



ST CHRISTOPHER'S 'SUSPENDED CHURCH' NEWSLETTER

Sunday 8th November 2020 – Remembrance Sunday

NEWS UPDATE



Church during Lockdown

So once again we are relying on remote contact to keep in touch with each other. Let's dig deep and continue to support each other through regular communication.

This weekly newsletter will continue. This week a video has been made for Remembrance Sunday, which can be viewed on the "St Christopher's Lea" YouTube channel. You will also find the video is linked to our Facebook page.

The church building can be opened for people to come and sit quietly for prayer. In line with our regular routine we will be opening the church for quietness and prayer on Sundays between 9.30 and 10.30am, and on Thursdays between 10.00 and 11.30am.

Most of our hall users are also having to cease their activities, with the exception of the 'Play Inclusion Group' which is permitted to continue due to their work with vulnerable children.

The Tuesday evening Zoom prayers will continue. This runs from 8.00 – 9.00pm.

Sticker Advent Calendar by 'God Venture'



Last month we ordered some sticker advent calendars, which have arrived this week. Each day there is a couple of sentences to read from the Advent / Christmas story and a corresponding sticker that is added to the storyboard. There are forty stickers in total, which means that the calendar runs from 1st December to 9th January. The story begins with Elizabeth and Zechariah and the birth of John the Baptist, and continues right through to the

boy Jesus growing up in Nazareth.

It looks excellent, and I know for my own children this advent calendar will tell the Christmas story in more detail than they have had before. Louisa and I will make the sticker advent calendar the first part of their bedtime story routine each night. We have purchased 20 calendars, and they are £3.00 each.

FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED! So let me know if you would like one.

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE



This week includes a couple of interviews. I asked Tony Thompson and Nigel Shaw to talk about why Remembrance Sunday is important to them.

Tony Thompson



Hello everyone, some of you will know me already, my name's Tony. I want to talk about what Remembrance means to me. I don't think in over 10 years I've actually missed going to a church service and a cenotaph. But as everybody knows 2020 is an extraordinary year and we can't do many of the things we previously did, however in spite of that it'll still be a special day for me.

I joined the army when I was 19, after college. I came from a military family, my granddad served, my dad served, and I still have 2 nieces who are currently serving. So, I joined up because it felt like the right thing to do. I didn't join up for any political affiliation, it had nothing to do with that.

This was the nineties, there were a lot of atrocities occurring in various places – Rwanda, Bosnia, Northern Ireland just to name a few. But I had a choice to join up; many people today do, but in 1914 the boys and men that found themselves in Northern Belgium didn't have any choice. They were conscripted and many of them unfortunately never came home; sons, brothers, fathers, friends and neighbours.

Sometimes I think that there's a bit of a preoccupation with the great monuments of history, the great leaders, poets and not much consideration to the suffering and sacrifice of the unknown soldier, the common man. Not just then, it's about remembering now as we live in the 21st century, because obviously soldiers still die in conflicts.

I think it should be a peaceful time to reflect and think about that in the hope that we never have to repeat that shared history again, that huge conflict. You might know of someone who is still serving or of someone who has served in the past that's no longer with us. And that's important. We should never forget because I think this illustrates our shared humanity. You can observe remembrance in various ways; wear a poppy, make a poppy, go to church, visit a cenotaph at 11.00am, it doesn't matter which. The important thing is using that time to reflect on our shared humanity and thinking of all the people that are no longer with us. So, I think that's really important and it's a good thing too.

Have lovely Remembrance Day and see you soon. Take care everyone.

Nigel Shaw



Peter: As someone who relates closely to war and conflict, what does Remembrance Sunday mean to you? You've known family members who have died in the wars haven't you?

Nigel: Yes. My grandfather, my father and my mother all served in the RAF. My father served in the Burma campaign as a fighter pilot and his cousin was a prisoner of war with the Japanese. So, really, I followed family tradition into the armed services.

Peter: When I take part in remembrance each year, I feel sad for people who have died in war, but I struggle to relate to it personally because I've not known family members. Some of those family members you've just mentioned did perish in World War 2, didn't they?

Nigel: Yes, they died, and I think we should all remember that they died so that we can live a life of freedom from tyranny. So their sacrifice, the men, and women in the armed forces, wasn't in vain.

Peter: Absolutely.

Nigel: That's why I think we should always remember Remembrance Day for the generations and not forget it.

Peter: So, you followed the family tradition and went into the RAF. Tell us more about that?

Nigel: I spent 22 years in the RAF. Spent my time in Europe and the Far East doing various jobs. Even there we celebrated away from home. We always celebrated Remembrance Day as it happens on Sunday. Wherever you are in the world, it's always remembered.

Peter: So when Remembrance comes around each year you remember family members who have fought and died in conflict, and maybe some RAF comrades as well?

Nigel: Yes. A few of my friends died in various campaigns around the world, and they also should be remembered as well as the veterans who died in the first and second world wars.

Peter: One of the things I observed after the Iraq and Afghanistan wars was that we started seeing more people attending Remembrance Sunday services at church. I think what happens is when you know people who been affected by war and conflict, it hits home doesn't it?

Nigel: Yes it does. I'm pleased to see the younger people. I've seen they're tending to remember their past heritage and what the older generation did, there can't be many left now. Looking at 2020 a lot of veterans have died now who survived it. I think that we should remember it every year. And hope the amount of people who remember it carries on in all the generations.

Peter: Thank you Nigel. Each year you lay our wreath at St. Christopher's, and for me you embody the spirit of Remembrance Sunday, so it's nice to hear a bit more.

Nigel: Thank you Peter.

Troubles then and Now



We are having to endure a pandemic at the moment, and it is tough, it is difficult. At the moment the UK death toll from the coronavirus stands at around 47,500.

I thought I'd compare this to those who died in the World Wars; in World War One 700,000 men died in conflict, and World War Two 450,00 people, including some civilians through the bombings.

Of course, this pandemic is hard, but these statistics do put things into perspective. They endured these terrible wars, and they came through it, and we can endure what we're going through now and come through it as well.

It is comforting to know that Jesus told us to expect trouble and unrest. As someone has once said, "everything will be alright in the end. And if it's not alright, then it's not the end yet!"

**Everything will
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it's not alright,
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the end yet.**

I leave you with these words of Jesus in Matthew's Gospel:

'Beware that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, "I am the Messiah!" and they will lead many astray. And you will hear of wars and rumours of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places: all this is but the beginning of the birth pangs.

'Then they will hand you over to be tortured and will put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of my name. Then many will fall away, and they will betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because of the increase of lawlessness, the love of many will grow cold. But anyone who endures to the end will be saved. And this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all the nations; and then the end will come.

Matthew 24:4-14

Prayers – Written by Jim Cam

Let us pray.

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

May God give peace.

God give peace

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

May God give peace.

God give peace

For all members of the armed forces who are in danger today,
and those who pray for their safe return

May God give peace.

God give peace

For civilian women, children and men whose lives have been disfigured for terror and war,
calling to mind in penitence the anger and hatreds of humanity;

May God give peace.

God give peace

For peacemakers and peacekeepers, who seek to keep this world secure and free;

May God give peace.

God give peace

For all who bear the burden and privilege of leadership, political, military and religious;
asking for gifts of wisdom and resolve to search for reconciliation and peace;

May God give peace.

God give peace

We pray now for all those fighting the COVID-19 virus,
treating and caring those suffering in our hospitals,
caring for others with life threatening illnesses,
or protecting the vulnerable in our care homes.

We give thanks for their dedicated, sacrificial and caring work
and pray for their protection and the strength to continue in their healing and care for others.

Lord graciously hear us.



Lord, have mercy
on those who mourn
who feel numb and crushed
and are filled with the pain of grief,
whose strength has given up
You know all our sighing and longings:
be near to them and teach us to fix our hope on you
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lord graciously hear us.

A PRAYER FROM THE BISHOP'S TASK GROUP:

**Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord. 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.
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.**

