



Parish of St. Mary's Swynnerton & St. James' Cotes Heath

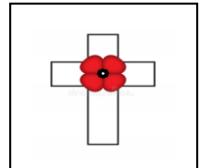
Sunday Nov.8th 2020 (Remembrance Sunday)

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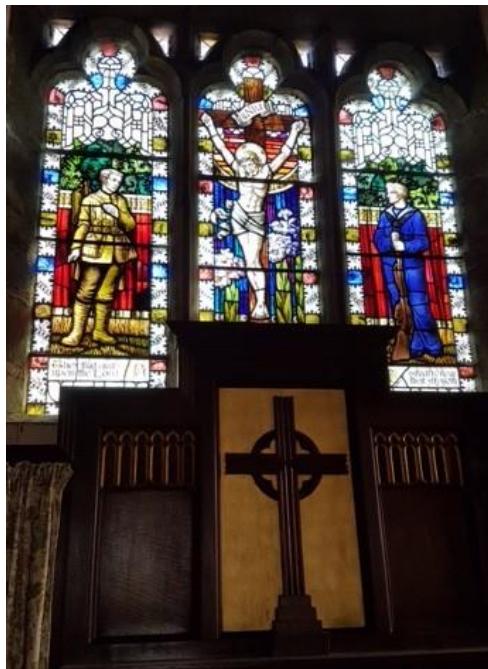
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There will be no services at St. Mary's or St. James' for the next month but St. Mary's will be open each Sunday between 10.30 and 11.30 for private prayer.

Bishop Michael writes: "While we face major challenges as churches and communities, we have a message of faith, hope and love to share with all. With these new restrictions in place, we need to do all we can to encourage one another, and to pray for each other as we journey through these uncertain times, following Jesus as Lord."



As it will not be possible to meet together on Remembrance Sunday, you may like to use the service in this news sheet to help you remember and reflect.

To mark the 75th anniversary of the end of World War 2, BBC TV and radio will broadcast a range of special programmes, including the Festival of Remembrance on Saturday 7th November (BBC1, 9.10 – 10.30) and the ceremony at the Cenotaph in London on Sunday 8th November, (BBC1, 10.15 – 11.45).

St. James's east window (*pictured left*) is back to its former glory; three damaged panes have been repaired and restored by Ester Naylor from "Off the Wall", stained glass specialists based in Halesowen. The window was originally installed as a memorial after the first world war and bears the inscription "Given by the inhabitants of Cotes Heath in grateful and lasting memory of the men of the parish who fell in the Great War, 1914-1918."

19 people attended the "Zoom" Annual Parish meeting on October 27th. Reports on every aspect of church life were shared and financial statements approved. Ray Lewney continues as churchwarden; Alison Buckley, Ken Marchant, and Nesta Williams were welcomed as new members and thanks were recorded for faithful work done over the years by retiring members Helen Ladell and Pat Lawrence. The first meeting of the new PCC has taken place this week.

James Coull and Kathryn Stokes had planned to get married late in November. However, the Prime Minister's announcement meant that this would be impossible. Undeterred, they consulted with the vicar, organist, church warden, verger and rural dean and managed to arrange a "Common Licence" so that they could be married at St. Mary's Church on Wednesday, November 4th, the day before the lockdown came into force. We send congratulations and wish them every happiness in their life together.





The reading for this Sunday is from Paul's letter to the Philippians, chapter 4, verses 6-9.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practise these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

What is Remembrance Sunday all about? We usually take part in time honoured rituals, saying poems, praying, laying wreaths and of course, with the rest of the country keeping two minutes silence to remember those who died in wars and conflicts in the past.

Within these rituals we try and picture what our ancestors were like and the horrors they experienced, the pain, the misery, the sense of bewilderment, the anguish and the boredom. And we acknowledge their bravery and heroism. Do we try and place ourselves in their shoes and wonder how we would have coped if we were in the same situations? How would we have coped with the mud, the fear and seeing our friends killed around us?

By remembering the past, it not only brings it to life, it challenges us to look again at how we cope with the present, both morally and spiritually.

At the heart of the Christian faith is another act of remembrance, the Holy Communion. This is when we remember the last meal Jesus shared with his disciples.

"Take, eat" Jesus said, "in remembrance of me", and 2,000 years later as a reminder that Jesus is always with us. At the heart of all remembrance whether it be Remembrance Sunday or Communion we are reminded that God himself is present. He holds us, his creation in his hands. We can give thanks for the gifts of imagination and prayer. We can be so inspired by God that we become more compassionate, more honest, and more devoted to that love and peace which passes all understanding. The peace which the world cannot give but the peace which we need to know and experience in the current situation of a pandemic and worldwide unrest.

Today we can't meet together because of lockdown and for many of us it is the experience of living with restrictions imposed on us by others. How will we cope? Will we consider the good of others before ourselves and obey instructions or will we do our own thing? Our heroes today are the NHS and all who work together to save lives in this country and abroad. We are facing an invisible enemy. We hope that in the future people will be able to say of us "we are proud of them", just as we are proud of those whose sacrifice we remember today.

June Steed



- The Archbishops have called for November to be a month of "repeated and sustained prayer" for the nation and have suggested that Christians might join in to pray, wherever they are, at 6pm each evening.
- The C of E has a series of short Mental Health Reflections on its website which you can read or listen to. Helpful to everyone who is feeling anxious or down. Find them by clicking on "Faith in Action" then "Mental Health Resources".
- Please pray this week for Richard Wenger, Fr. Paul Chavasse, Elaine Dulson, Wendy Jackson and Paul Bell, Dot Sargent, Pat Barley, Pat Lawrence, Carol & Martyn Turner, Geoff & Linda Foster, Margaret Bailey, Jonquil and Nick Goacher & family and for the Shaw family in their bereavement.

AN ACT OF WORSHIP FOR REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

"God is our refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble."

Let us remember before God, and commend to his safe keeping, those who have died for their country in war; those whom we knew, and whose memory we treasure; and all who have lived and died in the service of the peoples of the world.

Confession: Let us confess to God the sins and shortcomings of the world; its pride, its selfishness, its greed; its evil divisions and hatreds. Let us confess our share in what is wrong, and our failure to seek and establish that peace which God wills for his children.

Most merciful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we confess that we have sinned in thought, word and deed. We have not loved you with our whole heart. We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves. In your mercy forgive what we have been, help us to amend what we are, and direct what we shall be; that we may do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with you, our God. Amen.

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon us, pardon and deliver us from all our sins, confirm and strengthen us in all goodness, and keep us in life eternal; through Jesus Christ our lord. **Amen.**

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

We pray for the leaders of the nations, that you will guide them in the ways of freedom, justice and truth.
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for those who bear arms on behalf of the nation, that they may have discipline and discernment, courage and compassion.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for our enemies, and those who wish us harm, that you will turn the hearts of all to kindness and friendship.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for the wounded and the captive, the grieving and the homeless, that in all their trials they may know your love and support.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Most holy God and Father, hear our prayers for all who strive for peace and all who fight for justice. Help us, who today remember the cost of war, to work for a better tomorrow; and, as we commend to you lives lost in terror and conflict, bring us all, in the end, to the peace of your presence; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Collect for peace: O God, the author of peace and lover of concord, to know you is eternal life, to serve you is perfect freedom. Defend us, your servants, from all assaults of our enemies, that we may trust in your defence and not fear the power of any adversaries; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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. 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.



We will remember them.

(Two minutes silence)

An act of commitment:

Lord God our Father, we pledge ourselves to serve you and all humankind, in the cause of peace, for the relief of want and suffering, and for the praise of your name. Guide us by your Spirit; give us wisdom; give us courage; give us hope; and keep us faithful now and always. Amen.

A prayer for our times: **"Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy, in this time of uncertainty and distress. Sustain and support the anxious, be with those who care for the sick, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may find comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.**