

# **Christ Church, Ipswich**

**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

## **Remembrance Sunday Family Worship**

*Minister: Revd Neil Coulson*

*Organist : Mr Stephen Hogger*

Hello, I hope you are well. Our worship service this morning includes our Act of Remembrance. If starting around 10.45, our service will help move us towards the two minutes silence at 11 am. If you are worshipping at home today, you may well wish to use the television or the radio to mark the silence along with many other people across the UK. This Sunday, the Lectionary brings before us Amos 5:18-24 and Matthew 25:1-13, the Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids.

Let us worship God:

### **Call to worship**

Gracious God,  
we heard you even in the sea of disorder  
and the darkness of the void,  
crying, 'Light and life become!'  
And all creation was begun.  
**We gather to praise you.**

Redeeming God,  
we heard you even in the sins of destruction  
and the night-time of sadness,  
crying, 'Enough! Here is my Son:  
love and hope for the future!'  
**We gather to praise you.**

Inspiring God,  
we heard you even in the silence of sorrow  
and the anguish of pain,  
crying, 'If God be for us,  
who can be against us!'  
**We gather to praise you.**

### **R&S 705 Our God, our help in ages past**

1 Our God, our help in ages past,  
our hope for years to come,  
our shelter from the stormy blast,  
and our eternal home:

2 Under the shadow of thy throne  
thy saints have dwelt secure;  
sufficient is thine arm alone,  
and our defence is sure.

3 Before the hills in order stood,  
or earth received her frame;  
from everlasting thou art God,  
to endless years the same.

4 A thousand ages in thy sight  
are like an evening gone;  
short as the watch that ends the night  
before the rising sun.

5 Time, like an ever-rolling stream,  
bears all our years away;  
they fly forgotten, as a dream  
dies at the opening day.

6 Our God, our help in ages past,  
our hope for years to come,  
be thou our guard while troubles last,  
and our eternal home.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748) altd. based on Psalm 90:1-6

## A Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving – The Price of Freedom

Sovereign God,  
 We praise you today for the freedom we enjoy  
 in this nation and as individuals –  
 freedom of speech and expression,  
 freedom from war and oppression –  
 a freedom secured at such enormous human cost.  
 For all we owe to so many,  
**receive our thanks.**

We praise you for those who made such freedom possible,  
 the countless thousands who sacrificed life and limb  
 in two World Wars  
 and in subsequent conflicts,  
 leaving homes and loved ones, often to return no more.  
 For all we owe to so many,  
**receive our thanks.**

We praise you for all who have fought against tyranny,  
 hatred and evil,  
 prepared to sacrifice everything  
 rather than allow such forces to hold sway;  
 and we salute their courage shown in the face of danger,  
 their dedication to duty,  
 their determination to battle on against all odds.  
 For all we owe to so many,  
**receive our thanks.**

While we are deeply troubled by the present wars and conflicts within our world,  
 we praise you for wherever there is peace that can be enjoyed today –  
 a peace which we need to treasure constantly,  
 nurture carefully  
 and safeguard always,  
 recognising the price at which it was won.  
 For all we owe to so many,  
**receive our thanks.**

We praise you for those today who fight  
 for international freedom and justice,  
 members of our own armed forces currently serving around the world,  
 members of UN peacekeeping forces in places of continuing tension,  
 striving to maintain democracy,  
 to keep rival factions apart,  
 to protect innocent civilians,  
 and to pave the way for a lasting end to hostilities.  
 For all we owe to so many,  
**receive our thanks.**

Sovereign God,  
 we praise you today for the freedom we enjoy,  
 and we pray that the day will come  
 when there will be no more war,  
 when the nations of our world will live in harmony,  
 and when you will rule over all.  
 Until that time, help us to learn the lessons of the past,  
 to remember its sacrifices,  
 and to work as far as we are able for peace.  
 For all we owe to so many,  
**receive our thanks.**  
 Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## A prayer of confession – Living as Peacemakers

Loving God,  
 we are reminded today of how easy it is to speak of peace,  
 and how difficult it is to pursue it;  
 how straight forward it sounds to talk of breaking down barriers,  
 yet how demanding it is to actually live as peacemakers.  
 Yet we are reminded also that this is what you want us to do –  
 to live in such a way that we heal wounds rather than create them,  
 that we unite rather than divide, that we reconcile rather than separate.  
 For our share in the world's continuing pain,  
**Lord, forgive us.**

We confess the things within us which make for conflict,  
 pride, greed, envy, intolerance, a nursing of petty grievances,  
 our unwillingness to forgive,  
 our preoccupation with self and our lack of time for others –  
 so much that we are as guilty of as any other.  
 For our share in the world's continuing pain,  
**Lord, forgive us.**

Rescue us from all that keeps us apart,  
 and put a new spirit within us –  
 a spirit of love and openness,  
 acceptance and understanding,  
 healing and reconciliation.  
 May the peace we pray for begin here and now in our hearts,  
 and so may we be instruments of your peace,  
 bringing healing to our broken world and harmony between nations.  
 For our share in the world's continuing pain,  
**Lord, forgive us.**

In the name of Christ. **Amen.**

## Remembering

Friends, let us remember in silence before God,  
 all those who have died in war.

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.  
**We will remember them.**

## *The two minutes' silence*

When you go home,  
 tell them of us and say;  
 for your tomorrow,  
 we gave our today.

We pray:  
 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**

### **The act of commitment:**

Let us commit ourselves to responsible living and faithful service.

Will you strive for all that makes for peace?

**We will**

Will you seek to heal the wounds of war?

**We will**

Will you work for a just future for all humanity?

**We will**

Merciful God,  
 we offer to you the fears within us that have not yet been cast out by love.  
 May we accept the hope you have placed in the hearts of all people,  
 and live lives of justice, courage and mercy;  
 through Jesus Christ our risen Redeemer. **Amen.**

***Our children go to Junior Church with our love and blessing.***

### **R&S 620 For the healing of the nations**

1 For the healing of the nations,  
 Lord, we pray with one accord;  
 for a just and equal sharing  
 of the things that earth affords.  
 To a life of love in action  
 help us rise and pledge our word.

2 Lead us, Father, into freedom;  
 from despair your world release,  
 that, redeemed from war and hatred,  
 all may come and go in peace  
 Show us how through care and goodness  
 fear will die and hope increase.

3 All that kills abundant living,  
 let it from the earth be banned:  
 pride of status, race or schooling,  
 dogmas that obscure your plan.  
 In our common quest for justice  
 may we hallow life's brief span.

4 You, Creator-God, have written  
 your great name on humankind;  
 for our growing in your likeness  
 bring the life of Christ to mind;  
 that by our response and service  
 earth its destiny may find.

Fred Kaan (1929-2009)

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### **OT Reading      Amos 5:18-24**

*The Day of the Lord a Dark Day*

<sup>18</sup> Alas for you who desire the day of the Lord!

Why do you want the day of the Lord?

It is darkness, not light;

<sup>19</sup> as if someone fled from a lion,

and was met by a bear;

or went into the house and rested a hand against the wall,

and was bitten by a snake.

- <sup>20</sup> Is not the day of the Lord darkness, not light,  
and gloom with no brightness in it?
- <sup>21</sup> I hate, I despise your festivals,  
and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.
- <sup>22</sup> Even though you offer me your burnt-offerings and grain-offerings,  
I will not accept them;  
and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals  
I will not look upon.
- <sup>23</sup> Take away from me the noise of your songs;  
I will not listen to the melody of your harps.
- <sup>24</sup> But let justice roll down like waters,  
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

### **Gospel Reading Matthew 25:1-13**

#### *The Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids*

**25** 'Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. <sup>2</sup> Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. <sup>3</sup> When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; <sup>4</sup> but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. <sup>5</sup> As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. <sup>6</sup> But at midnight there was a shout, "Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him." <sup>7</sup> Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. <sup>8</sup> The foolish said to the wise, "Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out." <sup>9</sup> But the wise replied, "No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves." <sup>10</sup> And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. <sup>11</sup> Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, "Lord, lord, open to us." <sup>12</sup> But he replied, "Truly I tell you, I do not know you." <sup>13</sup> Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

### **R&S 344 God of grace and God of Glory**

1 God of grace and God of glory,  
on thy people pour thy power;  
crown thine ancient Church's story;  
bring her bud to glorious flower.  
Grant us wisdom,  
grant us courage,  
for the facing of this hour.

2 Lo! the hosts of evil round us  
scorn thy Christ, assail his ways!  
From the fears that long have bound us,  
free our hearts to faith and praise.  
Grant us wisdom,  
grant us courage,  
for the living of these days.

3 Cure thy children's warring madness;  
bend our pride to thy control;  
shame our wanton, selfish gladness,  
rich in things and poor in soul.  
Grant us wisdom,  
grant us courage,  
lest we miss thy kingdom's goal.

4 Save us from weak resignation  
to the evils we deplore;  
let the gift of thy salvation  
be our glory evermore.  
Grant us wisdom,  
grant us courage,  
serving thee whom we adore.

H. E. Fosdick (1878-1969) altd.

**A Talk will be offered reflecting on today's readings**

***A moment for personal reflection as Stephen plays the organ***

## R&S 586 All my hope on God is founded

1 All my hope on God is founded;  
he doth still my trust renew.  
Me through change and chance he guideth,  
only good and only true.  
God unknown,  
he alone  
calls my heart to be his own.

2 Human pride and earthly glory,  
sword and crown betray our trust;  
what with care and toil is builded,  
tower and temple, fall to dust.  
But God's power  
hour by hour  
is my temple and my tower.

3 God's great goodness aye endureth,  
deep his wisdom, passing thought;  
splendour, light and life attend him,  
beauty springeth out of naught.

Evermore  
from his store  
new-born worlds rise and adore.

4 Daily doth the almighty giver  
bounteous gifts on us bestow;  
his desire our soul delighteth  
pleasure leads us where we go.  
Love doth stand  
at his hand;  
joy doth wait on his command.

5 Still from earth to God eternal  
sacrifice of praise be done,  
high above all praises praising  
for the gift of Christ his Son.  
Christ doth call  
one and all;  
ye who follow shall not fall.

Robert Bridges (1844-1930) altd.

\* based on Joachim Neander (1650-80)

## Our prayers of intercession

*Lord of life, we live in turbulent times as we await your return. The lives of your people are in turmoil.*

Lord, this country has survived two world wars. Today we remember all who have served, and still serve, in our armed forces. We pray for the families of those who lost their lives serving their country, and all who have found their lives altered by physical or mental injuries. We pray for all still serving, for all veterans and all who will benefit from this year's Poppy Appeal.

We pray for all around the world caught up in conflict today; for the continuing war in the Ukraine and that in the Middle East. We pray for those urgently in need of medical supplies and food to survive. We pray that more aid lorries will be allowed to cross the border and reach their destination.

Lord, we bring before you all caught up in atrocities, particularly the traumatised young children in need of tender care amid the brutality that surrounds them.

We pray also for those who have suffered in the recent earthquake in Nepal.

*Lord of life, bring peace to this darkly chaotic, turbulent world. May the light of hope shine amid the darkness in these difficult times.*

Lord, we pray for the unrest in this country. We pray that there will be no interference with Remembrance services or parades. Give wisdom to the police as they work to maintain order and safety on our streets.

Lord, leading nations have signed an agreement vowing to protect the world against the potential of Artificial Intelligence to cause catastrophic harm. We pray promises will be kept, and that technology giants will act responsibly.

AI aids and abets scammers and fraudsters. We pray for all people who have suffered emotionally and financially at the hands of such people.

We pray for all who fear losing their jobs due to the increasing use of technology.

*Lord of life, bring justice and integrity to this turbulent world. May the light of hope shine amid the darkness in these difficult times.*

Lord, we pray for your Church in today's world. May it be a beacon, a lighthouse where people can find refuge and safety in times of need and reassurance amid difficult, confusing times.

We pray for your hand, Lord, on all within our communities. There are many without homes; many without permanent accommodation, constantly moving children from one temporary room to another. We pray for more affordable housing. We bring before you all living hand-to-mouth. Lord, give wisdom to those in authority allocating funds and resources.

*Lord of life, bring sustenance to this turbulent, needy world. May the light of hope shine amid the darkness in these difficult times. Lord of life, we await your return with an urgent desire to see your light shine and dispel the darkness. Fill all hearts with the oil of gladness. In your name we pray. Amen.*

### **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 and ever. **Amen.**

### **R&S 345 Guide me, O thou great Jehovah**

1 Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,  
pilgrim through this barren land;  
I am weak, but thou art mighty,  
hold me with thy powerful hand:  
bread of heaven, bread of heaven,  
feed me now and evermore;  
feed me now and evermore.

2 Open thou the crystal fountain  
whence the healing stream doth flow;  
let the fiery, cloudy pillar  
lead me all my journey through:  
strong deliverer, strong deliverer,  
be thou still my strength and shield;  
be thou still my strength and shield.

3 When I tread the verge of Jordan,  
bid my anxious fears subside;  
death of death, and hell's destruction,  
land me safe on Canaan's side:  
songs of praises, songs of praises,  
I will ever give to thee;  
I will ever give to thee.

William Williams, Pantycelyn (1717-91)  
v. 1 tr. Peter Williams (1722-96) altd.  
vv. 2-3 tr. William Williams (or John Williams, 1754-1828) altd.

### **A sending out prayer**

In a world still torn by conflicts, send us out as makers of peace.  
In a world of destruction, send us out as menders and builders.  
In a world of hurt, send us out as healers.  
Where worlds are ending, send us out with faith in new beginnings. **Amen.**

### **The Blessing**

God, grant to the living grace,  
to the departed rest,  
to the Church, the King, the Commonwealth  
and all people,  
unity, peace and concord,  
and to us and all God's servants,  
life everlasting.

And may the blessing of God Almighty,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
be with you now and remain with you always. **Amen.**

### **The Grace is shared with one another**

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