

**Abbey International Baptist Church, Reading
Worship Service for Remembrance Sunday**

10:30am 9th November 2025

Simon Bird leading & Rev Zoltan Biro Preaching

www.abbeybaptistchurch.org.uk

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INTRODUCTION

This is Remembrance Sunday, when the nation remembers those who have died in wars. Many of us have lived through or been affected by war or other conflicts and this is a time to remember. Our service starts with praise, acknowledging God and who he is. The Psalms show we can come with honesty and pour out our grief. There may not be easy answers, but he hears. Zoltan will preach on Psalm 77, a lament. Then we recall his justice and love and bring our griefs in intercession to him.

CALL TO WORSHIP (based on Psalm 46:1-2)

God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.

We will not fear

though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,

We will not fear

God is our refuge and strength
an ever-present help in trouble.

We will not fear

HYMN BP&W 68/MP 564

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
O my soul, praise Him, for He is your health and salvation!
All those who hear,
Brothers and sisters, draw near,
Praise Him in glad adoration.

Praise to the Lord, who above all things so wondrously reigning,
Bearing you high on his wings, and so gently sustaining:
Have you not seen?
All you have needed has been
Met by his gracious providing.

Praise to the Lord, who shall prosper your work and defend you!

Surely His goodness and mercy here daily attend you:
Ponder anew
What the Almighty can do,
Who with His love doth befriend you.

Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore Him!
All that has life and breath, come now with praises before Him!
Let the Amen
Sound from His people again:
Gladly we praise and adore Him.

Joachim Neander (1650-80) tr. Catherine Winkworth (1827-78) and others

PRAYER FOR REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

We meet in the presence of God.
We remember with sorrow lives lost in wars and conflicts.
We pray for all who continue to suffer because of fighting and terror.
We commit ourselves to work for reconciliation,
That all people may live together in freedom, justice and peace. **Amen**

FAMILY TIME – The Poppy Story

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K8Jv0T9eFUy> up to 2:47

SONG MP139

An offering will be taken during this song, after which young people will leave for their groups

Father, we adore you.
Lay our lives before you.
How we love you!

Verse 2, Jesus, we adore you...

Verse 3, Spirit, we adore you...

Terrye Coelho ©1972 CCCM Music

REMEMBERING

We come to God knowing he hears us. We bring our griefs and complaints and lay them before him. Habakkuk prayed (1:2):

How long, Lord, must I call for help, but you do not listen?
Or cry out to you, 'Violence!' but you do not save?

Let us say together what the Psalmist told us (62:8):

Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.

We have a time for remembering in quiet prayer, or if you want, to come to the front and make your own prayer and leave your own symbol of remembrance. That is for

people killed in wars, civil wars or political violence anywhere in the world. We bring our griefs and burdens and lay them at the foot of the cross.

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. (Isaiah 53:4)

Following this poem we will have 2 mins silence, the traditional remembrance in the UK,

All stand

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.**

From 'For the Fallen' Laurence Binyon (1869–1943)

We keep 2 minutes silence

We turn to God in hope, as Jeremiah prayed:

I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall.

I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me.

Yet this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope:

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.

They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:19-23)

They who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy. (Psalm 126:5)

SONG BP&W 600/MP908

O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer,
when I call, answer me.

O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer,
come and listen to me.

Psalm 130 © 1982 Ateliers et Presses de Taizé

SERMON – Troubling Memories *Psalm 77*

Leading Remembrance Sunday services always fills me with certain level of concern. I am deeply aware of the responsibility to mark the day with the tenderness and dignity it deserves.

The purpose of Remembrance Sunday is to remember the sacrifices made by those who gave their lives for a greater cause... but by doing that we also remember the horrors involved. We do this in the hope that, somehow, this act of remembrance might just remind us to recognise and strive for the 'things that make for peace'.

This year the remembrance of wars of the past in the light of current conflicts which rage so viciously is especially a heavy load for our collective hearts to bear. Suffering upon suffering and a seemingly relentless cycle of death and destruction leave us overcome with grief for this broken world.

In my conversations recently with both young and old, both within and outside the Christian community, the recurring motif is a sense of hopelessness and feeling of overwhelm when they think of the battles raging in our world. Many people, including myself, are experiencing a complex mix of barely managing to watch the devastating

scenes of suffering because they are too painful, and a sense of guilt when not giving it enough attention, acutely aware that for thousands this is their actual, living, nightmare.

Being overwhelmed is not an unreasonable emotion to experience right now. Remembering can be hard. Feeling helpless is hard. This is what Asaph the writer of Psalm 77 must have experienced. I would like to read the first 10 verses, so we understand what Asaph felt. I am reading from the Message:

I yell out to my God, I yell with all my might,
I yell at the top of my lungs. He listens.

²⁻⁶ I found myself in trouble and went looking for my Lord;
my life was an open wound that wouldn't heal.

When friends said, "Everything will turn out all right,"
I didn't believe a word they said.

I remember God—and shake my head.

I bow my head—then wring my hands.

I'm awake all night—not a wink of sleep;

I can't even say what's bothering me.

I go over the days one by one,

I ponder the years gone by.

I strum my lute all through the night,

wondering how to get my life together.

⁷⁻¹⁰ Will the Lord walk off and leave us for good?

Will he never smile again?

Is his love worn threadbare?

Has his salvation promise burned out?

Has God forgotten his manners?

Has he angrily stomped off and left us?

"Just my luck," I said. "The High God retires
just the moment I need him."

Sometimes all we can do is feel a deep sadness and feel overwhelmed... At these times it feels that time freezes or it is a vicious circle... It is a kind of Ground Hog Day... If you are familiar with the film, you will understand my reference... The film portrays a reporter who has to relive the same day, over and over and over, and over and over and over again, until he figures out what he needs to do right. I don't know how many of you remember the first reaction of the reporter in the film. He gradually becomes depressed and desperate for a way to escape the loop. He commits suicide in a variety of ways, but each time, he reawakens on February 2.

Remembrance Sunday can feel a little bit like this today... We hope that we can escape the disturbing loop of violence and war, but we wake up again and again with news of wars... it might be in different parts of the world, but the same suffering...

However, Remembrance Sunday also reminds us that remembering doesn't just include recalling the darkness. As Christians we are obliged to remember the God who spoke into the darkness, the God who has been faithful through the centuries and is our refuge and strength when the storms rage.

As people of God we often don't have a good track record in remembering this. The Bible is littered with stories of people with short memories who forgot the faithfulness of God. The story of the Exodus, for example, provides plenty of stories on this subject. God's dramatic rescue mission of his people seems to be forgotten when the freed are regularly swing between commitment and despondency. Sometimes it was all too overwhelming for them, and their circumstances left them questioning what God was up to. We, too, can often oscillate between clinging to God's promises on the one hand and feeling despair and impatience on the other.

We struggle. Asaph struggled. And even Jesus struggled when he stood over Jerusalem, and he cried saying: "Oh Jerusalem, if you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace!" ... Jesus' tears were tears of longing and pain.

Today many of us are looking to that land, and many other lands, and shedding tears. There is a broken spirit and a sense of hopelessness that hangs in the air. But then he entered Jerusalem and did something about it. He gave himself up on the cross in the ultimate act of self-giving love. He broke the chains and ushered in a new kingdom which we too are invited into. A kingdom where power is to be found in weakness, where death is swallowed up in victory and love always finds a way.

This is what happens in the Film I mentioned the time loop is broken when the reporter finds true unconditional love. And this is what Asaph experiences in his wrestling with his memories:

Once again I'll go over what God has done,
lay out on the table the ancient wonders;
I'll ponder all the things you've accomplished,
and give a long, loving look at your acts.

¹³⁻¹⁵ O God! Your way is holy!

No god is great like God!
You're the God who makes things happen;
you showed everyone what you can do—
You pulled your people out of the worst kind of trouble,
rescued the children of Jacob and Joseph.

¹⁶⁻¹⁹ Ocean saw you in action, God,

saw you and trembled with fear;
Deep Ocean was scared to death.
Clouds belched buckets of rain,
Sky exploded with thunder,
your arrows flashing this way and that.
From Whirlwind came your thundering voice,
Lightning exposed the world,
Earth reeled and rocked.
You strode right through Ocean,
walked straight through roaring Ocean,
but nobody saw you come or go.

²⁰ Hidden in the hands of Moses and Aaron,
You led your people like a flock of sheep.

So, this Remembrance Sunday, as we hold the darkness in our hearts and acknowledge its weight, may we also remember the mighty works of our God. May we know with confidence that the light who came into the darkness holds us and all the world's struggles in the mystery and wonder of his eternal love. Amen

SONG MP 509

O Lord the clouds are gathering
The fire of judgment burns
How we have fallen
O Lord You stand appalled to see
Your laws of love so scorned
And lives so broken

Chorus

*Have mercy Lord (have mercy Lord)
Forgive us Lord (forgive us Lord)
Restore us Lord revive Your church again
Let justice flow (let justice flow
Like rivers (like rivers)
And righteousness like a never failing stream*

O Lord over the nations now
Where is the dove of peace
Her wings are broken
O Lord while precious children starve
The tools of war increase
Their bread is stolen

O Lord dark powers are poised to flood
Our streets with hate and fear
We must awaken
O Lord let love reclaim the lives
That sin would sweep away
And let Your kingdom come

Yet O Lord Your glorious cross shall tower
Triumphant in this land
Evil confounding
Through the fire Your suffering church
Display the glories of her Christ
Praises resounding

CCLI Song # 30464Graham Kendrick © 1987 Make Way Music

Intercession

Paul urges us to pray for leaders:

I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:1-4)

We have a time of prayer for nations and the world situation. Pray in the quiet, or come to the front and make your own prayer. We end each prayer with:

Have mercy Lord.

Amen, Let your Kingdom come, Your will be done.

THE LORD'S PRAYER: *you are invited to pray in your own language*

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name,

Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins,

As we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are Yours

Now and for ever and ever. Amen.

FAMILY INTERCESSION – *Maureen Dickens leading intercession for church family needs*

Father God, thank you for families, and as we pray may your love surround each one of us. We think particularly of those families who are mourning loved ones, may they know your comfort at this time.

Father God, we lift to you families living in Gaza, Israel, Ukraine, Russia and the many other Nations affected by war and natural disasters, remembering Jamaica and other Caribbean Islands which saw the worst of hurricane Melissa, please be with all those affected and give them courage, bringing much needed aid and medical supplies to rebuild lives.

Father God, we remember in our prayers those who live on the streets and pray that you would encourage government and councils to find ways of providing homes and helping them in their need, enabling them to be part of the community.

Father, help us to live this day to the full, being true to you in every way.

Jesus, help us to give ourselves away to others, being kind to everyone we meet.

Spirit, help us to love the lost, proclaiming Christ in all we do and say.

Father, we lift these prayers to you through Jesus your Son, our Saviour, **Amen.**

HYMN MP428/BPW535:

Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided,
urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way,
sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided:
Lord of the years, we bring our thanks today.

Lord, for that word, the word of life which fires us,
speaks to our hearts and sets our souls ablaze,

teaches and trains, rebukes us and inspires us:
Lord of the word, receive Your people's praise.

Lord, for our world when we disown and doubt him,
loveless in strength, and comfortless in pain,
hungry and helpless, lost indeed without him:
Lord of the world, we pray that Christ may reign.

Lord for ourselves; in living power remake us -
self on the cross and Christ upon the throne,
past put behind us, for the future take us:
Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone.

Timothy Dudley-Smith © Hope Publishing, Michael Baughen © The Jubilate Group (Verse 3 omitted)

BLESSING: Phil 4:7

May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. **Amen.**

THE GRACE

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. Amen.**

Events this week:

Wednesday 12 th	10.30	Renew Wellbeing
	12.15	Bible Study
	2.00	iCaf
Thursday 13 th	10.30	Bible Study
	10.30	Toddlers
	7.30	Men's Bible Study
Friday 14 th	5.00	Table Tennis Club

Sunday 16 th	10.30	Worship with Communion Service and Sustenance (The purpose of the gifts of the Spirit) 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; 1 Peter 4:10-11
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Followed by Church Meeting

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