Printed Service for 8th November 2026

God's Remembrance

Prepared by Rev Paulson Devasahayam



Call to worship: Psalm 46:1,8-11 :
God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Come and see what the Lord has done, the desolations he has brought on the earth. He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire. He says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Hymn STF 132 O God our help in ages past https://youtu.be/ssr-Ga3Mz6Q?si=hc3sZo16QVbrnLey

Our 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 your throne
Your saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is your arm alone,
And our defence is sure.

Before the hills in order stood
Or Earth received her frame,
From everlasting you are God,
To endless years the same.

A thousand ages in your 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.

Like flowery fields the nations stand,
Pleased with the morning light;
The flower's beneath the mower's hand
Lie withering ere 'tis night.

Our God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be thou our guard while troubles last
And our eternal home.

Prayer: Almighty God, we come today to remember all you have done - your creative acts, your mighty deeds throughout history, your dealings with your people, your gift of Christ, your love experienced daily in our lives.
Remind us of all we owe, ***lest we forget.***

We remember those who lost their lives in the two world wars and later conflicts - the horror they endured, the determination they displayed, the courage they showed and the sacrifices they made to defend the values we continue to hold dear today, and to ensure lasting peace.
Remind us of all we owe, ***lest we forget.***

Forgive us that so often and so easily we do forget. We fail to recognise all you have done for us, to remember all we have received, to count our many blessings, or to appreciate how much we owe to you and so many.
Remind us of all we owe***,*** ***lest we forget.***

Almighty God, through all things you remember us - help us to remember you! Remind us of all we owe, lest we forget. We ask it in the name of Christ. Amen.

Hymn: StF 489 All I once held dear https://youtu.be/Merf00qcQik?si=JvwyoPLp7ruBo4kj

All I once held dear, built my life upon
All this world reveres, and wars to own
All I once thought gain I have counted loss
Spent and worthless now, compared to this

Knowing you, Jesus
Knowing you, there is no greater thing
You're my all, you're the best
You're my joy, my righteousness
And I love you, Lord

Now my heart's desire is to know you more
To be found in you and known as yours
To possess by faith what I could not earn
All-surpassing gift of righteousness

Oh, to know the power of your risen life
And to know You in Your sufferings
To become like you in your death, my Lord
So with you to live and never die

Act of Remembrance
In John's gospel Jesus says, "Greater love has no-one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13)
Let us remember before God those who died in the two world wars and in conflicts since. We remember their courage and service, those who returned carrying wounds, and the families and communities whose lives were changed. We also remember civilians who have suffered and died through war.
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 of silence

The Rouse or Reveille

Recording resource from the Royal British Legion — https://counties.britishlegion.org.uk/counties/womens-section/ceremonial-music/
You may use the recording resource above, which includes the Last Post, two-minute silence and Reveille.

Let us pray. Faithful God, we entrust those who have died to your mercy. Comfort those who grieve, sustain those who carry wounds, and guide us in the ways of justice and peace. Help us to remember with gratitude and to live with compassion. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Bible Reading: Isaiah 49:13-16
Shout for joy, you heavens; rejoice, you earth; burst into song, you mountains! For the Lord comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones. But Zion said, "The Lord has forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me."
"Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me.

Sermon
One of the words I came across recently is the Old English word reord-berend, which means "speech-bearer". In the poem The Dream of the Rood, it is used to describe human beings. What an interesting way to describe humans. We are the people who carry words. We carry stories, memories, hopes and prayers. Through our words, we share something of ourselves with one another. On Remembrance Sunday, through different media, we listen to the stories of the past, especially the voices preserved in letters, memories, and accounts handed down to us. We remember those who gave their lives in service, and all whose lives were broken by war. However, today, as we observe Remembrance Sunday, we, as speech-bearers, adopt silence to remember.

Into this silence, our reading from Isaiah 49:13–16 brings a speech, the speech of God's remembrance. These words speak into the experience of exile in Babylon. Jerusalem had been devastated, its temple destroyed, and many of its people taken far from home. Decades had passed. A generation had lived with loss and unanswered questions. Out of that pain came the cry: "The Lord has forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me" (verse 14).
In these verses, Isaiah 49:13–16, I see a clear portrayal of God's remembrance. What do I see in God's remembrance?

Firstly, God's remembrance is a tender one.

As I mentioned, these verses were spoken in a time of complete catastrophe. We see this in the book of Lamentations, where Zion sits like a widow with "none to comfort her" (Lam 1:1–2), and the book ends with a question: "Why do you forget us for ever?" (5:20). Here, in Isaiah 49, we see the answer: "The Lord comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones." Two words in this verse carry the weight. The word for compassion is rahamim, from the root rehem, meaning "womb." It is easy to connect this with verse 15, which says "the child of her womb." This is womb-love, and God claims it for himself. Again, we see that the word for comfort, nicham, has a bodily sense. It describes breathing deeply with someone, being sorry alongside them. God does not comfort from a distance. He sits down in the dust and breathes with the broken.

The act of remembrance we observe today speaks to the pain, loss and grief that all of us carry, and that grief demands comfort and compassion. Therefore, remembrance stands and speaks to us as a bearer of past grief and loss. However, we find hope and strength in God's remembrance. God's remembrance is reflected and personified in his tender love.

While preparing this message, I read a study by Miroslava Hukelova and Margaret Holloway about what Remembrance Sunday means to those who attend. One participant, a former military officer whom the researchers called Martin, spoke about the difficult things he had witnessed:
"I am not going to get too graphic . . . but when you see some of the things that I have seen . . ., you do question, and it is a way of trying to release that . . ."
For him, remembrance provided an opportunity to release something of the burden he carried.
Another participant, whom they called Nigel, was a retired doctor. He had spent his working life caring for people facing death. But when his own wife died, grief became deeply personal.
He had no military background or religious affiliation. Yet at the Remembrance service, he found himself remembering his wife. He spoke about how helpful it was to be among people who understood.
Into such sorrow, Isaiah speaks of the God who comforts his people and has compassion on those who suffer. God's remembrance is an expression of his tender love. He knows those who are gone, and he sees those who are left grieving. He hears the sorrow we can express and understands the sorrow for which we have no words. That gives us hope and strength. We can bring our wounded memories before him. Our silence can make room for sorrow. Our care can help someone carry it. Our act of remembrance brings our grief before God; his tender love gives us hope within it.

Secondly, God's remembrance is an engraved one.

We see that, as Zion fears the Lord has forgotten her, God promises his remembrance in another, more tangible way, with a kind of proof: "See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me" (verse 16).
The word for engraved is haqaq, meaning to cut, carve, or mark out. It is not pencilled in. Elsewhere Isaiah speaks of writing "The Lord's" on the hand as a mark of belonging (44:5), but here God bears the mark, and our name is cut into him.
It is also a protected place. The palm is where you hold what you cannot bear to drop. Earlier in this chapter, the prophet says, "In the shadow of his hand he hid me" (v. 2). Then in verse 16 God says, "Your walls are continually before me." Though Jerusalem lay in ruins, God keeps the broken walls before his eyes, every wall and gate, because he means to rebuild. God's remembering looks back to hold what was lost, and forward to restore.

This matters on Remembrance Sunday. We remember lives lost, but we also see lives that still need rebuilding. There are families carrying grief, veterans carrying painful memories, and communities longing for safety and peace. As Christians, this picture of God's hands leads us to think of Jesus' hands. How deep did he cut? Look at the hands of Jesus. Those wounds are God's name for us, written in his own flesh. In those wounded hands, we see the depth of Christ's love. The one who suffered is risen. We bring our grief to him, trusting that death does not have the final word.

At Kohima, the capital of Nagaland, a state in north-east India, the memorial to the British 2nd Division bears these words: "When you go home, tell them of us and say, For your tomorrow, we gave our today."

It is an instruction to speech-bearers: tell them. Tell them about the people behind the names. Tell them about the cost of war, the courage of those who served, and the sorrow carried by those who remained.
And as people of faith, let us also speak of the hope we have in God's remembrance. From the womb to the tomb and beyond, we entrust ourselves and those we love to his mercy.
And may our actions show the tenderness of the God who remembers.

We say, "We will remember them." And into our sorrow, God speaks his promise: "I will not forget you."
May that promise comfort us, strengthen us, and guide us to live with compassion and work for peace. Amen.

Hymn StF 696 For the healing of the nations https://youtu.be/QXtfIE6jSYQ?si=1zoqRKblPmvU27_b

For the healing of the nations,
Lord, we pray with one accord;
For a just and equal sharing
Of the things that earth affords.
To a life of love in action
Help us rise and pledge our word.

Lead us, Father, into freedom,
From despair your world release;
That redeemed from war and hatred,
All may come and go in peace.
Show us how through care and goodness
Fear will die and hope increase.

All that kills abundant living,
Let it from the earth be banned;
Pride of status, race or schooling,
Dogmas that obscure your plan.
In our common quest for justice
May we hallow life's brief span.

You, Creator God, have written
Your great name on humankind;
For our growing in your likeness
Bring the life of Christ to mind:
That by our response and service
Earth its destiny may find.

Prayer of intercession

God of compassion, we bring before you a world that still carries the wounds of war. We pray for people living in fear, for families separated, for children whose homes have been destroyed, and for all who are seeking a safe place to live. Protect them and open ways for help to reach them.

We pray for leaders of nations and all who carry responsibility. Give them wisdom, humility and courage to seek a just peace. Strengthen those working for reconciliation, and help us all to recognise the dignity of every human life.

We remember serving members of the armed forces, veterans and their families. Be near to those carrying physical wounds, painful memories or loneliness. May they receive the understanding and support they need.

We pray for those who grieve. You know the names they hold in their hearts and the voices they long to hear again. Comfort them with your tender love. Help us to stay beside them when the public acts of remembrance are over.

We pray for those who are unwell, those in hospital or care homes, and those who feel forgotten. Bless all who care for them. In a moment of quiet, we bring before you those particularly on our hearts today.

A short silence. Faithful God, you promise that you will not forget your people. Help your Church to reflect your remembering love. Make us patient listeners, faithful friends and people who work for peace. We offer these prayers in the name of Jesus Christ. 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 StF 720 We turn to you, O God of every nation https://youtu.be/B8xvvEe6sks?si=9f4INazLlPe7YIwp

We turn to you, O God of every nation,
Giver of life and origin of good;
Your love is at the heart of all creation,
Your hurt is people's pain in war and death.

We turn to you, that we may be forgiven
For crucifying Christ on earth again.
We know that we have never wholly striven,
Forgetting self, to love the other man.

Free every heart from pride and self-reliance,
Our ways of thought inspire with simple grace
Break down among us barriers of defiance,
Speak to the soul of all the human race.

On men who fight on earth for right relations
We pray the light of love from hour to hour.
Grant wisdom to the leaders of the nations,
The gift of carefulness to those in power.

Teach us, good Lord, to serve the need of others,
Help us to give and not to count the cost.
Unite us all, to live as siters, brothers:
Defeat our Babel with your Pentecost.

Blessing : May the God who has engraved us on the palms of his hands keep us in his tender love, and send us out to love as we have been loved. And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among us and remain with us always. Amen.

Acknowledgements : Opening prayer: Nick Fawcett, Worship through the Seasons: Reflective Services for Special Sundays (2002), Kevin Mayhew Ltd, Buxhall. The reflections from Martin and Nigel are drawn from Miroslava Hukelova and Margaret Holloway, "Lest we forget": the significance and meaning of Remembrance Sunday in contemporary British society, Mortality 28, no. 3 (2023), pp. 460–478.