



ST JAMES' CHURCH, ISLINGTON N1 8PF

8 November 2020 REMEMBRANCE 20/45

Readers: Matt and Nicole Jean-Baptiste
 Gospel: Mother Suzanne Smith, Alvin, TX
 Prayers: Charlie and Isla Seabrook
 Organist: Kerry Sabine
 Technicals: Adam Dickson
 Hymns: Adam Dickson, Sinead Burniston
 AM587 Amazing Grace
 TP120 Put peace
 AM578 National Anthem
 CP355 I vow to thee my country

Collect: 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 the all peoples and establish harmony among the nations, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY As at the Cenotaph and at memorials the length and breadth of the country our commemoration today is going to be a rather muted affair. So it seemed appropriate to take as our theme for this year 'The Lonely Soldier', recalling the deep feelings of isolation experienced by many soldiers as they fought for our freedom. My thanks to Adam and to Sinead for helping us to return to a recorded virtual service once more - and to our list of readers who were prepared to record their contributions - in one case from 6000 miles away in Alvin, Texas. Find the Virtual Service on the St James' Islington Facebook page/posts/Remembrance Sunday. The service also includes the two minutes silence: there is nothing wrong with the video!

ARENA e-NEWSLETTER returns to being weekly during the lock-down and yet again we managed to find enough to fill two pages without trying too hard! There are about 80 subscribers and of course it is available on the web too. If you would like to use it for any requests or for sharing information, please feel free to email or text. It isn't just for central information sharing!

MUSICAL VESPERS For at least a couple of years people have suggested that we offer a quiet Sunday evening service occasionally. The question was, what format should it take? The growth in our music making suggested that we might try to combine the growing interest in live music with a service which was reflective and peaceful. Hence 'Musical Vespers', a mix of psalms and readings, a short biblical reflection and on this occasion three pieces of piano music (Beethoven, Debussy and Chopin) played by our good friend Gisella Meyer. I think this format would be flexible enough to support all kinds of music but perhaps it would be too ambitious to do it every month. On the other hand we ran out of service sheets and several members of the congregation were in St James' for the first time having been drawn in by the posters in the railings. My suggestion is that we leave out the very darkest and coldest months of the winter and try this again for Candlemass at the beginning of February? Any thoughts?

AGM Postponed from the 2nd Sunday after Easter because of the pandemic, we thought it important that we actually meet in person for our AGM rather than via Zoom which is bound to exclude those not on line. The first task was to elect new Churchwardens and although Hilary Roden wasn't able to be present because of

Covid in the family, we were delighted that she and Isabel Nisbet were prepared to serve for another year. As you know they make an excellent team and have complimentary gifts which serve St James' very well. We were glad to say a massive thank-you to both of them. We were also able to re-elect Sinead Burniston, Alastair Hume and Rosemary Ross who kindly stood for a further three year term. The Treasurer's report sadly revealed what we all knew: that we will lose up to £50,000 this year because of the lack of bookings in the Hall and Church. Thankfully we have reserves to cover this so that we will be able to pay our Common Fund to the Diocese in full this year - but we won't be able to do it again! After the annual 'Review of the Year' which gave us so much to be thankful for, a useful question and answer session was almost wholly devoted to the Organ Project which has been stalled for most of 2020. The really good news is that the Party Opponents are no longer insisting on a full Consistory Court which means that we should get a ruling by mid December...

SUNDAY SCHOOL While we technically have 41 children in Sunday School - and each of them received craft work during the last long lockdown - some are rarely with us in Church. So the Sunday School team are asking all those who would like to receive craft work this month to get in touch directly. We will do all we can to meet demand!
COPIES of 111 CHURCHES IN LONDON (featuring St James') are available at £8.

THIS WEEK

Sun **REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY** On line Service of the Word available from 10am.
 Mon 12.30pm Pack-Up sandwich service only.
 Tues No 8.30am Morning Prayer or 9am Mass.
 Wed No 10am Mass.
 Thurs No 6pm Evening Prayer and Office session.
 Sun 15 **2nd SUNDAY BEFORE ADVENT** On line Service of the Word available.

Calendar and Daily Prayer themes

Sun 8	REMEMBRANCE	Kingsley Lewis and Pauline; Beryl Lloyd; McBriens
Mon 9	DEL Wk 32	Kurt, Julia, Florence Maile; Paula, Gianni, Giandre Morrison
Tues 10	Leo the Great	Jade Nicholson, John, Charlie and Henry Green
Wed 11	St Martin of Tours	Isabel Nisbet; Joyce Owusu; Toni Parker
Thurs 12	Feria	Jessica and Tayah Phillips; Nick, Matilda and Barnaby Powell
Fri 13	Charles Simeon	John, Hilary and Laura Roden and Hope Dixey
Sat 14	Samuel Seabury	Rosemary Ross; Kerry, Chris, Ben Sabine; Helen Schofield
Sun 15	2nd SUNDAY BEFORE ADVENT	Sam, Joe, Charlie and Isla Seabrook

PRAYER BOARD/NOTICES Requests for prayer welcome

BIRTHDAYS Happy Birthday to one of the founders of Pack-Up, Joyce Owusu, who celebrates a very significant round number today and tomorrow to Hayley Jenkins with lots of prayers for improved health. Another Friday 13th sees Martin Allen and Fr John in celebratory mood and on Saturday we send best wishes and thanks to Toni Parker, coordinator of Pack-Up.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY Warmest good wishes to John and Hilary Roden who have a further twelve months before their ruby anniversary next year.

SICK Christopher Browne, Emily Grainger, Kris Hyde, Hayley Jenkins, John, Kingsley Lewis, John Roden, John Scott, Charlie Sharpe, Vera Taggart and Melanie Toogood.

ANNIVERSARIES Today: Mary Linzell (2014), Peter Comerford (2018); 11th: Phoebe Kerr and Nola Leach; 13th: Peggy Mount (2001).

INTERNATIONAL CHURCH LINKS In the US: Suzanne Smith, Grace Church, Alvin. Suzanne's husband Travis is Rector of Holy Comforter, Angleton, 14 miles away. In Japan: Fr Sebastian and Yuki Naniwa, serving in a parish in Ehime near Hiroshima.

PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE **Nazanin Zaghari-Radcliffe**'s second trial has been postponed. It is impossible to imagine what she is going through. The news about **Kylie Moore-Gilbert** (left) is equally difficult. She is in the notorious Qarchak prison. Unable to be in regular contact with her family she admits to being 'in a very bad place'. She has been held since September 2018.

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 Churchwardens: Hilary Roden and Isabel Nisbet | Hall Bookings: hallatstjames@gmail.com



Each Monday at 12.30pm.





SERVICE OF THE WORD for Remembrance Sunday

as streamed from
St James' Church,
Prebend Street
London N1

SERVICE OF THE WORD FOR REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY 2020

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Peace be with you!

Welcome to St James', Islington, for this Service of the Word for Remembrance Sunday 2020. Today also marks the first Sunday in this second period of national lock-down when it is not possible to invite our congregations to pray together in Church. Whether we 'saw this coming' or not, its still feels very strange not to be part of a worshipping community and this Service of the Word is offered as a way of reminding ourselves that we are all part of the family of God, the Body of Christ. Wherever you are, I hope you will know that our spiritual bonds are as strong as ever and our prayers for you are as active as ever!



Our theme for today's Remembrance Sunday is 'The lonely soldier': the lonely soldier, both male and female, in every theatre of war that we can ever recall.

Underneath all the pomp - the military parades and uniforms, the military music and the essential camaraderie that holds troops together - every soldier, sailor and aircrew, indeed every undercover agent, every civilian and every child caught up in warfare, has to face - head on - a singular loneliness - with only their thoughts, their fears and their courage to keep them company. In facing death, day in and day out, those who have given up their own liberty so that we might enjoy all the freedoms that we so easily take for granted, have had to dig deep into their own inner hearts and minds - and learn to come to terms with the dangers and the probabilities that lie in front of them. Fear of the unknown is wholly natural and yet it is the kind of test that most of us would avoid if we possibly could. We give thanks today for all those lonely 'soldiers' and for all that they achieved.

But before we begin to consider these things, let us ask God to guide our thoughts, to still our minds and to be with us now - wherever we are - thanking him for all that he has given us this week; thanking him too for the fellowship of the Church which links us not just with other members of St James' but also with our fellow Christians around the world. We start with our Collect for Remembrance Sunday.

Collect

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 Word of God

1st Reading: (Genesis 22: 1-19) After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' He said, 'Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt-offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you.'

So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt-offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. Then Abraham said to his young men, 'Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you.' Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. Isaac said to his father Abraham, 'Father, the fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?' Abraham said, 'God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son.' So the two of them walked on together.

When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, and said, 'Abraham, Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' He said, 'Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.'

Then Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt-offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place 'The Lord will provide'; as it is said to this day, 'On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided.'

The angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven, and said, 'By myself I have sworn, says the Lord: because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the sea-shore.'

And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessings for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.' So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beer-sheba.

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

1st Hymn: AM587 Amazing grace

[t Amazing Grace]

*Amazing grace (how sweet the sound)
that saved a wretch like me!*

*I once was lost, but now am found,
was blind, but now I see.*

*Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come.
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far.
and grace will lead me home.*

*When we've been there a thousand years,
bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise
than when we first begun.*

(Words: John Newton)

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia. Alleluia. It is the will of him who sent me, says the Lord, that I should lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up on the last day. Alleluia.

Gospel: (St Matthew 26: 36-46) Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, 'Sit here while I go over there and pray.' He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, 'I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.'

And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.' Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, 'Could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' Again he went away for the second time and prayed, 'My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.'

Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? The hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON FOR REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY | 08.11.2020

Genesis 22: 1-19; St Matthew 26: 36-46

This Passage from St Matthew is all too real. After a tough week in which the crowds turned out to welcome Jesus with palms and shouts of joy every bit as raucous and noisy as a Donald Trump rally on a good day, the storm clouds begin to gather. Behind the scenes Judas is plotting a rendezvous with the police attached to the Jewish Sanhedrin. How could they finally arrest Jesus - but out of sight? All the time Jesus can feel the disciples misreading everything he says to them and as a result they were either on cloud nine or down in the doldrums. And then there is Peter spluttering all kinds of promises which we know he won't keep. And all the time the net which the Jewish leaders are spreading gets worryingly close.

Jesus really is alone in a way that we haven't seen before. Up to now there has always been someone around to keep him company; but here, when the stakes are at their highest and Jesus is genuinely frightened of what is going to happen, not one of the disciples is sufficiently aware to be able to support him.

Can we feel the pressure he went through? Can we feel his sense of isolation and his worry that he wouldn't be up to the horrors that lay in front of him on Good Friday?

Equally, can we feel the terrible weight that lay on the shoulders of Abraham when, as a test of faith, God demands he take his only son up the mountain and offer him up as a sacrifice? As a father it is a bit like watching 24 hours in A+E when a parent brings in their critically sick child. It almost physically hurts us as we sit and watch while the doctors surround the stretcher, doing all they possibly can - but inevitably leaving the adult to cope on their own. The A+E unit, the path up the mountain; there is no one and no where to break that over-arching sense of loneliness, the burden that no one else could share.

So too for the soldier. Their loneliness also involves scenarios which, God willing, none of us will ever have to meet. A telling play by Helen Benedict, 'Lonely Soldier monologues', recalls the challenges being met by women soldiers in Iraq. There are lots of themes - problems with defective equipment and devious contractors, the tedium of sitting around waiting for things to happen, the deadening effect of routine exposure to violent death, the unreasonable and petty tyrannies of superiors, the extremes of stress and isolation and an inability to trust anyone.

But the scene that challenged me most focused on the realization that to be effective in combat required a resolute refusal to acknowledge the basic humanity of the civilian population of Iraq. This was graphically conveyed by one soldier's recognition that in order to protect her comrades she might have to run over and shoot dead even women and children who might be about to set off IEDs, those lethal hidden land mines.

How could one possibly share that kind of experience, away from the scene where it took place? Who could wonder that these women were often overwhelmed by an extreme sense of loneliness. The play, using first hand interviews, reveals how most of these women were telling their stories for the very first time because it had not been possible for them to share these experiences with either other female comrades or their close families. Warfare is often thought of as a shared experience where 'group bonding' compensates (at least to an extent) for the fear of pain and death - to oneself or to those whom one is fighting. Yet for these women, military service had cornered them into an ever-diminishing sense of isolation - and silence.

Stephen Westerland's short poem expresses the range of thoughts going through the mind of a First World War soldier very well:

Standing in trenches
living in fear every day,
missing those closest
thousands of miles far away.
Fighting for freedom
a mind over-wound,
a best mate lies motionless,
there on the ground.
Battles were fought
in the rain and the cold,
disease and depression
for the young and the old.
They fought for our futures
women, children and men
so let's voice our pledge that
we will remember them.

Whether in the trenches of the Somme or in the exposed desert roads in Iraq; whether in front of a German military court for the English nurse Edith Cavell or in a stinking cell in Beirut endured for all those years by Terry Waite, John McCarthy and Brian Keenan, or in the depths of the Nigerian jungle for the women Edna O'Brien describes so well in 'Girl', the book that I described to you a few weeks back: for each the same was true. These challenges were faced head-on by people on their own. Like Abraham. Like Jesus.

How will we remember the fallen, those courageous men and women? Not in a group, by and large, but with that sickening realization that each of them felt themselves to be utterly alone at the moment of their greatest time of trial. As the graphic above says: War is hell.

Except for Christians for whom there is one redeeming ray of light. And while it isn't enough to take away the loneliness and to 'make it all better', it is what made the sacrifice possible for both Abraham and Jesus.

Even in the middle of his loneliness, Jesus fends off total despair with the words: *My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.*

The extent of human enduring remains extraordinary. Sometimes it is couched in nationalism and the words *Pro patria mori: for my country I will die.*

But for others who could so easily be overwhelmed by feelings of hopelessness - or even a desire for revenge - there is a greater vision, a bigger reframing of the challenge and a desire to be more like Jesus: *Despite appearances I am not alone because where I am and what I am doing is part of a much greater picture which God alone has taken charge of.* However hideous these events, however likely it is that some will die, God weaves them still into the great network of new life and new possibilities - maybe known but more likely not.

And our role? To make sure these events are not forgotten but are made visible by our active determination to remember those who died for us in war:

They fought for our futures
women, children and men
so let's voice our pledge that
we will remember them.

2nd Hymn: **TP120 Put peace into another's hands** [t AM463 Ach Gott und Herr]

*Put peace into another's hands
and like a treasure hold it,
protect it like a candle flame,
with tenderness enfold it.*

*Put peace into each other's hands
with loving expectation;
be gentle in your words and ways,
in touch with God's creation.*

*Put Christ into each other's hands,
he is love's deepest measure;
in love make peace, give peace a chance
and share it like a treasure.*

(Words: Fred Kaan)

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us with power from on high.
We believe in one God:
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Confession

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we have sinned against you,
through our own fault, in thought, and word, and deed,
and in what we have left undone.**

**We are heartily sorry and repent of all our sins.
For your Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake,
forgive us all that is past;
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name. Amen.**

Almighty God, who forgives all those who truly repent,
Have mercy upon us, pardon and deliver us from all our sins,
confirm and strengthen us in all goodness,
and keep us life in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Prayers

Grant us, Lord, an end to our sadness,
a halt to our suffering and pain,
the hope of a brighter tomorrow
like sunshine after the rain.

Assure us the day is now dawning
when darkness and fear are no more;
no suffering or dying or mourning,
no hatred, violence or war.

Give us our freedom unbounded,
a life of true blessing and peace,
where evil is finally confounded
and every division has ceased;

a time of hope for our nation
a time of unending delights.
Lord, finish your earthly creation
by setting all conflict to rights.

Creed

Let us declare our faith in God.

**We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family in heaven and earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.**

Lord of all,
hear our prayers for the victims of war
and for peace in the world

We pray for those across the world who bear the scars of conflict - the injured, the maimed, the mentally distressed; those who through the horrors of war have lost limbs, their reason, their loved ones.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

We pray for those left homeless, those who have become refugees, those who have lost their livelihoods and their security, and those who live in daily fear for their lives.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

We pray for children who have been orphaned, parents who mourn their children, husbands and wives who have lost their partners, and countless families for whom life will never be the same again.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the members of the armed forces and for their responsibilities for keeping the peace across the world; for the stresses and strains of being away from their families and friends for long periods of time and for the dangers they often face.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

We pray for world leaders, politicians and diplomats, those whose decisions and negotiations affect the lives of so many and in whose hands peace ultimately lies.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

Give strength to all those who seek to break down barriers of race, colour, creed and culture. Grant that wherever war and the threat of war continues to haunt people of goodwill, reconciliation and hope may enter there.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

Receive into your kingdom the souls of those who have died and whose anniversaries fall this week: Mary Linzell, Peter Comerford, Phoebe Kerr, Nola Leach, Peggy Mount and Gillian Comings. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

Rejoicing in the fellowship of Mary the Mother of God, St James, St Peter and all the saints, we commend ourselves and all those for whom we pray to God's unfailing love:

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

As part of the great family of God our Father, we say together 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.**

Act of Remembrance

And now let us remember before God, and commend to his sure keeping, those who have died as a result of armed conflict; those whom we knew and those whose memory we treasure, and for all who have died in the service of mankind.

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

In the rising of the sun and its going down:
we will remember them.

In the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter:
we will remember them.

In the blueness of the sky and in the warmth of summer:
we will remember them.

In the rustling of leaves and in the beauty of autumn:
we will remember them.

In the beginning of the year and when it ends:
we will remember them.

When we are lost and sick at heart:
we will remember them.

When we have joys we yearn to share:
we will remember them.

So long as we live they too shall live, for they are a part of us,
and we will remember them.

Here follows the two-minute silence.

The completion of the silence is signalled by the sounding of the Last Post

The National Anthem: **AM578 God save our gracious Queen**

*God save our gracious Queen,
long live our noble Queen!
God save the Queen.
send her victorious, happy and glorious.
Long to reign over us.
God save the Queen.*

Lord God our Father, we pledge ourselves to serve you and all the world, in the cause of justice, for the relief of want and suffering and for the praise of your name.

Guide us by your Spirit: that now and always we may be faithful to your Son, the Prince of Peace. Amen.

Community Notices

Blessing

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 to all God's servants, life everlasting:
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Go in the peace of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

Final Hymn: **I vow to thee my country**

[t Thaxted]

*I vow to thee my country all earthly things above,
entire and whole and perfect, the service of my love;
the love that asks no questions the love that stands the test,
that lays upon the altar the dearest and the best;
the love that never falters, the love that pays the price,
the love that makes undaunted the final sacrifice.*

*And there's another country I've heard of long ago,
most dear to that that love her, most great to them that know;
we may not count her armies, we may not see her King;
her fortress is a faithful heart, her pride is suffering;
and soul by soul and silently her shining bounds increase,
and her ways are ways of gentleness and all her paths are peace.*

(Words: Cecil Spring-Rice)

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May God bless every £1 we give so that St James' will be here, not just for today and for tomorrow, but for the future he wants to create.