

Remembrance Sunday Sun 8th Nov 20

Welcome & Announcements

Call to worship

Praise Group- '*Blessed be your name*'

Prayer of Repentance

Act of Remembrance (All Stand) Prayer

Placing of Wreaths

Exhortation (John Fields)

Last post - Silence & Reveille

Old Testament Reading- Psalm 46

Prayer for Offering & Video

New Testament Reading - Rev 22:1-5

Address

Prayers & Lord's Prayer

Closing Hymn MP 743 *We'll walk the land.*

Benediction

National Anthem

Call to worship *I lift up my eyes to the mountains where does my help come from?* *My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.* Psalm 121 vs 1-2

PRAISE - Blessed be Your name in the land that is plentiful
Where Your streams of abundance flow, Blessed be Your name
Blessed be Your name when I'm found in the desert place
Though I walk through the wilderness, Blessed be Your name

*Every blessing You pour out I'll turn back to praise
When the darkness closes in, Lord, still I will say
Blessed be the name of the Lord, Blessed be Your name
Blessed be the name of the Lord, Blessed be Your glorious name*

*Blessed be Your name, when the sun's shining down on me
When the world's 'all as it should be', Blessed be Your name
Blessed be Your name, on the road marked with suffering
Though there's pain in the offering, Blessed be Your name*

*Every blessing You pour out I'll turn back to praise
When the darkness closes in, Lord, still I will say
Blessed be the name of the Lord, Blessed be Your name
Blessed be the name of the Lord, Blessed be Your glorious name*

*You give and take away, You give and take away
My heart will choose to say, Lord, blessed be Your name
You give and take away, You give and take away
My heart will choose to say, Lord, blessed be Your name*

Act of repentance

Lord God as we have sung again this morning ***blessed be your name*** as we remember now your faithfulness & goodness to us & others... So in a moment of quiet we take time to confess that we have not always been faithful to you... (a moment of quiet)

As we confess our sins & turn from them.... so we also now ask for courage & all we need, that we might work for peace & justice for the good of all people & for God's kingdom. We ask You Lord to help us be faithful servants of Jesus, who is alive & reigns with you & the Holy Spirit, one God forever & ever amen.

Congregation stand- CALL to REMEMBRANCE

Let us remember before God the men & women of all nations who have died as a result of war; those whom we have known & whose memory we treasure; those we never knew; & those who died unknown. We will remember all who have lived in hope but died in vain; the tortured; the innocent; the starving; the exiled; the imprisoned; the oppressed; & the disappeared. Eternal God, holy & true, holy & compassionate: we remember before You those who have made profound sacrifices so that we may live in peace & freedom; those who gave their lives in overcoming evil; those who give their lives in maintaining peace; those who mourn the loved ones they have lost; & those who bear the scars that never heal.

Our wreaths will now be laid by **June Martin** on behalf of the Armed forces- by **Harry Mulligan** on behalf of the Police Service & **Ian Johnston** on behalf of the Boy's Brigade...

Laying of Wreaths

Exhortation (John Fields) *They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old; age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them, we will remember them*

Last post - Silence & Reveille

Old Testament Reading Psalm 46 God is our refuge & strength, an ever-present help in trouble. ² Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way & the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, ³ though its waters roar & foam & the

mountains quake with their surging. ⁴ There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. ⁵ God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. ⁶ Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts. ⁷ The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

⁸ Come & see what the Lord has done, the desolations he has brought on the earth. ⁹ He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow & shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire. ¹⁰ He says, "Be still, & know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." ¹¹ The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Offering Prayer & Video

New Testament Reading - Rev 22:1-5

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³ No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever & ever.

SERMON What would your perfect holiday look like... where would you go... what would you do...what would the weather be like..? These some of the questions given to us theology students in college as we had a day studying the subject of personality types... The idea was to see how each of us was different introverts & extroverts etc & how that shaped what we wanted for our dream holiday... So there I was thinking of somewhere peaceful & warm...but not too warm... somewhere bright & sunny...but with just enough cloud cover so that you don't constantly have to put on loads of that sticky sun tan lotion... somewhere you can relax... but it's not boring...there are various things to see if want... **somewhere perfect**... Of course at the end of the exercise we discovered that we all had a slightly different idea of our perfect place...but that people with similar personalities tended to have some ideas in common... **Slide1**

I wonder how we might try & describe your perfect place this morning.. I wonder where we might want to escape to if there was NO lockdown, NO Virus & money was NO issue... would it be a fabulous island somewhere... or the lights of New York or walking in the mountains... Or would you simply want to stay at home & have a few friends round ? Sometimes it can be good to dream... can't it ? For dreams can bring a smile to our faces.... but sadly of course dreams are just that dreams....

Last Sunday we looked back so that we could be encouraged to live more faithfully for God in the present ... This week on Remembrance Sunday as we remember those who given their

lives for our freedom, our passages direct our gaze towards the future... so that we can live more completely for God in faithfulness & hope in the present... **Slide 2..**

As we turn to our passages of scripture...especially our New Testament reading from the book of Revelation the first thing that I want to say this morning...is that although these words may be couched in apocalyptic metaphorical language, language that is meant to conjure up pictures & emotions rather than meant to be dissected for clues... Nevertheless these words aren't just dreams... this isn't about escapism. **Slide 3..** Rather this strange almost cryptic language points to something solid & real.. to a future hope rather than a flight of fancy...

In fact what our passage from Revelation describes is the new holy city, the 'new Jerusalem' **slide 4** that comes down out of heaven from God in Rev 21:2. And the imagery presented here in this vision flows from earlier parts of scripture... particularly from the early chapters of Genesis, with Adam & Eve in the garden of Eden & Ezekiel's vision of a renewed temple in Jerusalem (Ez Chp 47) Yes here in the book of Revelation God gives John a vision of the future... a new beginning... the coming of the kingdom of God coming in all its perfection to earth... as God renews heaven & earth..

I don't know what comes to mind for you when I mention the word heaven...**SLIDE 5** but I can guess that just like those different ideas about a perfect holiday... people have very different ideas about what heaven might be like...& to a degree

thats ok... as long as we hold on to some important truths.. & the first of these truths is that ... heaven isn't just a dream or a crutch or a good luck charm... its solid & real..

Perhaps because of the influence of mass media on us all.... our society has either tended & either deny completely or trivialise the idea of heaven & eternity...& maybe some Christians have also helped make heaven sound like a dream.... some spiritual place in the sky... a place of clouds & harps & otherness.. a place , a place that might feel more like a escapist dream than anything else... However as the Christian author Tom Wright has argued the early Christians didn't see heaven like that... it was also much more solid for them... Wright argues that it was never about escaping earth ...rather it was about bringing heaven down ...

And indeed that is what we see here in Revelation chapters 21 & 22 .. God's people don't flee earth... rather God comes & brings heaven & earth together & make both of them new ... Slide 6

A new creation... a perfect place of life... symbolised so well by that picture of a river of life that flows from the throne of God & the lamb... a river that flows from God... a river that waters a tree ... the tree of life... whose fruit humanity was barred from back in the garden of Eden when Adam & eve rebelled against... this might be poetic language to us... but to any Jew or early Christian these were concrete words that spoke of something that will happen..

Over the last few weeks we Milligans have sat & watched a program called 'Garden Rescue' Slide 7 were a group of garden designers including Charlie Dimmock come & help someone transform their bland or ruinous garden into something that you might see in the Chelsea flower show....As part of the show the different designers present their plans & designs to the owners of the garden...with all the different parts of the garden various plants on it... BUT I have to admit ... even with that picture in front on me on the TV I can struggle at times to see beyond the concrete space that the people are sitting in there & then... So it can be truly amazing to see things begin to take shape... to see that the painted images of a new created garden.... weren't just dreams but solid.... Today we live in a world where wars have sadly raged in various parts for years... & now we have a world wide pandemic... BUT as you read Rev as you think of eternity... don't for one moment fall into believing its just a dream.... as we hear in our passages one day God will bring a perfect peace for our renewed perfect world

The writer & film maker Woody Allen has said..Slide 8 "*Existence for eternity could get a little boring... especially towards the end.*" Again this reminds us of how hard it can be for us human beings to get our heads round the idea of heaven & so we can tend to make light of it ... However I believe this quote also reminds us of something else... something important... verses 3-4 of our Revelation passage says Slide 9 *No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his*

servants will serve him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

Yes ultimately what makes heaven ...heaven... what makes it a place of life & wholeness isn't something special about it. It's not just the perfect temperature or the perfect weather or the beautiful design. No what makes heaven ...heaven is that God is there at the very centre, life flowing from Him & from the Lamb, perfect eternal life. Life given to all the citizens of that wondrous place; to all those who have his name on their foreheads. So to reply to Woody Allen...why won't eternity be boring? Well because the people there will be different. We will be changed. The new heaven & the new earth are for a new people. People who have realised their need of a saviour. People who with all their imperfections & sin have come to trust that Jesus died for them & that He can, like the best designer, look into our hearts & lives... at the concrete & bare patches of soil & he can ..not just design ...but transform us into new people... people fit for anew kingdom...

This Remembrance Sunday, this year of all years, all those who trust Christ don't just dream that things might get better... but we look forward in hope knowing that as Paul says in his letter to the Corinthians **slide 10** that '*our present troubles are small & won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them & will last forever!*¹⁸ So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.'

PRAYERS for others - Heavenly Father, Eternal God . God who held the past, is present with us NOW & will hold the future.. We come to you this morning in humble prayer for You are the Creator who made us, The LORD who knows us & King who loves us.. You are the giver of life..so we come now on this day of remembrance to pray for this world, the Church & all people

Lord God we remember before You today all those who have died in every war throughout your world, soldiers who perished in the horror of battle, civilians caught up in dreadful conflict, men women & children who lost their lives through violence...

We remember especially today those victims of the 2 world wars including those close to us & our families. We also remember those who came home with terrible injuries & those whose loved ones never returned. Lord we pray that You would continue to bring healing, comfort & help to all those who have tasted the pain of warfare.

So God of HEALING we continue to pray NOW for PEACE & justice for our world, we pray that You would help leaders & decision makers to seek Your ways & give them courage to work for a new & better world for us all to enjoy.

We pray too for Your Church O God that You would strengthen all Christians in their walk with You & help us to work for Your kingdom, that Your ways O Lord would be seen more clearly in our local communities & in our wide world.

So Lord of all hopefulness, God of all healing we also bring to you today those who need our prayers... We pray for...

Jean, Gerry & Jean, Bernie, Ronnie, Maggie, George, Diane & family & especially Margaret Mawhinney.. in hospital.

We pray too for **Leo, Timothy, Daniel & Adam...**& we also remember **Raymond & Connie, Patti & Carol with Covid.. & Paul, Sarah, Lucy, Mark, Trevor , Susanne, Liz, Arianna, Nicky, Valerie, Yvonne & Christine, Gary..** Lord God we pray that You would bring healing, help & hope to these people & their families. And we say together the Lord's Prayer.

Hymn - We'll walk the land.

We'll Walk the Land With Hearts On Fire
And Every Step Will Be A Prayer
Hope Is Rising, New Day Dawning
Sound Of Singing Fills The Air

Two Thousand Years And Still The Flame
Is Burning Bright Across The Land
Hearts Are Waiting, Longing Aching
For Awakening Once Again

*Let The Flame Burn Brighter, In The Heart Of Darkness
Turning Night To Glorious Day, Let The Song Grow Louder
As Our Love Grow Stronger, Let It Shine! Let It Shine!*

We'll Walk For Truth, Speak Out For Love
In Jesus' Name We Shall Be Strong

To Lift The Fallen, To Save The Children
To Fill The Nation With Your Song

*Let The Flame Burn Brighter, In The Heart Of Darkness
Turning Night To Glorious Day, Let The Song Grow Louder
As Our Love Grow Stronger, Let It Shine! Let It Shine!*

Closing Prayer & Benediction

Lord our God, on this day of remembrance, we entrust all our prayers and needs to your infinite mercy. Help us to become ever more mindful of the bonds that unite us as a human family despite our differences. Heal our inner wounds and outward divisions, that one day our world might live in your true and lasting peace. We make this prayer to you in the name of Jesus, Your Son. And we share the grace together....

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God & the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all forever more. Amen

National Anthem

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!

