

**FULL SERVICE FOR REMEMBRANCE
SUNDAY 2021
FOR THE RIPON AND LOWER DALES
CIRCUIT**

Introduction

Welcome to our service on this Remembrance Day morning. My name is John Bailey and I'm a preacher in the Ripon and Lower Dales circuit. I intend to observe the two-minute silence at 11 o'clock to the best of my ability. It is always difficult to make an exact timing. This is deliberately not a full-on military service. I will endeavour to focus more on peace and regeneration.

Call to worship Psalm 70 (NLT version)

Please, God, rescue me!
Come quickly, Lord, and help me.

**May those who try to kill me
be humiliated and put to shame.
May those who take delight in my trouble
be turned back in disgrace**

Let them be horrified by their shame,
for they said, "Aha! We've got him now!"

**But may all who search for you
be filled with joy and gladness in you.
May those who love your salvation
repeatedly shout, "God is great!"**

But as for me, I am poor and needy;
please hurry to my aid, O God.

**You are my helper and my saviour,
O Lord, do not delay.
Amen**

**Hymn STF 109 In the
Darkness of the Still Night**

*You tube: <https://youtu.be/1sjdJ3x0K9Y> -
Frodsham Methodist Cloud Choir*

In the darkness of the still night,
in the dawning of the daylight,
in the mystery of creation,
Creator God, you are there.
In the breath of every being,
in the birthing and the growing,
in the earth and all its fullness,
Creator God, you are there.

In the homeless and the hungry,
in the broken and the lonely,
in the grieving of your people,
Creator God, you are there.
In the tears and in the heartache,
in the love through which we serve you,
in the anguish of the dying,
Creator God, you are there.

In our hearts and in our thinking,
in the longing and the dreaming,
in the yearning of our heartbeat,
Creator God, you are there.
In the love for one another,
in the sharing of our being,
in receiving and forgiving,
Creator God, you are there.

In our joys, our hopes, our healing,
in awakening to revealing,
in your call and our responding,
Creator God, you are there.
In our prayer and in our service,
in our praise and in our worship,
in your love that is eternal,
Creator God, you are there.

Margaret Rizza (b. 1929)

Words and Music: (c) 1999, Kevin Mayhew Ltd,
Buxhall, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 3BW

**Prayers of adoration/confession and The
Lord's Prayer.**

Let us pray:
In a sea of Flanders' mud and a scream of
ordnance, there is no praise, no worship, no
adoration...

... Until a determined poppy wriggles through
the ooze and splashes primary colour across
the grey-brown nightmare...

... Until a skylark finds the safe air above the
shell-arc and insists on squeezing her song into
the fragments of silence.

In the weary dried beige eternity of the Afghan
desert, there is no praise, no worship, no
adoration...

... Until a child in a pink tracksuit with a green
kite runs across the horizon...

... Until the sun catches the veined blueness of
the lapis lazuli lying on a jingly market stall.

We are in the place of peace and prosperity,
where we can bring praise that is due from all
the people of God, and worship that is the
delight of our lives and hearts, and adoration
for majesty and providence and love.

From everlasting you are God, to endless years
the same:

Enable us to discern your way to peaceful
living,
to strive against violence to people and to
planet,
to struggle for justice for all on this earth,
and to combat all that works against your
purposes of peace.

We are in the place of recollection and repentance, where we can mourn the decisions that tear apart the nations and destroy peoples God has made and chosen and settled and blessed. We can beg forgiveness for the excesses of cruelty found in the fog of conflict, for mad decisions made in moments of desperation, or things done that surely could never be done anywhere else.

And as we reflect on the sins and terrors committed by other people far away, we ask forgiveness for ourselves when we have benefited from those actions, when we have behaved to those around us as if we were in a battle, as if only our end desires mattered.

However, Lord you know us so well, we still respond to violence with further action, forgetting that turning the other cheek is what we should do.

We choose to do those things we should not do and we don't do many of the things we should. You sent your son, Jesus, not only as an example to our lives but as an eternal sacrifice so that our sins might be forgiven.

Lord help us to remember that in Jesus's death and resurrection, our sins are truly forgiven and we thank you for your great grace and generosity.

So let each one of us pray instead that we will occupy this world like a Flanders poppy, braving smallness and brightening promise; like a skylark, refusing to let violence be the last word, the last sound; like a polished piece of lapis lazuli, beautiful even if beauty has been lost around.

Amen

And now let us say the prayer that Jesus taught us.....

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.

Introduce period of meditation with poems and stories

Story - Kitty Eckersley 1915

When I found I was pregnant I went to see them at the leatherworks and they said they would find me some light work. So, I had a very nice job until I was seven months pregnant.

And then I'd just given up work on the Friday night when I received a letter on the Monday morning. I heard the postman come and I knew it would be a letter for me. So I ran down in my nightdress and opened the door, snatched the letter off him and ran in and shut the door again. And I opened the letter and saw it was from his sergeant. It just said, "Dear Mrs Morton, I'm sorry to tell you of the death of your husband." Well, that was as far as I could read. I don't really know what happened over the next few minutes, but I must have run out of the house as I was, in my bare feet, and banged on next door.

The next-door neighbours let me in. Then they brought some blankets and wrapped me up in them and sent word for my mother, so she came home and they treated me for shock. But his letter was only from the sergeant, so I thought perhaps it was an error. So later on, I wrote back to the sergeant but then I had another letter to say that he had also been killed. Then, later on, I got the official news.

Poem - ANTHEM FOR DOOMED YOUTH by Wilfred Owen written during September to October 1917

What passing bells for these who die as cattle?
– Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty horizons.
No mockeries now for them; no prayers or bells;
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs, –
The shrill demented choirs of wailing shells;
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.
What candles may be held to speed them all?
Not in the hands of boys but in their eyes
Shall shine the holy glimmers of goodbyes.
The pallor of girls' brows shall be there pall;
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

Wilfred Owen(1893 – 1918)

Story - Hannah Carpenter 2009 Note: Hannah's partner was in Afghanistan and this poem records her feelings.

I am with You

As I imagine what you are doing, I feel you by

my side,
 like the morning when you left me, I wish I'd
 never cried,
 for your shoulders were heavy with guilt and
 lots of sadness too,
 Last words echoed inside my head of "I'll be
 coming home to you".
 And there your kiss left mine until some distant
 day,
 to be your last (you promised) that you shall
 never go away.
 So I sit here looking out, on to fields so green,
 whilst you have only dessert and views you will
 have only seen.
 But rest assured I am with you, deep inside
 your heart,
 I would always be your strength and angel, you
 knew that from the start.
 To guide you through your dark days and help
 you with your thoughts
 and have the loving memories that never can
 be bought.
 You are with me every second; I hope you feel
 that too,
 because when I go to bed at night, all I feel is
 you.
 Though I wake up in the morning and see the
 empty space,
 A smile soon returns as a photo I have in place,
 just upon your pillow and there I say "Hello"
 for I know you'll hear that coming and feel our
 loving grow.

Reading **Matthew 25:1-13**

Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids

25 "Then the Kingdom of Heaven will be like ten bridesmaids^[a] who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. **2** Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. **3** The five who were foolish didn't take enough olive oil for their lamps, **4** but the other five were wise enough to take along extra oil. **5** When the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

6 "At midnight they were roused by the shout, 'Look, the bridegroom is coming! Come out and meet him!'

7 "All the bridesmaids got up and prepared their lamps. **8** Then the five foolish ones asked the others, 'Please give us some of your oil because our lamps are going out.'

9 "But the others replied, 'We don't have enough for all of us. Go to a shop and buy some for yourselves.'

10 "But while they were gone to buy oil, the bridegroom came. Then those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was locked. **11** Later, when the other five bridesmaids returned, they stood outside, calling, 'Lord! Lord! Open the door for us!'

12 "But he called back, 'Believe me, I don't know you!'

13 "So you, too, must keep watch! For you do not know the day or hour of my return.

Sermon

Let me take you back to our call to worship - Psalm 70 starts with an imminent entreaty for divine intervention, cries out for God's deliverance from enemies; and asks that those people be put to shame and confusion. It does however include a moment of hope "let all that seek... God is great" but it returns and concludes with a further call for God to act - O Lord do not delay. There is no recorded divine response.

Of course, there are moments in our lives where the words of Psalm 70 could easily be our own words - the need for divine intervention to happen now - without delay. A wish for those who have done us wrong to be subdued. Of course, when we want immediate help we often do not hear an instant answer. In the psalm therefore there is a scriptural basis for the lament, for airing our grievances and for asking for help. It is worth noting that Psalm 70 is a reminder that we might not receive an immediate answer!

Doubtless there are moments in our lives when there is no urgency, when our lives continue in a steady stream of regular days filled with regular concerns. And, if this Sunday, we might not have felt particularly connected to the psalm as it was read, you might find yourself thinking of other things - mainly mundane - like did I forget something shopping yesterday - what's for lunch? - What do I need to get done this week?

Yet it is on days these when the Psalm can serve as a prompt, a powerful reminder that even while our own lives maybe rolling regularly along, that's not necessarily the case for everyone. Others may well be hurting,

calling for help, awaiting deliverance. Others may well be crying out but hearing no response.

So, this Psalm can call us listeners, to stop and listen. – Who around us is living in a moment where the words of this psalm are their own? Who might be experiencing anxiety and turmoil even if we cannot see it in their day-to-day actions? And how might we help to help those who are so urgently crying out?

Psalm 70 links into our reading from the gospel of Matthew. Whilst you might consign talk of the last day to the realms of eccentric individuals with cult-like followings, the lives of Jesus disciples were to be shaped by the knowledge of his return. Matthew is clear that the timing of Christ's return is unknown. In the previous chapter Jesus speaks of the signs of the end time goes on to say no one but God knows the day or hour of its arrival. It is simply not predictable. Again, Matthew states clearly in the previous chapter that "you also must be ready, for the son of man is coming at an unexpected hour. So, readiness is essential.

This parable about the bridesmaids also points to the importance of readiness. It suggests that the foolish bridesmaids were not sufficiently prepared. Whilst the old Scout guide motto of be prepared is a positive one this parable is not about constant readiness – it's not about never sleeping – the disciples are not being asked to stand vigil through the ages for Christ's imminent return. In fact, all of the bridesmaids, both wise and foolish, are asleep when the shout announces the groom's approach.

What is more distinctive about this parable is its focus on the delayed return of the expected one. It is not simply about the right action in the groom's presence, it calls for recognition

that he may be delayed. This parable is not just about preparing for the groom's return, but also about preparing for his delay. If the groom returns quickly there would be no problem in taking one's lamp full of oil to meet him. But the wise disciple packs a supply of oil, knowing their wait may be unpredictable.

Delay – to postpone, to defer, to make late. When I was thinking about this I drifted off into soldier's experience delay – delayed fuse – delayed bomb – delay of advance/attack. How did those guys who sitting in the trenches in World War I, when they found the planned attack delayed or postponed - what was their feeling – joy at not having to go over the top – disappointment – relief – anger? In the Second World War there was a delay between the doodle-bugs engine cutting out before the bomb landed. There were delayed action bombs and ones that just didn't go off. We know that D-Day was postponed by 36 hours – how did the guys in the 1st boats feel about that?

On a personal note, I was looking at my father's flying logbook the other day and in one month in 1942 as a mid-upper gunner on Lancaster's of 106 Squadron, he flew nine operational missions over Germany There were other months when he flew very little. I know that on occasions, if one of the crew went sick others would be called in or some of his crew became temporary replacements on other crews. If they didn't return from a sortie, then his crew would have to wait for a replacement. Delaying further operational sorties for him. He never talked in terms of how frightening or how worrying or how stress making or really how it affected him – he did it because he thought it was the right thing to do. It seems to me that they were always prepared to go or to delay. I imagine that they made good use of any delay through further practice and extra planning.

I realise as I thought about this that I've moved onto feelings rather than the reactions. How do you react to these delays when they happen?

Let's take a simple delay – you're waiting for a train at a station and the announcement says it will be delayed by one hour – how do you spend that hour?...

You get on a plane just before they start up they announced that there is a problem and you go back to the waiting/boarding area. How do you spend your time what you do – especially if you're not given a re-boarding time?

You're about to move house and there's a delay in the chain?

The day you are due an operation you find there is a delay because there is no bed for you?

Simple questions but all require thought about what you do during the delay – pre-planning is not only required but essential to make best use of your time and your life.

Much of Jesus's teaching echoes that of the prophets. I've already said that I think the context in which Jesus spoke applies in many ways to us today. One thing seems certain: human experience is one of struggle. Whilst we might all yearn for a day when war is over and no more, the truth is that humans are involved in continuous conflict and also in environmental and other challenges. Humanity and all creation is constantly involved in trying to survive and within that survival there is sheer hard work of trying to make some progress as we see it.

There is a white poppy movement, I understand, originally developed in 1933 by the Cooperative Women's Guild to affirm the message of "no more war". Whereas the British Legion red poppy is there to remember the

military dead, those who wear the white poppy emphasise that they want to remember all those who are killed in war. All those who are wounded in body or in mind and the millions who have been made sick or homeless by war and the families and communities torn apart. They also remember those killed or imprisoned for refusing to fight and resisting war. They want to remember not only the military dead but civilians killed in the bombings of London, Coventry, Belfast and in the bombings of Dresden, Hiroshima, and more recently Baghdad and Kabul and the recovered but broken cities of Syria and Iraq and Afghanistan.

Change and decay may be the visible tip of the iceberg of human experience; yet sitting below all this, and seemed like the great bulk of the ice mass is the faithfulness of God, in whom none are dead but all are alive forever. A thought especially relevant today.

The wise bridesmaids keep the vision of Christ's return, and all it stands for, alive through their faithful waiting in the midst of delay. By preparing for the day, the timing of which no one knows but God, they proclaim that God's promises are true. They act out their hope for the day when God will establish justice and righteousness and peace.

These readings today encourage us to stand firm and to speak out. We are also called not to give up on God – especially not the God of peace – even though the world has been, and continues to be, soaked in conflict. Jesus suggests that our experience of such a world, and our trust in the truth of God's promise in Christ, should sustain our belief driven action. We are to make use of the delay; We are not to remain silent; we are not to hide in the modern-day shelters of our making – in a cosy

Christian huddle... – A world of violence, war and oppression gives us an opportunity to testify. **And we are to testify** to God's faithful presence, God's redeeming love, God's desire for justice and peace across all the face of the earth.

Amen

Poem: Let Peace Prevail in This World by Ravi Sathasivam
(Ravi lives in Sri Lanka – some of his poems are written in a "clipped" English)

When you look for peace
then the peace lies within you
When you search for peace
then it is not hard to find
When you want to keep peace alive
then you allow white doves to fly over you
When you make peace with others
then the whole world live in your heart

When you let peace be in the world
then you live in wonderful world
When you allow peace flow around the world
then your hateness will go and love will flow
When you open the door for peace
then peace welcome to your lives.
Let the peace prevail in our wonderful world

Act of Remembrance (Please stand if you are able)

Voice 1 says:

They shall grow not old,
as we that are left grow old;
age shall not weary them,
nor the years condemn.

Voice 2 may reply:

At the going down of the sun
and in the morning,
we will remember them.

All affirm:

We will remember them.

Remembrance at 11am – 2 Minutes Silence

**Hymn STF plus Once crimson
poppies bloomed**

you tube: <https://youtu.be/tbLjIsgD7CI>
(to tune "Little Cornard" STF 172)

Once crimson poppies bloomed
out in a foreign field,
each memory reminds
where brutal death was sealed.
The crimson petals flutter down,

still hatred forms a thorny crown.

For in this present time
we wait in vain for peace,
each generation cries,
each longing for release,
while war still plagues the human race
and families seek a hiding place.

How long will human life
suffer for human greed?
How long must race or pride,
wealth, nationhood or creed
be reasons justifying death
to suffocate a nation's breath?

For everyone who dies
we share a quiet grief,
the pain of loss remains,
time rarely brings relief,
and so we will remember them
and heaven sound a loud amen.

Andrew Pratt (born 1948)

Words: Andrew Pratt (born 1948) © October
2012 Stainer & Bell Ltd, London, England,
www.stainer.co.uk.

Please include any reproduction for local church
use on your CCL Licence returns. All wider and
any commercial use requires prior application to
Stainer & Bell Ltd.

Prayers of intercession

We give thanks that, in a world so complicated
we cannot understand it all, people seek peace
and address evil in so many different ways,
each determined and brave, each making a
difference for good or ill but doing their best.
So we give thanks and pray blessing for:

Men and women who are willing to stand
between enemies to make it impossible for
them to hurt each other.

The staff of United Nations agencies dedicated
to the rights of children, the feeding of
the hungry, the protection of the earth's
ecology, the rescue of refugees, the dignity of
citizens in every country.

Charities established to support those affected
by conflict: the British Legion, Help for Heroes,
the Erskine Hospital, the Earl Haig Fund.

Experts in mediation, working with those who
suffer brokenness in family life, in
business relationships, in churches and
community organisations.

People of power in countries of fragility, with the chance to keep peace and the chance to wreak war on helpless populations.

Voices of hope that speak the words that bring a sense of peace, that sing the songs that inspire justice, that describe the touch that gives gentleness to the world.

People known to us who can be impatient or aggressive when they are afraid, and who need to be loved and reassured even when they think they are in charge.

People known to us who give us stillness and quietness in our souls and make peacemakers of us as if by magic.

People of prayer who reach and hear and see the peace of Christ every day and carry it about as a gift to the world, free and flowing.

Glorious and gracious God,

We think of all those people and families who do not know God's love through other people we think of all those who suffer at the hands of others both physically and mentally we think of all those children who do not know a normal childhood or have had their childhood taken away from them through war or through nasty or coercive over controlling Lord help us change the way we love.

We think of all the war zones – the various countries of the Middle East and around the world we think of those many places where people have been thrown out of their homes and forced to flee. We think the many atrocities committed against those who are left afraid and very vulnerable. Lord, help us change the way we win

We think of all those in refugee camps and those who have suffered following the recent hurricanes and severe weather we think of the many places where nothing seems to be being done to rectify miserable situations and we think of the ways we disrespect this world of yours and cause the death and extinction of so many things Lord help us change the way we care.

Lord help us to leave the I behind and look towards the needs of others We take quiet moment for our personal thoughts..... help us always seek a nonconfrontational path in any problems we need to solve

May we join hands around the world so that all can see each other's viewpoint as we learn from each other with Christ as our example.

We ask this all in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ
Amen

Final hymn STF 713 Show me how to stand for justice

You Tube: <https://youtu.be/l8CIU66oFMQ>

Show me how to stand for justice:
how to work for what is right,
how to challenge false assumptions,
how to walk within the light.
May I learn to share more freely
in a world so full of greed,
showing your immense compassion
by the life I choose to lead.

Teach my heart to treasure mercy,
whether given or received --
for my need has not diminished
since the day I first believed:
let me seek no satisfaction
boasting of what I have done,
but rejoice that I am pardoned
and accepted in your Son.

Gladly I embrace a lifestyle
modelled on your living word,
in humility submitting
to the truth which I have heard.
Make me conscious of your presence
every day in all I do:
by your Spirit's gracious prompting
may I learn to walk with you.

Martin Leckebusch (b. 1962)

Words: (c) 1999, Kevin Mayhew Ltd, Buxhall,
Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 3BW

Blessing/the Grace

May the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ
The love of God,
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
Be with us all, evermore
Amen