



WELCOME TO ST PETER'S ASH

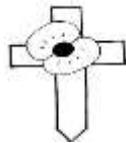


THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AT ST PETER'S IS CALLED TO CELEBRATE, LIVE AND REFLECT THE LOVE OF GOD IN JESUS CHRIST

8th NOVEMBER 2020

**3rd BEFORE ADVENT
(REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY)**

<u>READINGS FOR TODAY</u>		PARISH OFFICE: Closed during lockdown
Amos	5 v 18 - 24	TEL:01252 331161; e- mail: office@saint-peters-ash.org.uk
1 Thessalonians	4 v 13 – end	BOOKINGS OF WEDDINGS & BAPTISMS – phone for an appointment on 01252 321517 or 331161
Matthew	25 v 1 - 13	WEBSITE: www.saint-peters-ash.org.uk



PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SOULS OF THE RECENTLY DEPARTED, ESPECIALLY:

RICHARD STOKES; EDNA PEARSON; JUNE MIDDLETON; LIAM MURPHY; JULIE QUANTRILL; COLIN BARTLETT

MEMORIES OF JULIE QUANTRILL – the family are putting together some memory boxes of Julie for Jamie and Ailsa. If you have any memories/photos of Julie and family please let Claire Boud have them or Fr Keith. e-mails or hard copies are both acceptable:
keithbristow1956@outlook.com clairehboud@gmail.com

CARE AND SHARE - If you would like to donate any tins, packets, UHT milk, tea, coffee etc. for the shelves outside church, please bring items to church with you or leave them on the doorstep of the Rectory. Thank you.

CSW INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER 2020 - is next Sunday 15 November. Our theme this year is The Real Lockdown. More details on next week's sheet.

ADVENT COURSE

This year we will be meeting online, but there will be hard copies of the sessions available for those unable to access the internet to use for themselves at home. It's all FREE!

The course is entitled 'Hope' and is by John Birch – a theme which seems particularly relevant this year! There are four Bible Studies and discussions: The nature of hope; Listen to the witnesses; Hope in the Gospel promises; Hope for the future. The dates for the sessions online will be Thursday 26th and Monday 30th November, Tuesday 8th and Wednesday 16th December all at 7 – 30 pm. See the next page of this sheet for an introduction to the course.

If you wish to sign up for online, or receive a printed copy of the course, please phone Fr Keith on 01252 321517 or Carol on 01252 313239 or e-mail Fr Keith at: keithbristow1956@outlook.com

ST PETER'S CHURCH CALENDARS

Ideal Christmas presents, our calendar for 2021 has pictures of St Peter's and room for appointments. Only £5 they will be available in December when we're back in church – or order before from Fr Keith – 321517.

ST PETER'S PRAYER CHAIN - If you would like prayer for yourself or somebody else please phone: 01252 322292 or 01252 323037 This is a confidential service.

COLLECT FOR 3rd BEFORE ADVENT

Almighty Father,
whose will is to restore all things
in your beloved Son, the King of all:
govern the hearts and minds of those in authority,
and bring the families of the nations,
divided and torn apart by the ravages of sin,
to be subject to his just and gentle rule;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

LOCKDOWN RESTRICTIONS

At present the Government have told all places of worship to close until the current National Lockdown ends. We will resume our Sunday and Wednesday services in church as soon as we are given permission to do so. In the meantime there will be a weekly service of Morning Prayer on the website which you will be able to watch (from next Sunday) by following the link, or read yourself from the text, also on the website. We will continue to provide resources for daily Evening Prayer. The church can be opened for individual prayer – just contact Fr Keith on 01252 321517 to make a time. Our Prayer Chain is still open too. As before, Carol and I and others will be keeping in contact with as many people as possible, and I am sure that there will be lots of other contacts being made either by phone or on social media. God bless and keep safe! See you in December we hope!

LOOK FOR LETTERS FROM THE ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOP ANDREW ALSO EVENING PRAYERS FOR THE NATION LATER IN THIS WEEK'S SHEET.

READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK – 2nd BEFORE ADVENT

Zephaniah 1 v 7, 12 - end; 1 Thessalonians 5 v 1 - 11;
Matthew 25 v 14 - 30

Congratulations and good wishes to everyone celebrating their birthday this week, especially: KATH KNAPMAN (TODAY); JOHN MERRETT, KAYLA SHARP & ABBIE HURCOMBE (10TH); JO HURST (11TH)

INTRODUCTION TO THE ADVENT COURSE

HOPE by JOHN BIRCH

Our definition of 'hope' will depend on our situation, and whether we are in a stable place emotionally or facing difficulties and anguish. At its simplest, hope can be the wish for something we desire to happen, and as diverse as hoping to see a long-lost friend later in the year, hoping the next bus will arrive on time, a dear friend who is ill will recover, the country votes for our choice of government, or that the police catch the thief who recently broke into our car. It can relate to the small world we inhabit as individuals or reach out to touch all people.

For those of us who call ourselves Christians, hope takes on a different dimension. It is still about our day-to-day existence and seeing hope within it, but it is also about a future hope for 'salvation', 'resurrection', 'eternal life' and how these strands intertwine and influence our relationship with God and the world.

The Covid-19 pandemic of 2020 was a few months old when I wrote this study, and we were emerging from an initial fear of the unknown into a period of increasing knowledge about this virus, those most vulnerable to its ferocity and how best to change our behaviour to minimise chances of infection for ourselves and others. It also brought out the best in so many people, offering their help to the vulnerable in local neighbourhoods. Into what was a period of mourning and fear for many, emerged a hope that there could be better times ahead.

Campaigners for a green revolution to combat changes to our climate hope that their influence, backed up by science, will ensure that we leave a healthier world for our grandchildren to grow up into. There are many 'hopes' that reach the news headlines, and far more that do not. They should cause us to question how our faith can speak into these situations and affect our response.

Defining Christian hope in a paragraph is not that easy, but I offer this as a starting point:

'Biblical and Christian hope does not mean living in the clouds, dreaming of a better life. It is not merely a projection of what we would like to be or do. It leads us to discover seeds of a 'new world' already present today, because of the identity of our God, because of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This hope is, in addition, a source of energy to live differently, not according to the values of a society based on the thirst for possession and competition.'
([https:// www.taize.fr/en_article343.html](https://www.taize.fr/en_article343.html))

'I've read the last page of the Bible. It's all going to turn out all right.' (Billy Graham)

Morning Prayer on REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

If there is more than one person present, someone may wish to read the parts marked (L), everyone says the rest together. You can say alternate verses in the Psalm and in the Canticles. Please have a Bible to hand. You may wish to light a candle.

The Act of Remembrance is printed here (the order for Morning Prayer follows). It may be incorporated into the service of Morning Prayer at the place indicated, or used by itself, to coincide with the traditional keeping of the two minutes silence at 11 am. It may also be used again, by itself, at 11 am on Wednesday 11th November. The Lord's Prayer may be added if it is used on that occasion.

THE ACT OF REMEMBRANCE

(L) In this year, which marks the 75th Anniversary of the end of the second world war, we commit ourselves anew 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 wars and conflicts past and present, have been given and taken away.

(L) Let us pray for all who we will be remembering today:

All: Almighty and eternal God,
from whose love in Christ we cannot be parted,
either by death or life:
hear our prayers and thanksgivings
for all whom we remember this day;
fulfil in them the purpose of your love;
and bring us all, with them, to your eternal joy;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

(L) Let us also pray especially for those who served and died in the Second World War:

All: O God of truth and justice, we hold before you those men and women who have died in active service, particularly in the Second World War, whose sacrifice brought Victory in Europe and the Far East. As we honour their courage and cherish their memory, may we put our faith in your future; for you are the source of life and hope, now and for ever. Amen.

READING

In the Book of Lamentations in the Old Testament we find this reassurance of God's continued presence:

This I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning.

And in the New Testament in John's Gospel Jesus says:

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives.
Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

Continued

ACT OF REMEMBRANCE

(L) Now we remember before God, and commend to his safe keeping, those who have died for their country in war; in the service of the peoples of the world:

(L) 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.

All: We will remember them.

The two minutes silence is kept

At the end of the silence the Kohima Epitaph is said:

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

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 people and establish harmony among the nations, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This hymn may be said or sung:

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

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

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

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

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

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

ACT OF COMMITMENT

(L) Let us pledge ourselves anew to the service of God and our fellow men and women: that we may help, encourage and comfort others, and support those working for the relief of the needy and for the peace and welfare of the nations:

All: 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.

(L) May God grant to the living grace, to the departed rest, to the Church, the Queen, the Commonwealth and all people, unity, peace and concord, and to us and all God's servants, life everlasting. Amen.

All: May the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace, and rise with Christ in glory. Amen.

MORNING PRAYER

(L) O Lord, open our lips

All: and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

All I will make a way in the wilderness,
and rivers in the desert.

- 1 'I am the Lord, your Holy One, ♦
the Creator of Israel, your King.'
- 2 Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea, ♦
a path in the mighty waters,
- 3 'Remember not the former things, ♦
nor consider the things of old.
- 4 'Behold, I am doing a new thing; ♦
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
- 5 'I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers
in the desert, ♦
to give drink to my chosen people,
- 6 'The people whom I formed for myself, ♦
that they might declare my praise.'

All Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.

All I will make a way in the wilderness,
and rivers in the desert.

This hymn is said or sung:

Eternal Father, strong to save,
whose arm doth bind the restless wave,
who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep
its own appointed limits keep:
O, hear us when we cry to Thee,
for those in peril on the sea!

O Saviour, whose almighty word
the winds and waves submissive heard,
who walkedst on the foaming deep,
and calm, amidst its rage, didst sleep:
O, hear us when we cry to Thee,
for those in peril on the sea!

O sacred Spirit, who didst brood
upon the waters dark and rude,
and bid their angry tumult cease,
and give, for wild confusion, peace:
O, hear us when we cry to Thee,
for those in peril on the sea!

O Trinity of love and power,
our brethren shield in danger's hour;
from rock and tempest, fire and foe,
protect us wheresoe'er they go:
thus ever let there rise to Thee
glad hymns of praise from land and sea.

(L) The night has passed, and the day lies open before us; let us pray with one heart and mind:

All: As we rejoice in the gift of this new day, so may the light of your presence, O God, set our hearts on fire with love for you; now and for ever. Amen.

(L) On this Remembrance Sunday let us confess to God the sins and shortcomings of the world and our part in them:

For pride, selfishness and greed: Lord have mercy.
All: Lord have mercy

For evil divisions and hatreds. Lord have mercy.
All: Lord have mercy

For our failure to seek and establish that peace which God wills for his children.
All: Lord have mercy

(L) May the God of love and power forgive us and free us from our sins, heal and strengthen us by his Spirit, and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord. Amen.

All now say 'The Te Deum':

We praise you, O God,
we acclaim you as the Lord;
all creation worships you,
the Father everlasting.
To you all angels, all the powers of heaven,
the cherubim and seraphim, sing in endless praise:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
The glorious company of apostles praise you.
The noble fellowship of prophets praise you.
The white-robed army of martyrs praise you.
Throughout the world the holy Church acclaims you:
Father, of majesty unbounded,
your true and only Son, worthy of all praise,
the Holy Spirit, advocate and guide.

You, Christ, are the King of glory,
the eternal Son of the Father.
When you took our flesh to set us free
you humbly chose the Virgin's womb.
You overcame the sting of death
and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.
You are seated at God's right hand in glory.
We believe that you will come and be our judge.
Come then, Lord, and help your people,
bought with the price of your own blood,
and bring us with your saints
to glory everlasting.

Save your people, Lord, and bless your inheritance.
Govern and uphold them now and always.
Day by day we bless you.
We praise your name for ever.
Keep us today, Lord, from all sin.
Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy.
Lord, show us your love and mercy,
for we have put our trust in you.
In you, Lord, is our hope:
let us never be put to shame.

We now say the collect for the 3rd Sunday before Advent
(see first page)

Read Amos 5 v 18 - 24 followed by Psalm 70 concluding with:

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen.

Read 1 Thessalonians 4 v 13 - end

(L) Alleluia, alleluia.
Jesus Christ is the firstborn from the dead;
to him be glory and power for ever and ever.
All Alleluia

Now read Matthew 25 v 1 – 13 Here are some thoughts on today's readings from Fr Keith:

These next few Sundays before Advent, and, indeed, Advent itself, are focused on us 'getting ready'. Not for Christmas, but for the time when Jesus will come again in power and glory at the end of time, what in the Old Testament is known as 'The Day of the Lord'. To some people that may sound a bit terrifying, and certainly not in the spirit of the 'festive season'. But, for Christians, it should be a time of joyful expectation, as we should really believe what we say during the prayer of consecration at Holy Communion: 'Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ *will come again*.' We are called to get ready ourselves for that day, and help prepare the rest of the world for it also.

Jesus' story of the ten bridesmaids is a very familiar one. Five were wise and well prepared with their lamps ready to greet the bridegroom, the others were ill prepared and so missed the boat when it was time to go into the wedding banquet i.e. get into the Kingdom of Heaven. The message is starkly clear - 'keep awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour' when Jesus, the bridegroom, will return, and if you're not ready you will be excluded – no second chances.

When you have no idea when a promised event is going to happen, being in a state of constant readiness is a big ask. As human beings we like to think we are in control, and we get angry and frustrated when we're not. Part of our unease and anxiety with the Corona pandemic arises from that feeling that we have lost control. We cast around for someone, anyone, to blame for that – the government, those who aren't keeping the rules, scientists for not having an instant cure – the list goes on and on. And yet, Christianity has at its' heart a promise that has no set date for its' fulfilment. Patience and resilience are essential to our calling, but there are many who ridicule us about it. They would have us behave, as they do, carrying on as if it will never happen. In many people's eyes we are living in cloud-cuckoo land, and should be concentrating on problems closer to home.

That attitude, however, is a misunderstanding of what waiting for Jesus should be like. As I mentioned just now, it's not just about getting ready ourselves, but helping others to get ready too, and so the world's problems are always very much our concern. As Christians we have a duty to our neighbours, and trying to improve conditions in our world is part of that, as Jesus Himself taught us. So, we need to be involved in the here and now, even as we look forward to the future. Trying to turn people away for all that is destructive of the world that God has given us, and all that undermines the kind of loving relationships God wants us to have with one another, should be very much our concern. Our faith must be sincere and practical – we need to be making a real difference to the world around us, not just thinking about our preparedness in our own relationship with God.

Speaking through the prophet Amos, in today's first reading, God points out the self-deception of those who think they are on course for a good reward on the 'day of the Lord' at the end of time. These are people who go through the motions of religion, but who do not put it into practice in their day to day lives. The Book of Amos is full of God's anger at the greed and exploitation that is rife in Israel – the rich getting richer and ignoring or trampling down the poor who are getting poorer. The rituals of religion won't save the rich if they have no real meaning for them in living their lives. Darkness not light awaits these people unless they repent. What God wants is sincerity, justice and righteousness and not just lip-service to his commandments.

On this Remembrance Sunday we shall, rightly and properly, be looking back and giving thanks for those who gave so much in the cause of justice and freedom. We must never forget their sacrifice. But we must always be working hard to ensure that we do not squander all that they fought and died for. As we look forward to the coming of the Day of the Lord, the second coming of Jesus, like the wise bridesmaids, we must be prepared ourselves, but also play an active part in trying to make God's world the just and righteous place that He wants it to be.

On November 19, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln delivered remarks, which later became known as the Gettysburg Address, at the official dedication ceremony for the National Cemetery of Gettysburg in Pennsylvania, on the site of one of the bloodiest and most decisive battles of the Civil War, which was still going on at that time. At the end of what was a very brief address, he had this to say about how best to honour the dead:

'It is for us the living, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced.....that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.'

Lincoln was of course making a political point about the outcome of the war and the future of the United States. Honouring the dead by being dedicated to the cause of justice and freedom for all of God's people is, though, something I believe we can all take from that speech on this Remembrance Day. It is also linked with God's expectations of us in the context of waiting for Jesus to come again.

We must be active workers for Jesus in our troubled world. Empowered and guided by the Holy Spirit we all have tasks before us. 'Keeping awake', as Jesus told us, is an instruction not to be passive or accepting of the status quo. Too many times human beings have not learned the lessons of history, and the tragedies of war and suffering are repeated. Nations and peoples working together for the common good should be our goal, as we await the full revelation of God's Kingdom. Only then can we truly claim to be honouring those who gave so much for us and our future – even to the point of giving up their own lives.

Now pause for your own reflections.

(L): We now affirm our faith in the words of the Creed:

All I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.

We now say together:

All You will guide us with your counsel, O God,
and afterwards receive us with glory.

- 1 Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, ♦
who has come to his people and set them free.
- 2 He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour, ♦
born of the house of his servant David.
- 3 Through his holy prophets God promised of old ♦
to save us from our enemies,
from the hands of all that hate us,
- 4 To show mercy to our ancestors, ♦
and to remember his holy covenant.
- 5 This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
- 6 Free to worship him without fear, ♦
holy and righteous in his sight
all the days of our life.
- 7 And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the
Most High, ♦
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
- 8 To give his people knowledge of salvation ♦
by the forgiveness of all their sins.
- 9 In the tender compassion of our God ♦
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
- 10 To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the
shadow of death, ♦
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

All Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.

All You will guide us with your counsel, O God,
and afterwards receive us with glory.

*The Act of Remembrance may be used here or used later
at 11 am*

Afterwards we turn to God in a time of prayer:

Let us pray:

Let us pray for all who suffer as a result of conflict, and ask that God may give us peace:

For the service men and women who have died in the violence of war, each one remembered by and known to God;

For those who love them in death as in life, offering the distress of our grief and the sadness of our loss:

Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer

For all members of the armed forces who are in danger this day, remembering family, friends and all who pray for their safe return;

For civilian women, children and men whose lives are disfigured by war or terror, calling to mind in penitence the anger and hatreds of humanity:

Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer

For peacemakers and peacekeepers, who seek to keep this world secure and free;
For all who bear the burden and privilege of leadership, political, military and religious; asking for gifts of wisdom and resolve in the search for reconciliation and peace:

Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer

O God of truth and justice, we hold before you those whose memory we cherish, and those whose names we will never know. Help us to lift our eyes above the torment of this broken world, and grant us the grace to pray for those who wish us harm.

As we honour the past, may we put our faith in your future; for you are the source of life and hope, now and for ever.

Merciful Father accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

As Jesus taught us, so we pray: Our Father in heaven....

This hymn may be said or sung:

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.

*Oh 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.

*Oh 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
It is pardoning that we are pardoned
In giving to all men that we receive
And in dying that we're born to eternal life

Let us pray:

God, our refuge and strength,
bring near the day when wars shall cease
and poverty and pain shall end,
that earth may know the peace of heaven
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God of love,
may the death and resurrection of Christ
bring us, with all the faithful departed,
into the peace of your eternal home.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ,
our rock and our salvation,
to whom be glory for time and for eternity.
All Amen.

All May God the Holy Spirit, whom the risen Lord
breathed into his disciples, empower us and fill us with
Christ's peace, making us ready to receive Him when He
comes to reign in power and glory on the last day. Amen.

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy
of God, rest in peace, and rise with Christ in glory. Amen.

Special Evening Prayers for the Nation

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York and senior church leaders have called a month of Prayer for the Nation during the second lockdown. The suggestion is that as many of us as possible unite to do this at 6 pm each day. These prayers and themes are offered as tools to enable all to participate and are intended simply as suggestions:

Loving God, at this time of crisis when so many are suffering, we pray for our nation and our world. Give our leaders wisdom, our Health Service strength, our people hope. Lead us through these parched and difficult days to the fresh springs of joy and comfort that we find in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Loving Father God be with us in our distress: with our families, friends and neighbours, our country and our world. Give health to the sick, hope to the fearful, and comfort to the mourners. Give wisdom to our frontline and key workers, insight to our government and patience to us all; Overcome disease with the power of your new life, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Family Prayer

Loving God, you know us and all that we are facing. We thank you that we can come to you as we are – with all our fears and concerns, our difficulties and challenges. Please draw close to each of us and those we remember before you now. Bring to us your peace and comfort. And fill us with your Spirit that we may be bearers of your grace and hope to others. As a country protect us, encourage us and keep us. In the name of your Son Jesus we pray. Amen

Continued

Prayers for the Nation

Lord Jesus Christ, in these dark and difficult days we turn our hearts to you. In ages past you have delivered our nation from disaster. Do it again we pray. Give Wisdom beyond human wisdom to our leaders. Give strength beyond human strength to the NHS and all our frontline workers. Give comfort beyond human comfort to children and the elderly and all who grieve. Lord, Jesus Christ. In these dark and difficult days, turn your face towards us, have mercy upon us, and heal our land we pray. Amen.

Loving God, your Son Jesus Christ came that we might have life and have it abundantly; pour out your blessing upon our nation; where there is illness, bring your healing touch; where there is fear, strengthen us with the knowledge of your presence; where there is uncertainty, build us up in faith; where there is dishonesty, lead us into truth; where there is discord, may we know the harmony of your love; this we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

Daily Themes

Sunday: Family, friends and loved ones.

We lift to God those we hold in our hearts – praying for their health, their well-being and their sense of hope.

We pray that even when loved ones cannot physically be together they would not feel apart.

We ask for God's help in our communicating, our connecting and our caring.

Monday: Schools and colleges, children and young people.

We pray for all those involved in the shaping of young lives.

We give God thanks for the sacrifice and commitment of teachers and all those involved in serving children and young people in education.

We pray that all might be nurtured and cared for and that every needful resource would be made available – that all lives can flourish even in these difficult times and that no-one would be overlooked.

Tuesday ; Elderly, isolated and vulnerable.

We echo God's commitment to those most at risk of this virus by praying today for those who are particularly vulnerable and isolated: praying for their deliverance, protection and comfort.

We hold before God those who care for them – that they would be strengthened and encouraged in this work.

Wednesday: Businesses, the workplace and economic wellbeing.

In this time of great challenge, we pray for the economic wellbeing of the country.

We remember before God those who face great uncertainty in their work. We lift before God those who have lost their jobs and face an uncertain and difficult future.

We pray for a renewed commitment to our common life together.

Thursday: The NHS and other key workers.

Our God is the great healer – and the agent used more than any other is the NHS. Today we voice our gratitude for those who serve this country in the National Health Service and pray for that God would prosper the work of their hands – that they would all be encouraged in their continued work of sacrifice and care amongst us.

Friday: National and Local government.

We pray for those who are in positions of authority with responsibility for decision making at national and local level at this difficult time. We ask that God would give great wisdom, deep commitment to all and right judgment.

Saturday: All who are grieving, and all suffering with physical and mental ill-health.

'Lord the one you love is ill....' John 11 v 3

We bring to God all those who suffer in body, mind, spirit or with grief. We ask that in God's great loving kindness they might know God's sustaining presence amidst their pain.

We pray for those who are stretched beyond their own capacity to cope and remain hopeful – that in the roar of these waterfalls God would bring a sense of coherence, comfort and strength.

A Grace

Dear God We are grateful for all that you have given to us – this food, each other and our health. We pray for those who lack these things we enjoy. Give us thank full hearts and opportunities to share your gifts with others. We lift before you this country in these difficult days – and pray you would protect us, encourage us and keep us. Amen.

**A letter from the Archbishops of
Canterbury and York:**

Dear Friends,

These are deeply challenging and difficult times for us all. When we are surrounded by fear and suffering, it can be hard to feel hopeful. This coming winter feels like it will be longer and darker than usual.

There is a story in the Bible where Jesus and his disciples are caught in a storm. The disciples are understandably terrified as the wind and waves threaten to overpower them. 'Why are you so afraid?', Jesus asks. This year, we too have been caught in a storm which often feels overwhelming. And yet we can look to Jesus, in the boat with us, who calms the storm and comforts us in our fear.

We are writing to share our belief that whoever you are, and whatever you happen to believe, you are loved by God. Beyond measure. We also want you to know that we are praying for you, particularly asking that Christ's love will comfort us, calm our fears, and lead our nation and our world through this terrible pandemic. Starting this week, we have asked every church to pray each day at 6pm. We invite you to join with us. You'll be able to find simple resources on the Church of England website and social media channels.

There are three other responses that we want to encourage everyone to consider –

First, let's be calm. By only buying what we need and not hoarding, or by reaching out to our neighbours as we did during the first lockdown, we can be stronger together in ways that are impossible if we go it alone. When things go wrong - as they always will with such complex challenges - let us look for good and right ways forward together.

Secondly, let's be courageous. There are many reasons to be fearful at the moment, but the story of Christ calming the waves calls us to give our fears to Jesus and have faith in Him. The British willingness just to get on with things is one of our very best characteristics – let us not be paralysed by fear. We will all need each other's courage in the months to come.

Thirdly, let's be compassionate. So many of us are holding so much pain - our own and the pain of those we love. We will need to be gentle, kind and patient with each other. In the first wave we showed we are a nation of compassion and kindness. Let's dig deep and keep that love for

our neighbours strong in this second time of struggle. Even though there is much darkness around us, there are also many points of light in the weeks ahead.

This Sunday is Remembrance Day. As we remember the courage and sacrifice of those who gave everything for this nation in war, we are also reminded of the possibility for hope after destruction, of new life after suffering. In the coming weeks, there are great religious ceremonies. For Hindus, Sikhs and Jains there is Diwali, the festival of light. Sikhs will celebrate the birth of Guru Nanak. The Jewish community will observe Hanukkah. Many Muslim communities have just celebrated Eid-e-Milad, the anniversary of the birth of Muhammad.

Soon it will be Christmas. At his birth Jesus was also called Emmanuel. It's a word that appears in lots of carols. It means 'God is with us'. And this is the message of Christmas: in Jesus, God is with us, sharing our darkness and our struggles, bringing comfort and joy. It is the source of our hope. As the Bible says: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." (John 1:5) Let us shine in the darkness of this winter.

May God bless you and keep you, and all those you love.

The Most Revd & Rt Hon Justin Welby
Archbishop of Canterbury

The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell
Archbishop of York

FROM BISHOP ANDREW

Friends, these are challenging times as we move into Lockdown once more, and this time as winter approaches. It's vital that we continue to do what we can to reach out to those most affected in our communities, living out God's special heart for the poor and lonely and bereaved and the spiritually lost, as the church at its best has always done; and it's vital too that we continue to stream our worship services, whether live or recorded or in partnership with other churches, so as to draw us together into the presence of the Good Shepherd who continues to walk with us through the green pastures and the darkest of valleys.

Last Thursday marked the beginning of 28 days of Lockdown, but also, on the initiative of our archbishops, the beginning of 28 days of

focussed prayer for our nation at this time, and I'd love to encourage every Christian in the diocese to engage with this, and particularly with a very simple discipline: setting the alarms on our phones or wherever to go off at 6 o'clock each evening to remind us to pray together – across the diocese and nation - for just five minutes each day – or more, of course, as the Spirit leads you! It would be great too if as many churches as possible could toll their bells at 6 pm, so as to remind our communities that we are praying for them. And if you're able to pray and fast once a week over this month – fasting from food or maybe from TV or social media – that too would help us to focus our prayers for God's mercy at this time, and to keep that living link with the living God.

And some words of blessing from Paul's letter to the Romans: 'May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit'. Amen

Some other Evening Prayer resources for this week

O Lord open our lips,
and our mouth shall show forth your praise.

O God make speed to save us.
O Lord, make haste to help us.

A lamp or candle may be lit.

All See what the Lord our God has done
and exalt him in the sight of the living.

- 1 Blessed be God, who lives for ever, ♦
whose reign endures throughout all ages.
- 2 Declare God's praise before the nations, ♦
you who are the children of Israel.
- 3 For if our God has scattered you among them, ♦
there too has he shown you his greatness.
- 4 Exalt him in the sight of the living, ♦
because he is our Lord and God and our Father for
ever.
- 5 Though God punishes you for your wickedness, ♦
mercy will be shown to you all.
- 6 God will gather you from every nation, ♦
from wherever you have been scattered.
- 7 When you turn to the Lord
with all your heart and soul, ♦
God will hide his face from you no more.
- 8 See what the Lord has done for you ♦
and give thanks with a loud voice.
- 9 Praise the Lord of righteousness ♦
and exalt the King of the ages.

All Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.

All See what the Lord our God has done
and exalt him in the sight of the living.

That this evening may be holy, good and peaceful,
we pray with one heart and mind:

Silence is kept.

As our evening prayer rises before you, O God,
so may your mercy come down upon us
to cleanse our hearts
and set us free to sing your praise
now and for ever. Amen.

A Psalm is said: Mon 34; Tue 40; Wed 37; Thurs 43; Fri 31; Sat 86 ending with:

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever.
Amen.

*Two Scripture Readings now follow (see below). Between
the two readings we say:*

All Salvation belongs to our God,
who will guide us to springs of living water.

- 1 Behold, a great multitude ♦
which no one could number,
- 2 From every nation,
from all tribes and peoples and tongues, ♦
standing before the throne and the Lamb.
- 3 They were clothed in white robes
and had palms in their hands, ♦
and they cried with a loud voice, saying,
- 4 'Salvation belongs to our God
who sits on the throne, ♦
and to the Lamb.'
- 5 These are they
who have come out of the great tribulation, ♦
they have washed their robes
and made them white in the blood of the Lamb;
- 6 Therefore they stand before the throne of God, ♦
whom they serve day and night within the temple.
- 7 And the One who sits upon the throne ♦
will shelter them with his presence.
- 8 They shall never again feel hunger or thirst, ♦
the sun shall not strike them,
nor any scorching heat.
- 9 For the Lamb at the heart of the throne ♦
will be their Shepherd,
- 10 He will guide them to springs of living water, ♦
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

All To the One who sits on the throne and to the Lamb ♦
be blessing and honour and glory and might,
for ever and ever. Amen.

All Salvation belongs to our God,
who will guide us to springs of living water.

Readings:

Monday Isaiah 5 v 8 - 24; Matthew 4 v 23 to 5 v 12
Tuesday Isaiah 5 v 25 - end; Matthew 5 v 13 - 20
Wednesday: Isaiah 6; Matthew 5 v 21 - 37
Thursday: Isaiah 7 v 1 - 17; Matthew 5 v 38 - end
Friday: Isaiah 8 v 1 - 15; Matthew 6 v 1 - 18
Saturday: Isaiah 8 v 16 to 9 v 7; Matthew 6 v 19 - end

Gospel Cantic: The Magnificat (The Song of Mary)

All The righteous will shine like the sun
in the kingdom of their Father.

1) My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour; he has looked with favour on his lowly servant.

2) From this day all generations will call me blessed; the Almighty has done great things for me and holy is his name.

3) He has mercy on those who fear him, from generation to generation.

4) He has shown strength with his arm and has scattered the proud in their conceit.

5) Casting down the mighty from their thrones and lifting up the lowly.

6) He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.

7) He has come to the aid of his servant Israel, to remember his promise of mercy.

8) The promise made to our ancestors, to Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen.

All The righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

Prayers of thanksgiving are made for the day that is ending. Intercessions are offered for the church, the world and for individuals, the sick and the departed.

Our Father, who art in heaven ...

The Collect for this week:

Almighty Father,
whose will is to restore all things
in your beloved Son, the King of all:
govern the hearts and minds of those in authority,
and bring the families of the nations,
divided and torn apart by the ravages of sin,
to be subject to his just and gentle rule;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

This hymn may be said or sung:

Now the day is over,
Night is drawing nigh,
Shadows of the evening
Steal across the sky.

Jesus, give the weary
Calm and sweet repose;
With Thy tend' rest blessing
May mine eyelids close.

Comfort those who suffer,
Watching late in pain;
Those who plan some evil
From their sin restrain.

Through the long night watches
May Thine angels spread
Their white wings above me,
Watching round my bed.

When the morning wakens,
Then may I arise
Pure, and fresh, and sinless
In Thy holy eyes.

Let us pray:

Heal us, O God, from all our afflictions
and keep us steadfast in your love;
bind up our wounds,
raise us from death,
and lead us to fullness of life;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

O God,
the source of all good desires,
all right judgements, and all just works:
give to your servants that peace
which the world cannot give;
that our hearts may be set to obey your commandments,
and that, freed from the fear of our enemies,
we may pass our time in rest and quietness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lighten our darkness, Lord, we pray, and in your great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night, for the love of your only Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.

May the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

How do we remember?

Sermon to the Diocese of Guildford for
Remembrance Sunday, 8th November 2020

from Bishop Jo

Text: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Remembrance is all about making sure we're not uninformed about those who have died. In particular those who've died at war. Rather we're informed, and present to the memory, even of people we cannot name yet through whose legacy we live. Today we remember especially those who died in the 'war to end all wars'. It may have lasted just four years and taken place over a relatively small patch of land in Flanders but the names of those who died would make this sermon last nearly a year if I did nothing but read them out.

We also remember those who died twenty years later in the Second World War, the war that introduced the concept of Total War. Whereas in WW1, the battles were chiefly confined to the front lines of opposing armies, by the Second World War anywhere could be the frontline, with wholesale devastation from the air of towns and cities and their civilian populations – people in their homes, in the workplace, people at rest and play. Women and children joined the listings of war-dead en masse, and on all sides of the conflict. We remember them.

And so we honour those who laid down their lives for their country. And we grieve for those caught up who never chose to be involved, the co-lateral damage in a world where warfare continues. *We do not want to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died* – whether those who died at the battle of the Somme or those who died in the workcamp of Auschwitz or those who died in the air-raid shelters of Coventry or Dresden. Or those who've died as migrants escaping the present-day warzones that were their homes.

In his letter to the Thessalonians Paul is urging that we don't hide from the hard work of grief or remembrance, even when we can't make sense of it and it is very heavy. The pastoral situation there was very different from ours today but the weight of grief and the hunger for hope surely is not. To meet their concern Paul paints a picture of Christ's return, in the most vivid language possible, to help the recipients of the letter have the sense that they can actually see, hear, and trust the salvation they are risking their lives on... to build their patience and resilience in times that might otherwise feel meaningless and anxious. Our times are not purposeless: there *is* direction and an end point, in Christ's longed-for return. Glimpse the big picture, he says as he stretches out the canvas before the eyes of their hearts.

And so Paul describes heaven and earth as suddenly and beautifully reconciled in an embrace ("caught up together") – I wonder if, with the eyes of your heart you can feel yourself held within that embrace. It takes place in some newly opened space between heaven and earth ("in the air") and it's an embrace that will never end ("and so we will be with the Lord forever"). That image sums up Paul's deepest beliefs about God's reconciling purpose in Christ – a purpose clear enough to sustain Paul through prison and persecution, a purpose sure enough to bring faithful servicemen and women to lay down their lives, a purpose strong enough to carry us through the current trials of pandemic and political pandemonium.

When we speak of Christ's return Paul is not talking about some wistful dream that God might send Jesus a second time just as he did the first time. Given how long it has been since the 'first coming', there's probably a danger that after two thousand years Christian hope seems fruitless or delusional. No, Paul is saying anything BUT that – quite the opposite. He's demarcating the space, he's clarifying the direction of travel, and so he's redescribing what may sometimes *feel* like a wild and war-torn wilderness so we may inhabit it for what it is: more like an electro-magnetically-charged field of salvation between the poles of Christ's first and second appearance.

The promised appearance of Christ aligns us and charges us – just as with the earliest Gentile Christians – to come into right relationship with God and with one another. The experience of the Spirit of God at work empowers us to work for righteousness and justice, to live in holiness and love, to risk reconciliation even when violence threatens. The

world wars of the past have been attempts to achieve peace, yet we know such peace is temporary and tenuous; it is fragile and fallible. And yet we know there will be a day when wars will end, when reconciliation will be sealed, when salvation is the whole of it.

And so, based on that future confidence, Paul urges us to live now in the light of that security: to live into your partnership with Christ today. This isn't just about an imagined future: it's about Christ's work of transformation in you, and through you to your community, *today*. He addresses we who are alive: not to feel guilty, not to waste our lives, not to look back with regret; but to live within the reality of the cosmic embrace. Now.

Not least in the way that we mourn. In the way that we grieve. In the way that we remember.

How do we remember? I want to finish with the story of how our present practice of Remembrance began.

In 1914, a twenty-five-year-old South African named Percy Fitzpatrick, a former student at Oxford, was studying to be a lawyer in London. At the outbreak of war in July that year he returned home to Johannesburg and volunteered for military service. In September 1915, Fitzpatrick returned to England with the South African Heavy Artillery. He saw service at some of the most ferocious battles of the war, including the Battle of the Somme and the third Battle of Ypres. He commanded the 71st siege battery of the South African Heavy Artillery for around nine months. On 14th December 1917, FitzPatrick, now an acting Major, was nearing the railway station at Beaumontz in north east France to say farewell to two friends who were going on leave to England. A chance shell, fired at long range, struck. FitzPatrick was killed, aged 28. His father, Sir Percy FitzPatrick senior, a farmer and former Mayor of Johannesburg, had lost his eldest son. He planted memorial trees on his land, but then wanted to do more. He'd been impressed by a one-minute silence kept in his local church in 1916 after the South African casualty list had been read out. The date and time of the Armistice – the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month – inspired Sir Percy FitzPatrick to suggest an annual commemoration. The suggestion was forwarded to King George V and the King issued a 'call to the nation' at the beginning of November 1919 asking that, 'for the brief space of two minutes, there be a complete suspension of all normal activities...to perpetuate the memory of the Great Deliverance, and of those who laid down their lives to achieve it.' - the first minute's silence intended as a thanksgiving for those who have survived, and the second minute to remember the fallen. And so, on 11th November 1919, the Armistice Day silence was officially observed for the first time.

How do we remember? We continue the tradition that began with Percy Fitzpatrick Sr as fervently as ever nearly a century later. We may gather at memorials – even though it's not so easy this year. We may plant

trees. We may read out the names off the board at school or out of the book in our church. *To be informed, as brothers and sisters, about those who have died...* And at the same time, for we who are alive, we remember by claiming fully the life for which they died, the life which, despite all circumstances, is caught up in the cosmic embrace of heaven and earth, the everlasting arms, circumscribed in time and space by the first coming at Christ and his promised return. And so we live with a hope that is firm, we dwell secure, we know God's salvation. And so we may give thanks even as we grieve. And so we may live the hope of Christ in a world that is otherwise hope-less. Because, we may be clear, Jesus will return; salvation is secure; the future is bigger and better – and far longer! - than the past.
