



The  
United  
Reformed  
Church

The United Reformed Church in Lion Walk  
Christ Church United Reformed Church  
The United Reformed Church at Chappel

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Call to Worship:

In a world filled with violence and war,  
**we come together to celebrate the promise of peace.**

In a world filled with tyranny and oppression,  
**we come together to celebrate the promise of justice for all.**

In a world filled with hunger and greed,  
**we come together to celebrate the promise of plenty for all.**

Our hope is in the name of the Almighty God,  
**the Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer of heaven and earth.**

Prayer/Meditation:

Remember with clear eyes the horrific cost of war.

**Remember with deep sorrow those who killed and were killed.**

Remember with grief the blood-stained battlefields.

**Remember with tears the rending of people from their homes.**

Remember with compassion the bereaved and the wounded.

**Remember with reverence those who risked their lives for peace.**

Remember with tenderness the children's longing for freedom.

**Remember with gratefulness all who forgave their enemies.**

Remember with hope that the kingdom is planted with small seeds.

**Remember with confidence that faith, hope and love abide.**

Gracious Lord, we dream of a world free of poverty and oppression, and we yearn for a world free of vengeance and violence. And we pray for your peace.

When our hearts ache for the victims of war and oppression, help us to remember that you healed people simply by touching them..., and give us faith in our ability to comfort and heal bodies and minds and spirits that have been broken by violence.

When the injustice of this world seems too much for us to handle, help us to remember that you fed five thousand people with only five loaves of bread and two fish..., and give us hope that what we have to offer will turn out to be enough, too.

When fear of the power and opinions of others tempts us not to speak up for the least among us, help us to remember that you dared to turn over the tables of money changers..., and give us the courage to risk following you without counting the cost.

When we feel ourselves fill with anger at those who are violent and oppressive, help us remember that you prayed for those who killed you..., and give us compassion for our enemies, too.

When we tell ourselves that we have given all we can to bring peace to this world, help us to remember your sacrifice... , and give us the miracle of losing a little more of ourselves in serving you and our neighbors.

When people around us don't agree and think differently,  
**Lord, teach us to listen and understand.**

When we see people getting hurt,  
**Lord, teach us to speak up.**

When we see people who are hungry and poor,  
**Lord, teach us to give to them like you give to us.**

When we see people treated poorly because of their skin color or language,  
**Lord, teach us to be an example of love.**

When we see war and conflict around the world,  
**Lord, teach us how to make a difference and bring peace.**

When we see pain,  
**Lord, teach us to bring healing.**

When we feel low and things don't seem to be going well,  
**Lord, teach us to talk to our friends, our family and to you.**

When we stop and see all you have given us.  
**Lord, teach us to be thankful.**

Lord, so many people are in pain,  
**Teach us the way to peace.**

In our lives, our communities and the world  
**Lord, teach us to pray and teach us the way to peace.**

Walk with us, Lord, as we answer your call to be peacemakers. Increase our compassion, our generosity and our hospitality for the least of your children. Give us the courage, the patience, the serenity, the self-honesty and the gentleness of spirit that are needed in a world filled with turmoil and terror.

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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory for ever. Amen**

Reading: Micah 4:3-5

Hymn 601: Christ is the world's true light

Reading: Matthew 5:43-end

Reflection:

To remember something is to think of something we have experienced in the past and to bring to mind the sights and sounds, the thoughts and feelings of that time. On this Sunday in the year in the United Kingdom and many of the nations of the Commonwealth, we try to remember times of war, and the effects those times have had on people we knew, on families, and on nations. For some of us that remembering will be easier than for others. For some, memories of wartime will be vivid and real, because they have experienced them for themselves. They will be able to remember times of deprivation and hardship as the country's whole economy was geared to war production and there was no room for the production and enjoyment of luxuries. Some will remember times of loss and sadness over the death or injury of loved ones in war. Others will be able to remember the actual fighting, will be able to see the sights and hear the sounds of the battlefield.

But for an increasing number of people there will be no memory of war, except for memories of the Falklands War fifteen years ago, and the more recent conflicts in the Middle East and Afghanistan, neither of which had any real effect on the lifestyles of the majority of people. The last war to have an impact on everyone was of course the Second World War, and that happened long enough ago to make it part of history lessons in school. Nobody under the age of about eighty-five will remember much about the second world war, and nobody under the age of about ninety-five will have been old enough to have joined the forces and taken part in it. So all those people of all ages paying their respects at war memorials up and down the country today - what are they doing? What are they remembering? Especially those who are too young to really remember...

Are they perhaps remembering with sadness family members they never had a chance to meet? Or vaguely remembered faces and voices of fathers, uncles, cousins, grandfathers, who went off to war and never came back. And in that remembering, does God speak words of comfort and assurance. God's word in times of sadness is not only one of comfort, it is one of hope as well. God's word, even when we ponder the tragedy of death, brings us to life; life lived here on earth in such a way that we ourselves may be worthy both of the sacrifice others have made for us, and of His promise of life in all its fullness. God's word to those who live in the shadow of death is, "Rise up!"

History shows us just how many people have reacted to their circumstances by rising up and fighting against them. Many have devoted their lives to working for peace because of their experiences of war. Many have given themselves to campaigning on behalf of the poor because they themselves have experienced poverty. Even here, in our comfortable society, the sight on television of people starving to death in the poorest places produces an avalanche of donations to the charities that try to help them.

So our sad remembering of wartime death is God's call to us to rise up and live. To live for peace and justice.

Our remembering may not all be sad, especially if we are too young to have been touched personally by the tragedy. Our remembering may be a remembering of gratitude. A quick glance at any history of the twentieth century will show that at a certain time in this nation's life the freedom of all Europe was at risk. Only the bravery, skill, and often the sacrifice, of people in those nations who resisted were able to prevail and create the peaceful Europe in which we live today. We may not have known those who fought. We may not have

any personal memories of them, or of the fighting in which they were involved. But we can see plainly the results of their struggle - and we remember with gratitude.

And we can remember too with repentance. Not the first thing you might think of on Remembrance Sunday. Why, we might ask, do we have need to repent for the evil of others? When an aggressive nation invades another nation, and that nation tries to defend itself and the freedom of its people, and many are killed in the conflict, why should the invaded nation have to repent? And why, these days, should young people who have never been directly involved in any war, have to repent? Because wars are caused by nations - and very often individuals - whose hunger for power and control over others is such that they will go to war to get it - and we, sometimes at least, are just like them. No we don't have the authority to send the country into war, but how often have we been at war with members of our family, or neighbours, or friends? We remember in repentance and sorrow for the weakness of human nature which causes conflict. As we remember, we ask God's forgiveness for the weakness that causes conflict; we ask forgiveness for the whole human family which constantly allows its own selfishness to rule its thoughts and actions, and so often leads to war; and we ask God's forgiveness for ourselves for the part we play in adding to the conflict in the world with our own small fights and disagreements.

Then we remember with dedication. One of the reasons this day is celebrated annually is to make sure that the lessons of war are learned and never forgotten. In every city, town, and village in the country today, people are gathering round memorials to people who gave their lives in war. It's been estimated that a total of more than fifteen million people were killed in the second World War - that's nearly three times the entire population of Scotland. Numbers like that may be hard to take in, but one of the reasons we remember these things today is to try to understand the horror and suffering created by war, and to dedicate ourselves to peace. And the way we do that is by dedicating ourselves, in small ways and in our own lives, to living at peace with our neighbours, with God, and with ourselves.

Our remembering is with sadness for those who were lost and those who suffered; it is with gratitude for the heavy price paid by those who fought for freedom; it is with repentance and sorrow for the weakness that leads to war; and it is with dedication to peace and resolve to banish conflict from our own lives and from our world.

May God bless and confirm us in our resolve, that this world might become and remain as God created it and intended it - a world not of hate and conflict, but of love and peace.

HYMN 705: O God our help in ages past

Prayer:

**Jesus, Prince of Peace, hear our prayer.**

For all who have served the cause of peace in time of conflict, we pray...

For all who have lost loved ones in war, we pray...

For all who continue to suffer because of war, we pray...

For all who long for Your peace, we pray...

For all who dedicate their lives to Your peace, we pray...

For all who bring Your comfort to veterans and their families, we pray...

For all of us - called to be messengers of Your peace, we pray...

**Jesus, Prince of Peace, hear our prayer.**

**Jesus, Hope of Humanity, hear our prayer.**

For all who live in despair, we pray...

For all who seek healing of body, spirit and soul, we pray...

For all who live with great losses due to war, we pray...  
For all who trust in Your promises, we pray...  
For all who cling to Your words, we pray...  
For all who minister to veterans and survivors with Your Gospel, we pray...  
For all of us - called to be messengers of Your hope, we pray...  
**Jesus, Hope of Humanity, hear our prayer.**

**Jesus, Restorer of Life, hear our prayer.**  
For all whose faith has been wounded by war and violence, we pray...  
For all whose sense of purpose has suffered due to war and violence, we pray...  
For all whose sense of self has been broken by war and violence, we pray...  
For all whose journey remains incomplete without You, we pray...  
For all who seek completeness in You, we pray...  
For all who lead veterans and their communities to fullness of life in You, we pray...  
For all of us - called to be messengers of Your Gospel of Life, we pray...  
**Jesus, Restorer of Life, hear our prayer.**

**Jesus, Healer of All, hear our prayer.**  
For all whose bodies bear the marks of war, we pray...  
For all whose spirits bear the scars of war, we pray...  
For all whose wounds are bound up in the prison of addictions, we pray...  
For all who have not yet experienced Your healing love, we pray...  
For all who rely on Your healing presence in their lives, we pray...  
For all who bring Your healing to veterans and their families, we pray...  
For all of us - called to be messengers of Your healing love, we pray...  
**Jesus, Healer of All, hear our prayer.**

**All praise to You, Jesus, Lord and Redeemer.**  
For Your Gospel of comfort and peace...  
For Your victory over death and promise of everlasting life...  
For Your presence with us always, to the end of the age...  
For Your gift of the Spirit, Who makes us whole...  
For Your gift of peace, poured into our hearts at Baptism...  
For Your messengers who bring us Your Good News of love and peace...  
For Your call to help spread the Good News with our lives...  
**All praise to You, Jesus, Lord and Redeemer.**

I invite you now to spend a few moments with your own prayer, in words or in silence; or simply in reflecting upon the stories we have read and the words we have heard in our worship today.

Hear our prayer, which we offer in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

Hymn 620: For the healing of the nations

Benediction

Now we conclude our worship with renewed inspiration to do the work of God.

To seek good, not evil, love goodness, and establish justice.

This the greatest offering we can make;

letting justice roll down like waters,

and righteousness like an ever flowing stream.

We go in peace, with love for our neighbors.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit go with each one of us, and with all those we love, today and for ever more.

Amen