

St Columba's Church, Corby  
REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY  
14 November 2021

Pre-service Worship

GREAT IS THE DARKNESS that covers the earth,  
Oppression, injustice and pain.  
Nations are slipping in hopeless despair,  
Though many have come in Your name.  
Watching while sanity dies,  
Touched by the madness and lies.

*Come, Lord Jesus, come, Lord Jesus,  
Pour out Your Spirit we pray.  
Come, Lord Jesus, come, Lord Jesus,  
Pour out Your Spirit on us today.*

May now Your church rise with power and love,  
This glorious gospel proclaim.  
In every nation salvation will come  
To those who believe in Your name.  
Help us bring light to this world  
That we might speed Your return.

Great celebrations on that final day  
When out of the heavens You come.  
Darkness will vanish, all sorrow will end,  
And rulers will bow at Your throne.  
Our great commission complete,  
Then face to face we shall meet.

FATHER, I PLACE INTO YOUR HANDS  
The things I cannot do.  
Father, I place into Your hands  
The things that I've been through.  
Father, I place into Your hands  
The way that I should go,  
For I know I always can trust You.

Father, I place into Your hands  
My friends and family.  
Father, I place into Your hands  
The things that trouble me.  
Father, I place into Your hands  
The person I would be,  
For I know I always can trust You.

Father, we love to see Your face,  
We love to hear Your voice.  
Father, we love to sing Your praise  
And in Your name rejoice.  
Father, we love to walk with You  
And in Your presence rest,  
For we know we always can trust You.

Father, I want to be with You  
And do the things You do.  
Father, I want to speak the words  
That You are speaking too.  
Father, I want to love the ones  
That You will draw to You,  
For I know that I am one with You.

LORD, I COME TO YOU,  
Let my heart be changed, renewed,  
Flowing from the grace  
That I found in You.  
And Lord, I've come to know  
The weaknesses I see in me  
Will be stripped away  
By the power of Your love.

*Hold me close,  
Let Your love surround me.  
Bring me near, draw me to Your side.  
And as I wait  
I'll rise up like the eagle,  
And I will soar with You,  
Your Spirit leads me on  
In the power of Your love.*

Lord, unveil my eyes,  
Let me see You face to face,  
The knowledge of Your love  
As You live in me.  
Lord, renew my mind  
As Your will unfolds in my life,  
In living every day  
By the power of Your love.

### Opening Scriptures

Psalm 46.1  
God is our refuge and strength;  
a very present help in trouble.

Lamentations 3.21-23  
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.

### Call to Worship

We have gathered today to glorify God whose power sustains the world;  
to remember with thanksgiving those who lived and died in the service of our country;  
and to ask for God's help and blessing, that we may be worthy of their sacrifice  
each day of our lives.

### Opening Prayer

Eternal God,  
you are the shepherd of our souls,  
and the giver of life everlasting.  
On this day when we commemorate  
and commend to you  
those who lived and died  
in the service of others,  
we are glad to remember  
that your purposes for us are good,  
that you gave Jesus Christ

for the life of the world,  
and that you lead us by His Holy Spirit  
into the paths of Righteousness and peace.

**AMEN.**

### Our Confession

Merciful and faithful God,  
your purpose is to fold both earth and heaven in a single peace.  
With sorrow we confess that in our hearts we keep  
alive the passions and pride that lead to hatred and to war.

We are not worthy of your love,  
nor of the sacrifice made by others on our behalf.

Lord have mercy.

**Christ have mercy.**

Lord have mercy.

### Receiving God's Forgiveness

Almighty God,  
pardon and deliver us from all our sins,  
confirm and strengthen us in all goodness,  
and keep us in life eternal through Jesus Christ  
our Lord.

**AMEN.**

ETERNAL FATHER, STRONG TO SAVE,  
Whose arm hath bound 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 Christ, whose voice the waters heard,  
And hushed their raging at Thy word,  
Who walkedst on the foaming deep,  
And calm amid the storm didst sleep:  
O hear us when we cry to Thee  
For those in peril on the sea.

O Holy 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 them wheresoe'er they go:  
Thus evermore shall rise to Thee  
Glad hymns of praise from land and sea.

## Bible Reading for Remembrance Sunday John 15:9-17

9 'As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. 12 My command is this: love each other as I

have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit – fruit that will last – and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. 17 This is my command: love each other.

This is the Word of the Lord:

**Thanks be to God**

### Sermon part one

“Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.”

These words are not unfamiliar on Remembrance Sunday, and we will be looking at them closely this morning, from three different perspectives.

First we will consider these words as we remember those who have laid down their lives in conflict; then we will think about how these words might apply to those in the NHS, and Health Services around the world, who have laid down their lives in the Covid pandemic; before finally thinking about how these words apply most especially to Christ, who laid down his life, and how that brings challenges for us.

So first, “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends” in conflict.

We might think of examples of bravery, where on land, sea, or in the air, soldiers, sailors and airmen, have willingly given up their life to save the lives of their friends. This is the story of James Ashworth VC, who went to Lodge Park School and was remembered there on Thursday, he sacrificed his life as he crawled along ground being peppered with bullets in an attempt to throw his last grenade at a sniper who had his team pinned down.

We can see how that sacrifice was made for his friends, those who would be shot if he did not get close enough to throw that grenade.

But what about so many of the British and NATO forces who died in Afghanistan, not in acts of heroic courage, but as victims of the dreaded Improvised Explosive Device? Can we say that they laid down their lives for their friends, are they examples of the greater love Jesus speaks about?

These questions seem especially important this year, with the withdrawal from Afghanistan, and subsequent recapture of that nation by the Taliban, with the loss of human rights for the people there.

Let me say that, in my opinion, the sacrifice of all those who gave their lives is just as great an act of love, as those who died in acts of heroic courage to save their comrades, and the fact that the cause is now lost does not mean that the motives of delivering people from tyranny, protecting us from terrorism, and creating opportunity for all in that country, were not just & worthy causes.

Think about it this way, if we only do something for our friends how loving are we really being? Philip Loyd made this point between the World Wars when he wrote “love has sunk below its proper level if it begins to ask who is my friend and who is my enemy”.

It is also an act of love to try and make the world a better place, even if we ultimately fail,  
and if you place yourself in a position of danger,  
and let's face it for our troops in Afghanistan just being there was a danger,  
there is the potential for laying down one's life every time you step outside.

I am not saying this to glorify war,  
of course, it would be better if there were no need for conflict,  
indeed I still remember marching through London to protest against the second Iraq War,  
but it seems to me that those who went to Afghanistan went in the same spirit  
as those who went off to the Western Front, or Normandy, or wherever else in the World Wars.

It is right that we remember them,  
and recognise that those who made the ultimate sacrifice are those of whom it could be said:  
"Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."

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.

#### Collect for Remembrance Sunday

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.**

#### Affirming our faith

All God's promises are 'yes' in Christ; through him we give glory to God and say, 'Amen':  
It is Christ  
**to whom we belong.**

It is the Father  
**who assures us of our salvation and anoints us for his service.**  
It is the Spirit  
**by whom we are sealed in love for evermore.**

**We believe in one God:  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

GOD IS OUR STRENGTH AND REFUGE,  
Our present help in trouble;  
And we therefore will not fear,  
Though the earth should change!  
Though mountains shake and tremble,  
Though swirling waters are raging,  
God the Lord of Hosts is with us evermore!

There is a flowing river,  
Within God's holy city:  
God is in the midst of her,  
She shall not be moved.  
God's help is swiftly given,  
Thrones vanish at His presence,  
God the Lord of Hosts is with us evermore!

Come, see the works of our Maker,  
Learn of His deeds all powerful;  
Wars will cease across the world  
When He shatters the spear!  
Be still and know your Creator,  
Uplift Him in the nations;  
God the Lord of Hosts is with us evermore!

### OUR ACT OF REMEMBRANCE

We commit ourselves 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 world wars and conflicts past and present,  
have been given and taken away.

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.

TOGETHER:  
**We will remember them.**

The Last Post  
followed by TWO MINUTES SILENCE

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

**AMEN.**

### Sermon part two

Having looked at how our verse:

“Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” applies to conflict  
we are now going to think about how these words might apply to Covid, and those in the NHS,  
and Health Services around the world, who have laid down their lives in the Covid pandemic.

It is a sobering thought that, back in May, the Director of the World Health Organisation reported that:  
"For almost 18 months, health and care workers all over the world have stood in the breach between life and  
death. They have saved countless lives, and fought for others who despite their best efforts, slipped away.  
Many have themselves become infected, and while reporting is scant, we estimate that at least 115,000  
health and care workers have paid the ultimate price in the service of others."

In the UK over the same period 1,561 health and care workers died because of Covid,  
and Unison’s Head of Health said that “While most people were locked down safely at home,  
NHS staff did what they always do - went into work to care for patients and save lives; but overnight the  
everyday became terrifying. Staff were anxious for their own safety and that of their families.”

Doctors, porters, nurses, administrative staff, midwives, receptionists, paramedics, cleaners, radiographers,  
domestics, consultants, drivers, care workers  
and many others from across the NHS family went to work one day and never came back.  
Among these we must not forget how Black and Asian staff were much more likely to fall ill and die.

While these people probably did not realise the danger they were in,  
indeed the danger we asked them to face on behalf of us all,  
they, like those in conflict, demonstrated that great love for all those they served,  
patients they barely knew, neither friends nor enemies,  
but people they treated and cared for with love, especially when the patients’ family could not be there,  
and, as a result of that treatment and care, too many of them laid down their lives.

Of course, Remembrance Sunday is not set aside to remember these Health and Care workers,  
but our debt to them is such that I thought it right to include them today.  
We must not forget the sacrifices they have made,  
and while in the future there may be a day set aside to remember them,  
until then we will remember them and how  
“Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends”  
applies to Covid as well as conflict.

### Collect for the National Health Service

God of healing and compassion, we thank you for the National Health Service, and for the dedication of all  
who work in it: give skill, sympathy and resilience to all who care for the sick, and your wisdom to those  
engaged in medical research.  
Strengthen all in their vocation by your Spirit, that through their work many will be restored to health and  
strength; through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

BE STILL, FOR THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD,  
the Holy One is here;  
Come bow before Him now with reverence and fear.  
In Him no sin is found,  
we stand on holy ground;  
Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here.

Be still, for the glory of the Lord  
is shining all around;  
He burns with holy fire,  
with splendour He is crowned.  
How awesome is the sight,  
our radiant King of light!  
Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around.

Be still, for the power of the Lord  
is moving in this place;  
He comes to cleanse and heal,  
to minister His grace.  
No work too hard for Him,  
in faith receive from Him;  
Be still, for the power of the Lord  
is moving in this place.

### Sermon part three

Having looked at how our verse:  
“Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends”  
applies to conflict, and to Covid, we are now going to look at how it applies, supremely, to Christ.

The great Methodist writer Charles Kingsley Barrett wrote this comment about these words:  
“the eternal divine love reached its complete and unsurpassable expression in the death of Christ,  
which was at the same time the death of a man for his friends”.

If Christ laid down his life as a sign of his love,  
then what should our love be like?  
As we seek an answer to this question we must remember the verse immediately before our verse today,  
it says: “Love each other as I have loved you”.

Our love must be a sacrificial kind of love,  
a laying down our lives kind of love,  
which is why I find it hard to understand Christians who did not accept that the call to sacrifice practices we  
hold dear, like meeting together and singing God’s praise, during the pandemic;  
this was laying down our lives,  
this was loving as Christ loved us,  
this was following the command of Christ.

I am sure if I asked you to quote John 3.16 to me, many of you would do so,  
you are probably doing so in your head even now, and I will mention that verse in a moment,  
but how many know 1 John 3.16?

This verse says:  
“Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters”.  
That is the first challenge that we need to take away from these thoughts about how we respond to Jesus  
who laid down his life for us.

When we think of Jesus laying down his life, it was, of course, for his friends,  
those who loved him in life, like his disciples and the women who followed him so faithfully,  
and all those who have loved him since and love him today, seeking to follow him, serve him, and obey him.

But, as we have seen with both those involved in conflict and Covid, when we think about love there can be no divide between friends and enemies, and Jesus laid down his life for all people.

That includes those who disagreed with him in life, those who brought false charges against him, those who beat him, and mocked him, and those who killed him.

We see the love of Jesus for these people in his famous words from the Cross, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing".

And Jesus' laid down his life for all people ever since, some who openly opposed him, many who never give Him a thought.

We know Jesus laid down His life for all people because of John 3.16 "God so loved **the world** that He have His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life". When Jesus says "the world" He means all the people of the world, those who love God, and those who don't.

And this brings the second challenge for us, if Jesus laid down his life for all people, and there are people who do not know that, we ought to be telling them, so that they can acknowledge what Jesus has done for them.

Surely it is the responsibility of those of us who **do** know what Jesus did, to make everyone aware that Jesus laid down his life...for them.

If this is news for you this morning, please do speak with me afterwards, because there would be no better way for all of us to remember that Jesus laid down his life for us all, than for someone to believe that for the very first time.

If we make people aware that Jesus laid down his life for them we can do no more, their response is between them and God, just like when we were thinking about invitation and we learnt the maxim: we invite, but leave the "yes" or "no" to God!

We have seen how our verse:

"Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" applies to conflict, to Covid, and, supremely, to Christ.

And I hope we have heard the message in this verse:

to remember and give thanks for all those who have laid down their lives in conflict;  
to remember and give thanks for all those who have laid down their lives in the Covid pandemic;  
and to remember and give thanks for Christ, who have laid down His life for us all.

We can best give thanks to Christ by responding to the challenges to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters as a sign of our love for them, and to make sure that everyone knows that Jesus laid down His life for them, so they have the opportunity to respond, as we have had.

### Collect for Christ's Sacrifice

Almighty God, you gave your only Son to be for us both a sacrifice for sin and an example of godly living: Grant us the grace to follow in His footsteps, this day and always.

**Amen.**

Jesus Christ, I think upon Your sacrifice,  
You became nothing,  
poured out to death.

Many times I've wondered  
at Your gift of life,  
And I'm in that place once again.  
And I'm in that place once again.

And once again I look upon  
The cross where You died,  
I'm humbled by Your mercy  
And I'm broken inside.  
Once again I thank You,  
Once again I pour out my life.

Now You are  
exalted to the highest place,  
King of the heavens,  
where one day I'll bow.  
But for now,  
I marvel at this saving grace,  
And I'm full of praise once again.  
I'm full of praise once again.

And once again I look upon  
The cross where You died,  
I'm humbled by Your mercy  
And I'm broken inside.  
Once again I thank You,  
Once again I pour out my life.

Thank you for the cross,  
Thank you for the cross,  
Thank you for the cross,  
my Friend...

### Praying Together

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;

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 this day, remembering family, friends and all who pray  
for their safe return;

May God give peace  
**God give peace**

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;

May God give peace  
**God give peace**

for peace-makers and peace-keepers, 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 in the search for reconciliation and peace.

May God give peace

**God give peace**

We give thanks for the National Health Service. For the skills which day by day bring healing to so many. We remember those who gave their lives during the Covid pandemic selflessly caring for those in their charge.

May God give peace

**God give peace**

But above all we give thanks for the One who laid down His life for the salvation of the World. The One who came to bring peace and reconciliation to humankind, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace.

May God give peace

**God give peace**

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.

**Amen.**

All join together in the Lord's Prayer:

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.**

**Amen.**

### **The Act of Commitment:**

Let us commit ourselves to responsible living and faithful service.

Will you strive for all that  
makes for peace?

**We will**

Will you seek to heal the wounds of war?

**We will**

Will you work for a just future for all humanity?

**We will**

Merciful God, we offer to you the fears in us that have not yet been cast out by love:  
May we accept the hope you have placed in the hearts of all people,  
And live lives of justice, courage and mercy;  
through Jesus Christ our risen Redeemer.

**Amen**

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

### The Blessing

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**

### The Grace

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