A SERVICE OF READINGS AND PRAYERS TO COMMEMORATE THE THIRD BATTLE OF YPRES

Passchendaele

1917-2017

Lest we forget

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

12th November 2016

*Fought between July and November 1917, Passchendaele, also known as the Third Battle of Ypres, remains one of the most notorious battles of the First World War. In three and a half month of fighting, an advance of less than five miles saw an estimated 550,000 Allied and German troops killed, wounded or lost.*

*Around 90,000 British and Commonwealth soldiers were missing; 50,000 buried without being identifies, and 42,000 never recovered from the Belgian fields of Flanders that turned into an ocean of mud.*

ORDER OF SERVICE

BIDDING PRAYER

We gather today with the jarring images of the waste and ruin of war imprinted on our minds and imaginations, to remember all those who were involved in the Third Battle of Ypres, known as Passchendaele. We honour the memory of those who inhabited that war-shattered landscape, those who endured the mud and the blood; those who showed great courage and loyalty to comrades at arms; those who saw the unspeakable sight of bodies broken; those whose eyes saw the ugliness of disfigured, weeping and frightened human and animal faces and those whose loved ones never returned home. For all who were engaged in combat, those who tended the maimed and injured, the fallen, and for those families who still hold the memories of deceased soldiers, we ask for God’s mercy, and for ourselves, the grace to remember.

***All*** **We will remember.**

 HYMN

 *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;*

*We fade and vanish, as a dream*

*Dies at the op’ning 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

O God our light and our defence,

breathe your gentle Spirit over the wastes of our world.

Protect our memories from the infection of hate,

that we may live free from fear and resentment.

May the light of Christ lead us

out of the valley of the shadow of death

onto paths of reconciliation, forgiveness and peace

for the sake of the world your Son came to save.

***All* Amen.**

READINGS

Eyewitness Accounts of Passchendaele

Memorial Tablet

By Siegfried Sassoon

TIME OF SILENT REFLECTION



HYMN

*Be still, my soul; the Lord is at your side;*

*Bear patiently the cross of grief and pain;*

*Leave to your God to order and provide;*

*In ev’ry change he faithful will remain.*

*Be still, my soul: your best, your heav’nly friend,*

*Through thorny ways, leads to a joyful end.*

*Be still, my soul: your God will undertake*

*To guide the future as he has the past.*

*Your hope, your confidence let nothing shake,*

*All now mysterious shall be clear at last.*

*Be still, my soul: the tempests still obey*

*His voice, who ruled them once on Galilee.*

*Be still, my soul: the hour is hastening on*

*When we shall be for ever with the Lord.*

*When disappointment, grief and fear are gone,*

*Sorrow forgotten, love’s pure joy restored.*

*Be still, my soul: when change and tears are past,*

*All safe and blessed we shall meet at last.*

CANTICLE

*A Song of Jonah*

*Refrain:*  **My prayer came to you in your holy temple,**

              **and you brought up my life from the depths.**

I called to you, O God, out of my distress and you answered me; out of the deep caverns of death I cried, and you heard my voice.

***All* You cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounded me,**

 **all your waves and billows passed over me.**

 Then I said, I am driven away from your sight;

 how shall I ever look again upon your holy temple?

***All* The waters closed in over me,**

 **the deep was round about me;**

 **weeds were wrapped around my head**

 **at the roots of the mountains.**

I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me for ever, yet you brought up my life from the depths, O God.

***All* As my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, O God, and my prayer came to you, into your holy temple.**

 With the voice of thanksgiving, I will sacrifice to you;

what I have vowed I will pay; deliverance belongs to the Lord!

*Jonah 2.2-7,9*

 **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.**

*Refrain:*  **My prayer came to you in your holy temple,**

              **and you brought up my life from the depths.**

BIBLICAL READING

1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18

HYMN

*All my hope on God is founded;*

*He doth still my trust renew.*

*Me through change and chance he guideth,*

*Only good and only true.*

*God unknown, he alone*

*Calls my heart to be his own.*

*Human pride and earthly glory,*

*Sword and crown betray his trust;*

*What with care and toil he buildeth,*

*Tow’r and temple, fall to dust.*

*But God’s pow’r, hour by hour,*

*Is my temple and my tow’r.*

*God’s great goodness aye endureth,*

*Deep his wisdom, passing thought:*

*Splendour, light and life attend him,*

*Beauty springeth out of naught.*

*Evermore, from his store,*

*New-born worlds rise and adore.*

*Still from earth to God eternal*

*Sacrifice of praise be done,*

*High above all praises praising*

*For the gift of Christ hi Son.*

*Christ doth call one and all:*

*Ye who follow shall not fall.*

GOSPEL

Matthew 25: 1-13

ADDRESS

ACT OF CONFESSION

 Lord, the nations are in uproar and the kingdoms are shaken.

 Lord, have mercy.

***All*** **Lord, have mercy.**

 Lord, bring comfort to those who mourn and have suffered loss.

 Christ, have mercy.

***All*****Christ, have mercy.**

 Lord, speak your word of peace and calm our fears.

 Lord, have mercy.

***All*****Lord, have mercy.**

Lord, God of the nations, we easily forget those who are the victims of war. Forgive the wrath of the nations, the desire to build empires and to seek domination over others. May your mercy be upon all who have suffered the ravages of war; soothe their sorrows and heal their memories. Restrain the impulse to seek revenge, and by your grace may we find forgiveness in our hearts. Strengthen our wills to do good and not harm, to care and not to destroy, and bring good out of evil. We make this prayer in the name of the one who endured the cross and was victorious over sin and death, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

***All* Amen.**

PRAYERS

Let us gather up these and all our prayers in the words that Jesus taught us:

***All*** **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.**

*Prayer of Commemoration*

 Eternal God, our refuge and strength,

on this day we remember before you

all who experienced Passchendaele:

those who faced the terrible waste and devastation,

who fought against all the odds, endured the drowning mud, and the terror of creeping barrage.

We recall with thanksgiving the loyalty shown to comrades and the bravery of those who overcame their fear,

the courage of those who daily faced the gun-fire.

May we never forget the devastating loss of this battle,

the anxiety on the home-front, the inadequacy of the leadership and the sacrifices that were made.

Through our remembrances today, strengthen our resolve

to oppose naked aggression, to defend the weak,

and to speak your word of peace in times of conflict and insecurity. This we ask in the name of the Prince of peace,

our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

***All* Amen.**

HYMN

*Alleluia, sing to Jesus,*

*His the sceptre, his the throne;*

*Alleluia, his the triumph,*

*His the victory alone:*

*Hark, the songs of peaceful Sion*

*Thunder like a mighty flood:*

*Jesus, out of ev’ry nation,*

*Hath redeemed us by his blood.*

*Alleluia, not as orphans*

*Are we left in sorrow now;*

*Alleluia, he is near us,*

*Faith believes, nor questions how;*

*Though the cloud from sight received him*

*When the forty days were o’er,*

*Shall our hearts forget his promise,*

*‘I am with you evermore’?*

*Alleluia, bread of angels,*

*Here on earth our food, our stay;*

*Alleluia, here the sinful*

*Come to you from day to day.*

*Intercessor, friend of sinners,*

*Earth’s redeemer, plead for me,*

*Where the songs of all the sinless*

*Sweep across the crystal sea.*

*Alleluia, King eternal,*

*He the Lord of lords we own;*

*Alleluia, born of Mary,*

*Earth his footstool, heav’n his throne;*

*He within the veil has entered*

*Robed in flesh, our great High Priest;*

*He on earth both priest and victim*

*In the Eucharistic feast.*

 FINAL PRAYER AND BLESSING