



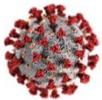
The Aldershot and North Camp Anchor

Issue 29: Sunday 8th November 2020

Dear Friends,

This week the Anchor has a slightly different format and includes an extended worship reflection for Remembrance Sunday. In this most unusual year, it is important that we remember not only those who have been involved in the conflicts of the past, but also those who continue to put themselves at risk for the sake of others.

At the time of writing, the expectation is that the Government will obtain sufficient support in Parliament for new national 'lockdown' regulations to be introduced. If these new regulations are agreed, then it will not be possible for churches to gather physically for Sunday worship until December 6th at the earliest. Our church buildings will therefore be closed from Thursday 5th November onwards. The Church Stewards at Aldershot and North Camp will continue to monitor the situation over the weeks ahead.



You will be aware that the Government is hoping that some of the new restrictions will be relaxed as Christmas approaches. We are making plans to hold some Christmas services in the hope that these will be able to go ahead. When we have more information about what will be possible, then details will be given in 'The Anchor'.

In the meantime, we will continue to produce 'The Anchor' and, for those with access to the internet, the weekly video reflections and opportunities to share in the various Zoom fellowships will remain available. This week's video reflection is an extended version of the reflection printed below and will be part of a Remembrance Sunday service that was recorded at North Camp a few weeks ago. Details of where to find the service will be sent to those on our email lists later in the week.

Let us continue to pray for each other in these most challenging times.

Yours in His service,

Worship Reflection

God is our shelter and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. So we will not be afraid, even if the earth is shaken. (Psalm 46 v 1-2)

Hymn (StF 132)

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home.



Prayer

O Lord remind us of the debt we owe to those who have sacrificed their health and their lives for the sake of others. Help us to continue to hold dear the liberty, justice and peace that others have fought for, so that their sacrifice will not have been in vain. Amen.

Bible Reading (John 15 v 9-17)

Jesus said, 'As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 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. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. 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. 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. This is my command: love each other.'

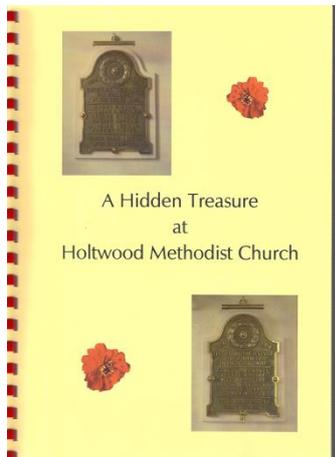
Reflection

On Remembrance Sunday 2019, none of us could have imagined how much the world would change over the months ahead. Over the last year the world has been significantly changed by the Covid pandemic and we can reflect on the way in which we find ourselves calling upon military language to describe what has happened in our world since the beginning of 2020.

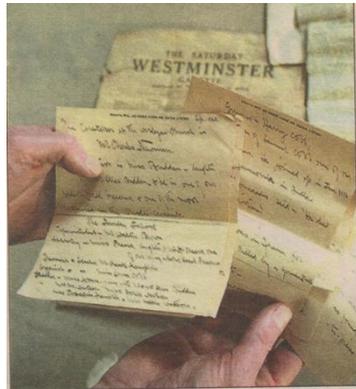
We speak of a 'battle' against the virus, we rightly describe those who work in the NHS and in the care sector as being 'on the front line' and we look forward to one day being able to celebrate a 'victory' against this global disease.

These links in language between the military and medical worlds remind us that in times of warfare and in times of medical emergency, the cost of the conflict is carried by those who bravely put themselves in harm's way for the sake of others.

Just over twenty years ago now, when I was Minister of a Methodist Church in Holtwood in Dorset, we were carrying out some building work on the chapel which involved taking down two brass memorial plaques for cleaning. The plaques showed the names of the



twelve young men from the village who lost their lives in the First World War. Much to our surprise, behind one of the plaques a 'time capsule' was discovered. The time capsule contained a range of interesting documents from 1920 but what was most moving were two sheets of notepaper on which someone had written a sentence or two about each of the twelve men whose names were listed on the memorial plaques.



The notes included the following descriptions.

Albert Tom King: Married and had a boy and a girl. After about 2 months in France he was shot dead by a sniper through a sandbag.

William George Dymott: Was only in military service for about one week and died. He should never have been pressed into the services.

Albert Edwards Ingram: Anxious to do his bit he joined under age and was told to return home. He joined up again and was blown to pieces in France.

These words, and those recorded about the other nine names on those memorial plaques, offer a painful insight into the reality not only of the cost of war but also of the bravery of all who offer themselves to fight for their country.

In our Bible reading Jesus says, "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends".

Those words take us to the very centre of the Christian Faith and to the life-transforming, forgiveness-bringing, death-defeating love that we see in Jesus and in his suffering on the cross. Still today the death and resurrection of Jesus offers forgiveness and new beginnings to all who are willing to respond to that Good News.

These are most unusual days, and this is a most unusual Remembrance Sunday, but we focus our thoughts on all who have suffered and have died in times of conflict and we remember all who continue to put themselves in places of danger for the sake of others. As we do so, we pledge ourselves not to forget their sacrifice.

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. Amen

Prayers of Intercession

We pray especially this week for:

- Those who have lost family members in wars of the past and those who serve in our armed forces today
- Those who work in the NHS and the care sector who put themselves at risk to bring healing to others.
- For the people of America as they respond to the outcome of the Presidential election

Gracious God, we ask these prayers through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord and Saviour. Amen

Hymn (StF 131)

By a monument of marble,
or a simple wooden cross,
here we gather to remember
sacrifice and tragic loss.
Blood-red poppy petals flutter,
each a symbol for a life,
drifting in a crimson curtain,
shadow of our constant strife.



Final Prayer

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 may the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us all and remain with us always. Amen.