

# An Order of Service for Remembrance Sunday

**Music: A Mighty Fortress - Fountainview Academy**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBhVuCcz9GI>

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

We meet virtually in the presence of God. 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.

**Hymn: Through all the changing scenes of life**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ox1r0OzIwoo&t=11s>

## Introduction to an Act of Remembrance

Let us remember before God, and commend to his safe keeping, those who have died for their country in war; those whom we knew, and whose memory we treasure; and all who have lived and died in the service of the peoples of the world.

## Remembering

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.

**The Last Post - two minutes silence - Reveille**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X\\_qiAnKLMQM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X_qiAnKLMQM)

## Prayer of Commemoration

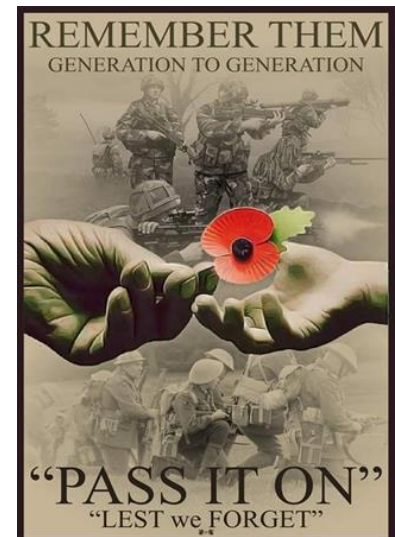
Ever-living God, we remember those whom you have gathered from the storm of war into the peace of your presence; may that same peace calm our fears, bring justice to all peoples and establish harmony among the nations, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## An Act of Penitence

Let us confess to God the sins and shortcomings of the world; its pride, its selfishness, its greed; its evil divisions and hatreds. Let us confess our share in what is wrong, and our failure to seek and establish that peace which God wills for his children.

### After a short silence, all say

Most merciful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
we confess that we have  
sinned in thought, word and deed.  
We have not loved you with our whole heart.  
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.  
In your mercy forgive what we have been,  
help us to amend what we are,  
and direct what we shall be; that we  
may do justly, love mercy,  
and walk humbly with you, our God. Amen.



Almighty God, who forgives all 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 in life eternal;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The following hymn expresses hope in God and trust for the future, may be sung

**O God our help in ages past**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ssr-Ga3Mz6Q>

### **Introduction to the Peace**

Jesus said, 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.  
I do not give to you as the world gives.

**Pray this for others taking part in the service and other services of remembrance today.**

The Peace of the Lord be with you.

### **The poppy of peace**

"Look at your poppy or the picture of a poppy in the service.  
Poppies are bright and cheerful flowers:  
give thanks to God for the lives of those who have died in war,  
remembering all the joy they brought to families and friends,  
and all the good things they did for their home and their country.

"Then look at the red petals:  
red reminds us of danger and harm.  
Ask God to be close to those who are still facing danger each day,  
to give courage to the armed forces, and compassion to all who help others.

"Place your whole hand over the poppy:  
poppies are also fragile and need to be handled gently.  
God cares for those who are hurting and those who are sad.  
Ask God to comfort all who are grieving the loss of someone they love.

"Finally place a finger on the centre of the poppy:  
ask God to help you play your part in working for peace in the world."



### **Listening for the Word from God - Matthew 5.1-12**

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

## REFLECTION:

The poppy has become the defining symbol of remembrance.

Each year well over 40 million Poppies are sold in aid of the work of the Royal British Legion. Poppies are now worn on lapels, football shirts, wrist bands, cars. They are projected onto buildings. They form the basis of powerful acts of public art: be they the 888,246 ceramic poppies were used in Paul Cummins and Tom Piper's installation "Blood swept lands and Seas of Red" at the Tower of London or the several dozen poppies knitted by the Women's Institute of Bardon Mill used to 'Yarn Bomb' the War Memorial in Bardon Mill last year.

But it was not certain that Poppies would become so commonplace.

In his book, *Where the Poppies Blow*, the historian John Lewis-Stempel maps the experience of the soldiers of the trenches through their engagement with the natural world which they experienced through the horror, and boredom, and filth, but sometimes unexpected beauty of the trenches.

It came as a surprise to me, and perhaps to many of you, to read that many of the British Tommys spent a good deal of their time in the trenches cultivating gardens. Some of these were for the laudable and practical needs of food production. In fact by the end of the Great War it is estimated that the British Army was self-sufficient in the fruit and vegetables they grew.

But greater pride and interest was spent on small flower gardens they would cultivate on the rear ramparts of their trenches.

Will you please send as soon as possible two packets of candytuft and two packets of nasturtium seeds? Captain Lionel Crouch wrote to his father in Chelmsford in 1915.

Some of the reasons for this growing was understandable. In a life which often crushingly boring, the cultivation of a small garden was something to do. Some stretches even running their own version of Britain in Bloom - or perhaps Flanders in Bloom - to add a level of competitive edge. At a deeper more level these little gardens could be a powerful remembrance of home, and in a life which was callously random, they offered some semblance of control and order in a disordered and distorted world. In a comment which could be true of many of us here today, Lewis-Stempel suggests that:

Love of flowers in the trenches was similar to love of religion. Few British soldiers declared it, almost everyone had it.

It is in and through this unique environment that the Poppy emerged as the defining symbol; of remembrance for the British society. However, it was not certain that this would be the case.

In the untilled soil of northern France and Belgium the Poppy would not normally thrive in the way that the blue cornflowers - which filled something of the same role in the French popular imagination as the Poppy does in the British - do.

But this was a unique environment, and in this unique environment the Poppy - which reminded so many of the English cornfields of home thrived. The artillery barrages of both sides turned Isaiah's vision on its head, ploughing and churning no-man's land. The explosions of ordinance helped spread the poppy seeds around the mud churned land. And the nitrogen of the explosives as well as the rotting remains of fallen animals and soldiers created a uniquely fertile environment for these poppies to blossom and bloom. So it was not a poetic image, but a reality of this beauty in a seemingly God-forsaken place which led Gordon McCrae to write, the day after leading the prayers at the ad hoc funeral of one of his dearest friends.

In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses row on row...

From those words written in 1915, through the first Poppy Appeals of the 1920s, through to the millions we see in our public remembrance across this country today, the simple red Poppy has become the most eloquent expression of the deep sorrow and gratitude that so many feel for those who have given their lives in time of war.

In the Poppy we are remember the sacrifice of those who fell in both world wars and other conflicts since. Those in whose veins, to quote the poet Isaac Rosenberg, the Poppies found their root. In the Poppy we glimpse an image and picture of the bravery and brutality of war. Seeing in this simple annual flower, and in its short and brilliant flowering, the image of a generation cut down all too soon. But rather than simply looking back, the Poppy also points us forward. In the trenches flowers became a sign of hope and deep spiritual epiphany. That in these simple flowers emerging through the rubbles of that seemingly God-forsaken landscape of no-man's land something good, something beautiful might, could and should emerge.

In our reading from the Gospel of Matthew we heard the beginning of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. In these Beatitudes, from the latin for blessing, we hear the promise and blessing that God reveals to us in the person of Jesus Christ.

What is striking is that these blessings begin not in the comfort of life as we might know it, or the happiness that we might desire. Blessing emerges instead for those, like the soldiers of the trenches, who dwell in darker places of life - the sorrowful, the persecuted, the hungry. And it is through these places that we know the promises of God for comfort, for mercy, for the kingdom of heaven.

In the simple Poppy we are given again this same picture, this same movement. That even in the blasted broken reality of the trenches something new might and should emerge. So as we wear our Poppies, as we lay them in remembrance we not only look back with sorrow and thankfulness, we look forward with hope and recommit ourselves to the truth and blessing that we might be peace makes, that through that we will become children of God.

**HYMN: Dear Lord and father of mankind**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YAxIN0egN-I>

**Praying Together**

In peace let us pray to the Lord. We pray for the leaders of the nations,  
that you will guide them in the ways of freedom, justice and truth.  
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for those who bear arms on behalf of the nation,  
that they may have discipline and discernment, courage and compassion.  
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for our enemies, and those who wish us harm,  
that you will turn the hearts of all to kindness and friendship.  
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for the wounded and the captive, the grieving and the homeless,  
that in all their trials they may know your love and support.  
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Most holy God and Father, hear our prayers for all who strive for peace and all who fight for justice. Help us, who today remember the cost of war, to work for a better tomorrow; and, as we commend to you lives lost in terror and conflict, bring us all, in the end, to the peace of your presence; through Christ our Lord. Amen..

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.

### **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.

### **Hymn: Eternal Father Strong to Save**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bDjwUzUnNpU&t=19s>

### **Responding in Hope and Commitment**

You may want to light a candle and lay your poppy by it as if laying a wreath:

### **The Kohima Epitaph is said**

When you go home  
tell them of us and say,  
for your tomorrow  
we gave our today.

### **A Prayer for the Armed Forces**

Almighty God, stretch forth your mighty arm to strengthen and protect the armed forces: grant that meeting danger with courage and all occasions with discipline and loyalty, they may truly serve the cause of justice and peace; to the honour of your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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.

## **An Act of Commitment**

Let us pledge ourselves anew to the service of God and our fellow men and women: that we may help, encourage and comfort others, and support those working for the relief of the needy and for the peace and welfare of the nations.

Lord God our Father, we pledge ourselves to serve you and all humankind, in the cause of peace, for the relief of want and suffering, and for the praise of your name. Guide us by your Spirit; give us wisdom; give us courage; give us hope; and keep us faithful now and always. Amen.

## **The National Anthem is sung.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rIDfR98bA9A>

## **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 all God's servants, life everlasting;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be amongst us and remain with us always. Amen.

## **HYMN: Lord for the years**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cd14v0e1RWU>

## **Music: Aled Jones - If I Can Help Somebody / Let There Be Peace on Earth (with Harry Billinge) (Arr. by Simon Lole)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2UCGagA5Jlo>

## **Where Poppies Blow by John Lewis-Stempel** - the need for nature in the first world war.

A poignant account of how British soldiers took their love and knowledge of the natural world with them to the front

As a historian of the first world war and as a nature writer, John Lewis-Stempel is ideally qualified to write this book. Few today, he argues, "would go to war for the fields, woods and brooks of Britain". But the generation of 1914-18 did precisely this. Asked why he volunteered to serve, Edward Thomas scooped up a handful of English soil: "Literally, for this." The British took their love and knowledge of nature with them to the front. They wrote letters and poetry filled with descriptions of the countryside, avidly bird spotting ("If it weren't for the birds, what a hell it would be," wrote a former miner) and keeping pets and even livestock (the 23rd Infantry had a cow at the front to supply them with Devonshire cream). They also planted colourful trench gardens with seeds posted from Blighty: pansies, forget-me-nots and nasturtiums. Apparently, celery grew well in the bottom of trenches. These were poignant attempts to humanise this most inhuman of wars, one whose symbol is now a flower: the blood-red poppy that colonised the cratered fields where so many fell. This is a book that brings home its tragedy like few others.

## In Flanders Fields



by John McCrae, May 1915

In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.

### Inspiration for “In Flanders Fields”

During the early days of the Second Battle of Ypres a young Canadian artillery officer, Lieutenant Alexis Helmer, was killed on 2 May, 1915 in the gun positions near Ypres. An exploding German artillery shell landed near him. He was serving in the same Canadian artillery unit as a friend of his, the Canadian military doctor and artillery commander Major John McCrae.

As the brigade doctor, John McCrae was asked to conduct the burial service for Alexis because the chaplain had been called away somewhere else on duty that evening. It is believed that later that evening, after the burial, John began the draft for his now famous poem “In Flanders Fields”.

John McCrae was serving as a Major and a military doctor and was second in command of the 1st Brigade Canadian Field Artillery. The field guns of his brigade's batteries were in position on the west bank of the Ypres-Yser canal, about two kilometres north of Ypres. The brigade had arrived there in the early hours of 23 April 1915.

- One account says that he was seen writing the poem the next day, sitting on the rear step of an ambulance while looking at Helmer's grave and the vivid red poppies that were springing up amongst the graves in the burial ground.
- Another account says that McCrae was so upset after Helmer's burial that he wrote the poem in twenty minutes in an attempt to compose himself.
- A third account by his commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Morrison, states that John told him he drafted the poem partly to pass the time between the arrival of two groups of wounded at the first aid post and partly to experiment with different variations of the poem's metre.