Leeds South and West Methodist Circuit.
Written Service for Remembrance Sunday.

Call to Worship - Psalm 46

God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea.
He says, “Be still, and know that I am God.
The Lord Almighty is with us;
God is our fortress.

Hymn: StF 83 Praise my soul the King of Heaven

Prayers of Confession

God of peace,
Forgive us when we have participated
in that which turns people against each other;
for fuelling anger and harbouring vengeance,
for not heeding your call to love one another.
Inspire us never to give up on the hope
that your life offers us,
and the courage to see past war and desolation
and live for the day when we will have peace. Amen.

Reading: Matthew 5: 1-12

Reflection

What does Remembrance Day mean to you?...

Why do we remember?...

What symbolises remembrance to you?...

Loss, Courage, Sacrifice, Hope?

About this time every year people start to talk about Remembrance Day and what it means. Some say it glorifies war, others say it glorifies death. It is actually neither, it is purely and simply remembrance, regardless of politics, religion, points of view, opinions, it is purely about remembering all those who died during times of conflict. It is a time to let those who have gone before us live on, a time to share their voices and their stories. A time when we all stand together, to say ‘we remember you’.

But for Christians remembering is only part of the story,
For me one of the most important symbols of Remembrance Day is hope. Hope of resurrection (joining together with Jesus Christ). We have that hope, we have that assurance (certainty) that Jesus will greet us, and take us home to our Creator God. Death is not the end, and we are not alone, as we heard in our reading today, Jesus' sermon on the mount, or the beatitudes, we hear Jesus talking to us at some of the most difficult times in our lives.

This is Jesus' love letter to us all, his assurance to the weak and those who mourn. It is his seal of approval on those who strive for peace, and it is hope when we suffer.

This world can be a difficult place to live in, it takes, it takes time, effort, it takes energy, it hounds and pursues people, it mocks and persecutes, it grinds people down and it abuses, just as it did to Jesus the Son of God and to his disciples and countless others before and after them. But be assured, when we are bent low, when we mourn, when we thirst and hunger for the righteousness of God, when we struggle with temptation, when we strive to make others' lives better; God not only promises to help but acts on our behalf, with a royal saving power, with comfort and a companion to stand alongside us, to accompany us, to plead for us. A God who not just lets us see him but lets us experience him, who wraps us in his loving arms. The arms of a loving parent.

But even as Jesus had to face sorrow so must we, as Jesus faced his cross, so do we, we can't have the resurrection without the cross, we can't have the joy without the sorrow, we can't have salvation without Gethsemane. Christ did this alone and he did it for each one of us, but the beautiful thing, one of the biggest mysteries of our faith is that through the loving gift of God, we are not alone, Jesus is with us each time we face sadness and sorrow, he purposely and willing goes through it again and again with us, sometimes behind us to help us on, sometimes in front to take the impact and sometimes carrying us when we are too weak to go on.

Through Jesus Christ we have this hope, the hope of harmony with God, in a place of love and peace, a hope that tells us that whenever we lose, we gain so much more through him who loves us. When we give time, energy, effort, when we give our lives we are guaranteed to gain so much more, there is always hope, there is always love overflowing, there is always the experience of being with God and being completely wrapped in his mercy and love. It is ok to shed a tear, and there are also reasons to be glad, because there is always a place and a reward in Heaven for us and those who went before us. When we remember loved ones passed, we should also remember that hope we have that we will all be joined together again, welcomed and blessed in the warm embrace of our loving God through his Son Jesus Christ.
Amen

Hymn: StF 132 O God Our Help in Ages Past

Act of Remembrance

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.
Lamentations 3.21-23

Older Voice:

They shall grow not old,
As we that are left grow old;
Age shall not weary them,
Nor the years condemn

Young Voice:

At the going down of the sun
And in the morning,
We will remember them.

All: We will remember them.

11am - Two-minute silence…

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.

Hymn StF: 645 Will your Anchor Hold

Prayers Of intercession

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.

Lord's Prayer.

Prayer of commitment

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

Hymn StF: 707 Make me a channel of your peace
Blessing/Dismissal.