



Written Service: Remembrance Sunday

SUNDAY 13TH NOVEMBER 2022

SERVICE WRITTEN BY MARC WILLIAMSON

We come to worship:

*Come and worship royal priesthood
Come and praise Him holy nation
Show forth His praise
Show forth His power*

*This is the day this is the hour
For this is the day
That the Lord has made
Let us rejoice and be glad*

*There's a call
It's coming from the mountain
To one and all
There's a call
A call to ev'ry tribe and nation
Worship Him*

The Lamb who sits upon the throne

*Arise and come unto His holy mountain
Worship Him and bow before His throne
Arise and worship Him
Before the nations lift your voice
And make His glory known.¹*

At the start of this time of worship **we confess our sins**, preparing for an encounter with the triune God:

Almighty God, we come to make confession, for we have sinned in thought and word and deed. We now repent in honesty and sorrow; forgive us, Lord, and meet us in our need.

Forgiving God, I come to make confession of all the harm and hurt that I have done; of bitter words and many selfish actions, forgive me, Lord, and make me like your Son.

Forgiving God, I come to make confession of all that I have failed to do this day; of help withheld, concern and love restricted, forgive me, Lord, and lead me in your way.

Redeeming God, we come to seek forgiveness, for Jesus Christ has died to set us free. Forgive the past and fill us with your Spirit that we may live to serve you joyfully.²

Forgiven, we pray for God's presence:

*Come, Lord Jesus, come to this world of ours.
Lord, we need you now in this world of ours.
Fill us with your peace in this world of ours.
Touch us with your love in this world of ours.
May we see your light in this world of ours.³*

Know that God is present with us and meets us where we are as we sing:

¹ Don Moen (1988)

² Christopher J. Ellis | STF. 419

³ Francesca Leftley | STF. 168

Be still, for the presence of the Lord,

*the Holy One, is here;
come bow before him now
with reverence and fear:
in him no sin is found --
we stand on holy ground.*

*Be still, for the presence of the Lord,
the Holy One, is here.*

*Be still, for the glory of the Lord
is shining all around;
he burns with holy fire,
with splendour he is crowned:
how awesome is the sight --
our radiant King of light!*

*Be still, for the glory of the Lord
is shining all around.*

*Be still, for the power of the Lord
is moving in this place;
he comes to cleanse and heal,
to minister his grace:
no work too hard for him --
in faith receive from him.*

*Be still, for the power of the Lord
is moving in this place.*

DAVID J. EVANS | STF. 20
[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=WDP9PFVNPDC](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WDP9PFVNPDC)

On this **Remembrance Sunday** it is right that we pause and reflect upon the effects of war in our history and our present. Whilst we often remember the “Great War”, the “war that will end war”, and recite words inspired by that part of our shared world history, we should not forget that conflict is still rife in our world today. In this space we remember all victims of all wars, including those who serve and those who are innocent bystanders.

Act of Remembrance:

*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.*

SILENCE

We will remember them

*Ever-living God, we remember those whom
you have gathered from the storm of war
into the peace of your presence;
may that same peace calm our fears,
bring justice to all peoples
and establish harmony among the nations,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Amen.

John McCrae’s famous poem “In Flanders’ Field” was written in a moment of mourning, amidst the real pain of the loss of a friend, in the middle of the first world war... A war from which he wouldn’t return. This poem inspired the use of the red poppy as a symbol of remembrance.

During this service we will be using both the poem and the poppy, as well as a recent film to consider our commitment to active remembrance.

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In Flanders' Field:

As you consider the poem below, are there any particular words or phrases which jump out at you as you read or listen to it?

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKoJvHcMLfc> as read by Leonard Cohen)

*In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.*

JOHN MCCRAE, MAY 1915

Personally, I struggle with the third verse:

*“Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high...”*

What does it mean for us to “Take up the quarrel with the foe?” How are we supposed to hold the torch high? Is there another way of thinking? Is there a lesson we should be learning?

If we simply take on the torch of those who have gone before us without questioning it, we are in almost certain danger of repeating the mistakes and adding to the

problem rather than being part of the solution. My hope, naive as it might be, is that we are actually called to something different and to hold high a brighter torch.

Red poppies were first introduced after WW1. The red poppy stands for remembrance and hope. It is sold for the purposes of raising money to support veterans and their families and helping those who have given so much in service of their country. When it was first introduced as a symbol for remembrance it was intended to convey mourning and serve as a reminder that war must never happen again.

In 1933 the idea of a white poppy was introduced. The idea of the white poppy is no less about remembrance and hope, but instead of being committed to just those who serve in British armed forces, they are intended to remember *all* victims of *all* wars, including those who serve and those who are innocent bystanders. Where the red poppy has always been adopted by those who supposedly “won” the first world war, there is something about the white that seeks to help all “sides” remember. White poppies symbolise peace and a longing to return to that initial commitment that war shouldn’t be the answer.

Beyond the red and white there are also purple poppies for those animals who find themselves involved in war, and black poppies which symbolise those people of different ethnic origins who contribute or contributed to war efforts.

Today we will focus on and commit to remembrance, hope, peace, and learning from war to seek a better way forward, echoing the prayer of St. Francis:

Make me a channel of your peace.

*Where there is hatred,
let me bring your love;
where there is injury, your pardon, Lord;
and where there's doubt, true faith in you:*

*O Master, grant that I may never seek
so much to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved, as to love with all my soul.*

*Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there's despair in life,
let me bring hope;
where there is darkness, only light;
and where there's sadness, ever joy:*

*Make me a channel of your peace.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
in giving unto all that we receive,
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.*

SEBASTIAN TEMPLE | STF. 707
[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=PUD1DZKEOBM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUD1DZKEOBM)

So, what might this better way forward look like?

A number of years ago now I first saw the film "Hacksaw Ridge". The film is based on the true story of Desmond Doss, a World War 2 soldier who fought in the US army in Japan after Pearl Harbour... Except as a soldier he chose not to carry a gun.

To set the scene of my first viewing: it was a night-time showing, and I was on the back row with a completely unobstructed view of the screen, Diet Coke in one hand and popcorn in the other. As the film went on I wished my view wasn't so clear and I

could hide. This was the first film that really taught me something about war.

In the middle there is a lengthy section which is just a depiction of war. I found myself getting more and more uncomfortable as the battle raged on and found myself wanting it to be over already. It was at this point that I really understood that war doesn't stop when I've finished my coke and popcorn and the lights come back on. That 20 minutes is nothing compared to the reality of war.

Here are some lines from the film (that also appear in the trailer⁴) that jumped out at me:

Captain Glover:

"Do not look to him to save you on the battlefield." ...

"I don't think this is a question of religion. I think this is cowardice."

Desmond Doss:

"While everyone else is taking life, I'm going to be saving it" ...

"I don't know how I can live with myself if I don't stay true to what I believe." ...

"With the world so set on tearing itself apart, it don't seem like such a bad thing to me to want to put a little bit of it back together." ...

"Please Lord, Just help me get one more" ...

In one night, after his battalion retreated, Desmond Doss saved over 70 people by moving back and forth across the battlefield, and lowering survivors from

⁴ If you haven't seen the film but are interested in it, you can find the **Hacksaw Ridge** Trailer here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2-1hz1juBl>

both sides down to the US army camp base below the ridge, so they could be transported for proper aid at the field hospitals. He was the first “Conscientious Objector” in the US to be given the Medal of Honour for bravery.

The film ends with interviews with several real people portrayed in the film. Captain Glover, who tried to get Doss kicked out of his unit has tears rolling down his cheeks as he says:

“He would never be by my side because he refused to carry a gun... but in the long run I found out he was one of the bravest persons alive, and to have him saving my life was the irony of the thing.”

What was it about Desmond Doss’ faith and commitment that made a difference? What did he have that enabled his presence in the war without a gun to have such an impact?

I wonder if **James 3:13 and 17-18** begins to give us the answers to those questions. James suggests that we should start by seeking the “wisdom that comes from Heaven” which leads to us being peacemakers:

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.

(T)he wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.

Maybe “taking up the quarrel with the foe” doesn’t mean we have to go to war... Maybe it doesn’t mean we have to kill... Maybe it means that “with the world so set on tearing itself apart,” it’s up to us to find a way “to put a little bit of it back together.” We might not find ourselves in the line of fire, conscripted into a war we may or may not believe in, but the world around us seems no less intent on tearing itself apart through imbalances of power, injustices and general lack of peace.

It is in such a world that we need the “wisdom that comes from Heaven” and where we are called to the Kingdom value of being peacemakers.

According to James the peace we might sow results in righteousness. But perhaps that righteousness isn’t just about you and me being “right”. Maybe the fruit of the “harvest of righteousness” is a restoration of the intended purpose of creation, with the flourishing of humanity and loving human relationships .

Seeking such wisdom, and heeding our calling, what might it look like for you and me to make a stand? What would it mean for us to put a little bit of the world around us back together? How can we love our neighbour, and our enemy in such a way that it builds up rather than tears apart? How can we change the world around us? What fruit should we dare to hope to see?

At the end of this written service there is an image of some poppies for you to colour. As you do so I want you to use it as an act of **intercessory prayer**, colouring

as you prayer for yourself, your communities, our country and our world.

Whilst it's not a "colour by numbers" picture and you're free to let yourself be guided by the Spirit as you pray, here are some colour suggestions that you might want to incorporate and things to pray about for each colour:

Red: Just like with the red poppies we considered earlier in our worship, as you colour in red remember those who mourn, those who find themselves conscripted to fight and those who are actively engaged in war. Pray for our leaders and those people whose decisions have the influence that could lead to war.

Black: Just as a black poppy reminds us of other ethnicities who are involved in war, so too we need to pray for those who need people to "fight" the injustices they face due to racism, poverty, gender issues, and the many ways in which power is abused and suffering caused. Often the centre of our poppies are black and it is the issues above that are often at the heart of conflict.

Green: Stems and leaves of poppies are green. Green is a colour that reminds us of new life, of hope, and of the good things to come. Pray for those who bring hope to our world and communities. Pray that you will have opportunities to do the same.

Orange: Orange is a colour that speaks of caution. Caution and anxiety are things that can both help and hinder us from living life to the full. As you colour in orange pray for discernment for yourself and others to heed the life-giving warnings and to have peace from those that stifle fullness of life.

Pink: Having used red in thinking about war and mourning, we finish with pink to think about those we love, and those we are called to love, those friends and family we hold dear, and those we sometimes struggle to hold dear. Bring them, their needs and your relationships before God as you colour in.

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As we approach the end of our time of worship, we share in the **Lord's prayer**, with those who pray it around the world and those who have prayed it throughout time. We petition "Your Kingdom come" seeking a harvest of righteousness. We seek a Kingdom of justice and joy, of peace and forgiveness and a hope yet to come in line with the will of God.

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours,
now and forever.
Amen.

May we have the wisdom that comes from heaven: Wisdom that is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate,

submissive, full of mercy and good fruit,
impartial and sincere.

May we sow in peace and reap a harvest
of righteousness, where we see
relationships that honour God and God's
image in all people.

May we hear the call of the Kingdom and
see the Kingdom of God in our time.

Hear the call of the kingdom,
lift your eyes to the King;
let his song rise within you
as a fragrant offering
of how God, rich in mercy,
came in Christ to redeem
all who trust in his unfailing grace.

Hear the call of the kingdom
to be children of light
with the mercy of heaven,
the humility of Christ;
walking justly before him,
loving all that is right,
that the life of Christ may shine through us.

King of heaven, we will answer the call.
We will follow, bringing hope to the world,
filled with passion,
filled with power to proclaim
salvation in Jesus' name.

Hear the call of the kingdom
to reach out to the lost
with the Father's compassion
in the wonder of the cross,
bringing peace and forgiveness,
and a hope yet to come:
let the nations put their trust in him.

KEITH GETTY, KRISTYN GETTY, STUART TOWNEND
| STF. 407
[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=65AUT49D108](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=65AUT49D108)

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AMEN

