

10 November 2024 – Remembrance Sunday/Combined Worship with St. Andrew's

Prelude Songs *The Lord is my Shepherd / Peace in times of wilderness / Let there be light*

Welcome / Announcements / Land Acknowledgement

Lilian Sutherland

We recognize that the land where we gather for worship belongs to God, as does all of creation. We also know we are here as guests on the traditional and unceded territory of the ləkʷəŋən and the WSÁNEĆ – Esquimalt and Songhees nations. May we continue asking God to forgive us for injustices we are directly or indirectly part of and may we be led along paths of reconciliation and solidarity.

➤ *O let the power fall on me*

Call to Worship (Psalm 76:1-3)

Wayne Stretch

In Judah God is known. God's name is great in Israel. The Lord's tent is in Salem, God's dwelling place in Zion. There God broke the flashing arrows, the shields and the swords, the weapons of war.

We pray today for God's power to guide us, God's might to uphold us, God's wisdom, to teach us – God's eye to watch over us, God's ear to hear us, God's word to give us speech. We worship today with the hand of God to protect us, the shield of God to shelter us, and the host of God to defend us. Let us praise God – our hope for years to come...

➤ *O God, our help in ages past*

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Gathering Prayer

Wayne Stretch

God of justice and peace, we gather at this solemn time of year, aware of the costliness of human history. In the face of hostility between nations and neighbours, you have come to us in Jesus Christ, carrying no sword, calling us to serve as peace makers. In this time of worship, renew in us the hope that you will turn swords into ploughshares, and lead the world you love away from making war for pride or profit. By the power of your Spirit, renew your promise of peace with justice for all your peoples.

God of justice and mercy, we confess that the world around us is in a mess. Nations turn disputes over territory into acts of aggression. Old enemies stir up conflict with their rivals. Threats of violence keep us all on edge. We confess we have not learned from past conflicts what leads to peace with justice among nations and neighbours. Forgive us and lead us in a better way. May it be so. **Amen**

Words of Hope

Wayne Stretch

Jesus said, Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Friends, through God's mercy, our sin is forgiven. May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you today and always.

A Service of Remembrance

- Remembrance Affirmation

Heather Anderson

We believe God made this world; God loves this world. God lives in the world.

We believe God holds the world and cradles it in loving hands: holding its pain – caring for every memory of every person in conflict.

We believe God loves each human being on every side of every struggle, who has given of themselves – even to death – for their friends and family and country.

We believe violence breaks God's heart, bullets tear through God's realm, and war opposes God's love.

But we believe love lives longer than hatred, and that hope burns away at despair.

God calls to us from violence praying we can work for a better world. May it be so!

Thanks be to God for the renewing grace of each day. **Amen**

O Canada

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- The Last Post / Silence / Reveille / Laying of Wreaths

- Prayer of Remembrance

Heather Anderson

"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."

As we remember before God those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, let us commend their souls anew to God's eternal mercy and compassion, and let us pray that God would grant us grace to serve faithfully until our life's end, to the honour and glory of God's Holy name.

In unity with all Canadians, of every race, gender, and creed we offer up prayers of thanksgiving for all those who made selfless sacrifices for God and country so that we and future generations might live in peace.

Bring your comfort and relief to those who mourn. Enable those who are wounded in body, mind, or spirit to live more peaceful and satisfying lives. Endow us all with a new resolve to hasten that day when war shall be no more, and your will alone is done on all the earth. Amen

God save our gracious King

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Prayer for Understanding

Brian Titus

Gracious God, as we approach the scripture today, we rely on the Holy Spirit to help us seek the application of God's word for our time. We pray together in the name of Jesus, the Christ. Amen

Scripture **Jeremiah 29:4-7, 10-14**

Brian Titus

Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: *Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.*

For thus says the Lord: *Only when Babylon's seventy years are completed will I visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.*

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

Mark 12:38-44

Mitch Coggin

As he taught, he said, *"Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets! They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."*

He sat down opposite the treasury and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, *"Truly I tell you; this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."*

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

On Remembrance Day, we remember those that unselfishly gave their lives in service. The act of remembering honours their commitment and makes sacred the power of memory. Remembering does not erase painful circumstances but meaningfully connects the past, present, and future. What part of remembering informs our present and our hope for the future?

The Lion King still is one of my favourite Broadway musicals. It's the story of Simba, young cub of Mufasa, King of the Lions. Mufasa's jealous brother, Scar, kills Mufasa and tricks young Simba into believing that Mufasa's death was really Simba's fault. Simba runs away and grows up carrying the burden of his father's death.

In the most dramatic scene of the musical, Simba sees an image of himself in a pond and that image becomes his father. The image of his father fills the night sky saying, "Simba, you have forgotten who you are and so have forgotten me. Look inside yourself, Simba. You are more than what you have become. You must take your place in the Circle of Life.

Simba expresses his doubt, "I'm not who I used to be."

His father reminds him, "Remember who you are. You are my son, and the one true king. Remember..."

Memory ties our lives together. Do we remember who and whose we are?

In the first scripture we read, Jeremiah, the prophet, wrote a letter to the first generation of Hebrew exiles taken into slavery in Babylon. The exiles heard the many voices that either gave them false hope or the voices that fueled their doubt. In chapters 27-31, Jeremiah scolds the false prophets who predicted that their exile would end in two years and that Babylon would be facing imminent doom. The prediction created false hope for a speedy return to Judah. There are always people around us who seem to minimize our own struggle with the devastating consequences we are living in.

The exiles had reason to doubt their future. Jeremiah was speaking to people:

Whose trauma had splintered their lives.

Who were the lonely outcasts.

Whose economic well-being had been shattered.

Whose families had been fractured.

Whose homes had been divided.

Whose future was doubtful.

Facing an uncertain future is the dominant theme of Jeremiah's letter and a reminder that there is no quick fix, it will take more than a generation.

Jeremiah's advice is not what we might expect and certainly not what they expected. He tells them to settle into the land of Babylon and create a community of faith, as unacceptable and impossible as it seems. Jeremiah's word from the Lord says to, *"Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare."*

Jeremiah tells the exiles to settle in for the long haul. Regardless of where the exiles were, Jeremiah is encouraging them to live their lives in the present. Rebuild, plant, marry and have children, do things that have life-giving power. Don't be a victim of your circumstances. They must work for their own welfare by seeking the welfare of the place where they live, no matter how counterintuitive that may seem.

The exiles could persevere on remembering their comfortable past in Jerusalem. Again, they are not to live in the past, but in the present, whether the circumstances are good or challenging. When we are open to the present, we are open to experience new hope. When God said to "settle in" he was not calling them to be Babylonians or to act in sync with what the Babylonians believed. The message of God through Jeremiah is that we are God's people wherever we are. We must remember who and whose we are.

How does remembering who and whose we are fit in the context of the Gospel story from Mark? We must look back to verse 38, *"As [Jesus] taught, he said, 'Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets! They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.'"*

Jesus is talking about those who put on a show of being religious. In the verses we read, Jesus and the disciples are watching people put their offerings in the treasury. They observed the wealthy putting in large amounts and then a poor widow who put in her two copper coins worth only a few cents. We don't know her name or what came first, her poverty or her widowhood, however, her example of faith supersedes those particulars.

Like the story of the rich young ruler, this isn't about money. The widow didn't let her circumstances or her past dictate her behaviour. She is a poor widow and was not

considered a valuable or contributing member of society. She could have remembered only what others said she was and lived according to that narrow, external interpretation.

The woman viewed her life's situation in a different way. She offered what might have been her two last coins. Even though her resources were scarce, she didn't allow her circumstances or the ways others defined her to dictate how she chose to live out her faith.

How does remembering who and whose we are shape our future? How do we accept life's challenges with courageous hope?

Jeremiah's encouragement is for us, *"For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope."*

➤ *Make me a channel of your peace*

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Offering and Prayer

Laura Kavanagh

Each week we pray for the coming of God's Kingdom. Though we do not know exactly what this will look like, we offer our gifts and talents to God for the work of the Kingdom here and now, that it will be known here and everywhere.

➤ *Praise God from whom all blessings flow*

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God of purpose and promise, we offer our gifts to help fulfill your purposes on earth. Bless our gifts and our actions so that others will grasp the promise of your love and discover your purpose for their lives, through Christ, our friend and saviour. Amen

† Pastoral Prayers / The Disciples Prayer (enfleshed)

Laura Kavanagh

In our remembering we pray... ***rain down your love, God of life***

O God of ages past, hope of years to come, we gather in this season of remembrance, grateful that you hold each one of us in your memory and your mystery. Today we remember all who have served to uphold justice and freedom in the wars of the last century, in conflicts of our own generation, and in peace keeping and relief efforts around the world. Especially we pray for those who have died in this service and for those who carry scars on body and soul, having returned from conflict. We remember their courage and we pray for their families who still ache for lives surrendered at great cost...

In our remembering we pray... ***rain down your love, God of life***

Holy One, we remember the victims of current conflicts, hiding in forgotten corners of the world, longing for safety and peace... We remember victims of violence in our own country, still fearful and uncertain about what the future holds... Give us the courage to speak out for their protection and recovery.

In our remembering we pray... ***rain down your love, God of life***

We remember those around us who carry on under the burden of sad and hard memories – those weighed down by grief, disappointment, anger, pain and loss...

Inspire us to offer a listening ear and an understanding heart whenever we can.

In our remembering we pray... ***rain down your love, God of life***

O God of ages past, hope of years to come, help us remember you day by day. Strengthen us to be disciples of your good news so that hope is renewed in our lives, your church and the world. We join our voices in Jesus name to pray as his disciples ...***Mother of us all, who dwells within and beyond, sacred is your name. May your holy vision for collective flourishing come to fruition among us. May your dreams of justice, love, compassion, and connection be enfleshed on earth. Provide us today with what we need to be nourished in body, soul, and heart. Forgive us for the harm we cause as we seek to forgive those who have harmed us. Lead us away from everything that destroys and liberate us from the hands of evil. For you are the ultimate source of hope. Your power-with exceeds all power-over. Your presence incites eternal wonder. All praise to you, our comfort and strength. Amen***

➤ ***Rain Down***

Blessing

Laura Kavanagh

As we leave this place of sanctuary and return to the beautiful and broken world, may we hold onto the choice to be ready – nurture a flame of hope that will not go out – engage in gentle and persistent defiance against despair. And may the peace of Christ be within and among us all. Amen

➤ ***Sing amen / Asithi***

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Postlude Song ***Peace Train***