done the real work by His life, death and resurrection. Yet that work continues still and never stops for it is the work of love.

May God enable us to be ready for Jesus by being faithful witnesses to that Love in our work and in our leisure, within the Church, but also far beyond it.

**Hymn: 658 (Singing the Faith) or 785 (Hymns & Psalms) A charge to keep I have**

[A Charge to Keep I Have - YouTube](#)

<p>1 A charge to keep I have : a God to glorify ; a never-dying soul to save, and fit it for the sky ;</p> <p>2 To serve the present age, my calling to fulfil ; O may it all my powers engage to do my Master's will !</p>	<p>3 Arm me with jealous care, as in your sight to live ; and O your servant, Lord, prepare a strict account to give !</p> <p>4 Help me to watch and pray, and on yourself rely, so shall I not my trust betray, nor love within me die.</p> <p>Charles Wesley (1707–1788)</p>
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**Prayers of Intercession:**

Response at end of each section:

**Leader: Lord, may Your Kingdom come**

**People: May Your will be done.**

Lord God, we continue to remember all those still suffering as a result of the wars of the last hundred years: those who have been injured themselves or who have to care for the injured or who have been bereaved on account of war. We think particularly of people we know personally. And we also pray again for those suffering as a result of wars and conflicts that are still continuing now in Ukraine, in Yemen, in Afghanistan, in Palestine or wherever it may be. We don't know if these wars are a sign that Jesus is about to return, but we pray that God's Kingdom may draw nearer as the nations learn to live together in peace and to work with each other to combat climate change and all the other problems the world faces:

**Leader: Lord, may Your Kingdom come:**

**People: May Your will be done.**

Jesus also spoke about the persecution of His followers as a possible sign of His imminent return. So we remember Christians today who are suffering for their faith in many countries of the world, not being able to worship openly and sometimes being imprisoned, tortured or even losing their lives. We pray too for those in this and other countries who face persecution in more subtle ways, being ridiculed for what they believe or passed over for promotion. We ask that You will give Christians the strength to be faithful and to go on loving those who torment them, so that, however long it may be until Christ returns to this world, Christians may witness to His kingship and His loving will.

**Leader:** Lord, may Your Kingdom come:

**People:** **May Your will be done.**

We also remember that just as the Temple in Jerusalem was shattered and destroyed by the Romans as Jesus foresaw, so the Church today is in so many ways shattered and divided and Christian fellowship spoiled by apathy, hypocrisy and lack of love. We pray that God's Kingdom may draw nearer as Christians draw closer to Christ and the Holy Spirit overcomes their divisions and bring them closer together.

**Leader:** Lord, may Your Kingdom come:

**People:** **May Your will be done.**

Finally, we ask that you will be near to all those who are sick and in need at this time, especially any known to us.

*(names may be mentioned at this point).*

May each one of us seek to share Christ's love with those in need and in every way possible may we grow in that love, so that we will be ready for Christ whenever He comes.

**Leader:** Lord, may Your Kingdom come:

**People:** **May Your will be done.**

We bring all our prayers in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Hymn: 188 (Singing the Faith) or 246 (Hymns & Psalms) There's a light upon the mountains**

[HOLYOKE-THERE'S A LIGHT UPON THE MOUNTAINS - YouTube](#)

1 There's a light upon the mountains, and the day is at the spring,  
when our eyes shall see the beauty and the glory of the King ;  
weary was our heart with waiting, and the night-watch seemed so long ;  
but his triumph-day is breaking, and we hail it with a song.

2 There's a hush of expectation, and a quiet in the air ;  
and the breath of God is moving in the fervent breath of prayer :  
for the suffering, dying Jesus is the Christ upon the throne,  
and the travail of our spirit is the travail of his own.

3 He is breaking down the barriers, he is casting up the way ;  
he is calling for his angels to build up the gates of day :  
but his angels here are human, not the shining hosts above ;  
for the drum-beats of his army are the heart-beats of our love.

4 Hark ! We hear a distant music, and it comes with fuller swell ;  
'tis the triumph-song of Jesus, of our King, Immanuel :  
Zion, go now forth to meet him ; and, my soul, be swift to bring  
all your finest and your noblest for the triumph of our King !

Henry Burton (1840–1930)

**The Blessing:** May we go out to serve and love the present age, offering the best we can to greet the coming of our King, whenever that coming may take place; and may the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit remain with us always. **Amen.**