



March Team Ministry

March Team St John, St Mary, St Peter, St Wendreda

Welcome

3rd Sunday of the Kingdom Season - 13th November 2022 **Remembrance Sunday**

Please keep in touch with one another, and I am always glad to hear from you on 01354 572117 or at andrew.marchurch@gmail.com

*We are still asking people to be sensible and sensitive . Mask wearing is optional. Respect people's space.
Washing hands is a good idea. Wine offered (for those wishing it). Dipping is not recommended.*

~ Services with Social Distancing ~

St Peter's Sundays 8am & 11am; Wednesdays 10am

St Mary's Sundays 9.15am ~ St John's Sundays 9.30am; Tuesdays 10am

St Wendreda's Sundays 11am

Prayer, Collect, for this week

Lord God of all the ages, the One who is, who was, and who is to come, stir up within us a longing for your kingdom, steady our hearts in time of trial, and grant us patient endurance until the song of justice dawns. We make our prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, for the gifts of the Holy Spirit, who is one God for ever and ever. Amen.

God who is faithful when all foundations crumble: in the time of crisis, as holy places fall and nations stumble, give us the conviction to bear witness to love, whatever the cost; through Jesus Christ, the Word and Wisdom of God. Amen.

Epistle 2 Thessalonians 3 v6-13

We command you, beloved, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to keep away from believers who are living in idleness and not according to the tradition that they received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us; 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. This was not because we do not have that right, but in order to give you an example to imitate. For even when we were with you, we gave you this command: Anyone unwilling to work should not eat. For we hear that some of you are living in idleness, mere busybodies, not doing any work. Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living. Brothers and sisters, do not be weary in doing what is right.

Gospel of Luke 21 v5-19

When some were speaking about the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to God, Jesus said, 'As for these things that you see, the days will come when not one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down.' They asked him, 'Teacher, when will this be, and what will be the sign that this is about to take place?' And he said, 'Beware that you are not led astray; for many will come in my name and say, "I am he!" and, "The time is near!" Do not go after them.

'When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end will not follow immediately.' Then he said to them, 'Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and plagues; and there will be dreadful portents and great signs from heaven.

'But before all this occurs, they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. This will give you an opportunity to testify. So make up your minds not to prepare your defence in advance; for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, by relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. You will be hated by all because of my name. But not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your souls.

Meditation

Today's gospel, on this Remembrance Sunday, talks of wars, nation rising against nation, kingdom against kingdom. But, as we hear in Luke, this will not bring about the end of the world. Luke was living in a time when they knew the reality of war. There had been rebellions against Roman rule, there had been a severe security crackdown in return by the Romans; and this culminated in the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, and the subsequent expulsion of all Jews from Jerusalem. Luke wrote to people who knew the consequences of fighting, armed rebellion and war.

Sadly, and tragically, we have been reminded of the reality of the consequences of war in the last year since start, in February, of fighting in Ukraine. There are other places where fighting is all too real in our world, some conflicts that have been rumbling on for years, or even generations, and these occasionally get an airing on our news media, but the fighting in Ukraine has been set before us most days recently. Looking back, we witnessed an attempt to instigate regime change by a thrust of military columns towards the capital Kyev. When it became apparent that there was significant Ukrainian resistance, the tactics seem to change to attempts to secure territory in the borderland between the two countries. This released a flood of refugees fleeing, and we witnessed their journeys and the arrival of some to stay amongst us here. Again, as resistance became more significant, probably related to the increasing supply of weaponry to Ukraine from the West, we witnessed, it seemed to me, a change from a hope to incorporate territory and people from Ukraine into Russia, to a desire simply to destroy.

Right from the beginning both sides have attempted to use economic factors and trade to further their respective causes. In the case of Russia, the blocking off of their exporting gas and oil, and preventing the Ukrainian harvest from being distributed. Again, as the months proceeded and annexation seemed to be being frustrated, the tactics changed to a naked attempt to undermine the viability of life in Ukraine by wrecking the power stations and supply to civilians and industry alike; to try and starve and freeze their way to achieve their aims. Whatever the aims of Russia may have been at the beginning, it now seems that not losing face and honour and prestige are more important than whether the territory of the Ukraine is inhabitable. For Ukraine the agenda has moved from simple survival, to becoming more integrated with the west. The "West's" agenda is to tread the fine line between not allowing the conflict to escalate, and to use it to stabilise the balance of power which leaves it in political and economic ascendancy.

I am afraid the coverage simply reaffirms for me the futility and destructiveness of war. Aggression does invite an aggressive response, but it does not bring us any nearer resolution. The tensions in this area are long standing, and different ways of telling the story and understanding the history point to different answers as the most fair and just. But fighting seems, to me, to take us further away from any just and fair outcome.

So this takes us to the gospel, which acknowledges that war and violence is all too much a real part of human experience, but do not interpret this as something that God desires, uses to make an example, or something that will achieve good. War and fighting are very real, but they are a sign and an outworking of the fallenness of humanity. The driving forces are perhaps too obviously greed, power-hunger, insecurity and rivalry. Luke invites the followers of his day to trust that they will be given the words to say when they face their times of trial and tribula-

-tion. He does not say they won't go through difficulty and near-impossible times, but rather that they should not lose hope in following in Jesus' footprints, which is a way of risk and love.

But that is very easy to applaud if you are feeling safe and secure, and so much harder when under real threat. Perhaps a fist and symbolic step is to try and change the language and attitudes of our own nation.

We have a Ministry of Defence, and armed services who are also sometimes spoken of as security services. There was a time when we had a Ministry of War, and a time when War was simply seen as an arm of diplomacy and international relations. When in the 1950's the organisation administration of armed services that had been separate for Navy, Army and Air Force were brought together the Ministry of Defence was created. This name went along with an idea that we would indeed use armed force, but only to defend ourselves, only to defend our values, only to defend the rights of others. War as an acceptable tool was rejected, only to be used in response to other's aggression and we would be as wise as serpents in being prepared and equipped for this role. I wish now we could take a further step and rename the department to be the Ministry of Peacekeeping, or even to be really ambitious and go for Peacemaking. I hope we could then refocus our thinking to use resources, human and material, to pursue ways of peace and harmony. It would be harder, it may mean more resources, but it would revalue the people who serve. It would be a risk, but someone has to make a start.

The poppy that grew in the wasteland of the trenches has become our symbol for today, we wear it with pride, but we could do with transforming it into a symbol of cultivation of peace.

God bless, Andrew

Prayers and Act of Remembrance

We commit ourselves to work in penitence and faith for reconciliation between the nations,
that all people may together; live in freedom, justice and peace.

We pray for all who in bereavement, disability and pain continue to suffer the consequences
of fighting and terror.

We remember with thanksgiving and sorrow those whose lives, in world wars and conflicts
past and present, have been given and taken away.

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.

2 minutes SILENCE

May the souls of the departed rest in peace, and through the mercy of God,
may they rise in glory. May they rest in peace, and let light perpetual shine upon them.
When you go home tell them of us and say, "for your tomorrow we gave our today".

Remember, Lord, those whose stories were unspoken and untold.
Jesus, remember them when you come into your kingdom.

Remember, Lord, those whose minds were darkened and disturbed by memories of war. Jesus,
remember them when you come into your kingdom.

Remember, Lord, those who suffered in silence, and those whose bodies were disfigured by
injury and pain. Jesus, remember them when you come into your kingdom.

God, bless the peacemakers.

Bless those who work in home and community to end a quarrel; bless those who keep faith
with arguing churches; bless those who speak a careful word in corridors of power; bless those
who live good and hopeful lives in refugee camps, those in internment, detention or prison;
bless those who minister to the military; bless those who seek peace with you and give your
peace away.

Bless all our peacemakers with the powerful presence and support of your Holy Spirit, and the
confidence that comes through following in the steps of Christ. Amen.