

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Sunday, November 10th, 2024
Rev. Gerry Gallant

The Armies of God
Proper 27
2 Samuel 23:8-12

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

On this day of memories, we gather to sing and to pray;
we remember the past and look to the future.

On this day when the guns and canons fell silent,
we come before you, God, seeking your peace.

On this day of hope in the face of terror,
we come before you, God, believing in your promise.

Let us worship God together, in peace.

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

O gracious and holy God,
give us diligence to seek you,
wisdom to perceive you,
and patience to wait for you.
Grant us, O God,
a mind to meditate on you,
eyes to behold you,
ears to listen for your Word,
a heart to love you,
and a life to proclaim you,
through the power of the Spirit
of Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

Remembrance Day

The Act of Remembrance

Call to Remembrance

"At the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month the guns fell silent on the Western Front, to bring to an end the First World War. Our nation and commonwealth have recalled that moment through our Armistice and Remembrance events down the decades, decades during which the men and women of our armed services have continued to pay the ultimate sacrifice.

'Freedom'

It is the Soldier, not the reporter
 Who has given us the freedom of the press.
 It is the Soldier, not the poet
 Who has given us the freedom of speech.
 It is the Soldier, not the peace camp organizer
 Who has given us the freedom to demonstrate.
 It is the Soldier,
 who serves beneath the Flag
 whose coffin is draped by the Flag
 who allows the protester to burn the Flag
 It is the Soldier, not the politician
 Who has given his
 blood
 his body
 his life
 The Soldier, who has given these freedoms.

Scripture

MICAH 4:1-5

**It shall come to pass in the latter days
 that the mountain of the house of the LORD
 shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
 and it shall be lifted up above the hills;
 and peoples shall flow to it,
 ² and many nations shall come, and say:
 "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
 to the house of the God of Jacob,
 that he may teach us his ways
 and that we may walk in his paths."
 For out of Zion shall go forth the law,**

and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

³ He shall judge between many peoples,
and shall decide disputes for strong nations far away;
and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war anymore;

⁴ but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree,
and no one shall make them afraid,
for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.

⁵ For all the peoples walk
each in the name of its god,
but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God
forever and ever.

The Ode

They shall not grow 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.

In Flanders Fields

In Flanders fields, the poppies blow
between the crosses, row on row,
that mark our places; and in the sky
the larks, still bravely singing, fly
scarce heard amongst the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
we lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
loved and were loved, and now we lie
in Flanders fields.

Take up your quarrel with the foe;
to you from failing hands we throw
the torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
we shall not sleep, though poppies grow
in Flanders fields.

Dr John McCrae, 1914/1915

Let us remember before God those who have died for their country in war; those whom we knew, and whose memory we treasure; and all who have lived and died in the service of mankind.

In Memory of: World War 1

George Bothwell
Walter A Ferrier
Graham Howie
Donald McPhail
Eric T. Spalding
Harold Stone
Edwin D. Wilson

Killed in Action in The Great War of 1914-1918

World War 2

Fred Burchell
Kenneth Davis
Norman Davis
Charles Donovan
John McLeod Hogg
Lorne Patterson

Killed in Action in The Great War of 1939-1945

The Last Post

National Anthem

O Canada!

Our home and native land! True patriot love
in all thy sons command

With glowing hearts
we see thee rise,
the true north strong and free;

From far and wide,
 O Canada,
 we stand on guard for thee. God keep our land
 glorious and free!

O Canada!
 We stand on guard for thee.
 O Canada!
 We stand on guard for thee.

Prayer

*Lord God of the nations,
 whose sovereign rule brings justice and peace,
 have mercy on our broken and divided world.
 Pour out your peace into the hearts of all,
 that all races and peoples may learn
 to live as members of one family
 in obedience to your law.
 Almighty and eternal God,
 from whose love in Christ we cannot be parted,
 either by death or life:
 hear our prayers and thanksgivings
 for all whom we remember this day.
 Fulfil in us, as in them,
 the purpose of your love;
 and bring us all to your eternal joy;
 through Jesus Christ our Lord.
 Amen.*

Children's Hymn

Call to Confession

Prepare the way of the Lord!
 Let us make our confession to God.

Prayer of Confession

**Have mercy on me, O God,
 according to your steadfast love;
 according to your abundant mercy
 blot out my transgressions.
 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,**

and cleanse me from my sin.
 For I know my transgressions,
 and my sin is ever before me.
 Against you, you alone, have I sinned,
 and done what is evil in your sight,
 so that you are justified in your sentence
 and blameless when you pass judgment.
 You desire truth in the inward being;
 therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.
 Hide your face from my sins,
 and blot out all my iniquities.
 Create in me a clean heart, O God,
 and put a new and right spirit within me.
 Do not cast me from your presence,
 and do not take your holy spirit from me.

Assurance of Pardon

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.
 Your sins are pardoned.
 The penalty is paid.
 Thanks be to God.

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors.
 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One.
 For Thine is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory,
 Forever and ever. Amen.

Opening Hymn #193: "Out of My Bondage, Sorrow and Night" (V 1,2,4)

Out of my bondage, sorrow and night,
 Jesus, I come; Jesus, I come;
 into thy freedom, gladness and light,
 Jesus, I come to thee;
 out of my sickness into thy health,
 out of my want and into thy wealth,
 out of my sin and into thyself,
 Jesus, I come to thee.

Out of my shameful failure and loss,
 Jesus, I come; Jesus, I come;

into the glorious gain of thy cross,
 Jesus, I come to thee.
 out of earth's sorrows into thy balm,
 out of life's storms and into thy calm,
 out of distress to jubilant psalm,
 Jesus, I come to thee.

Out of the fear and dread of the tomb,
 Jesus, I come; Jesus, I come;
 into the joy and light of thy home,
 Jesus, I come to thee;
 out of the depths of ruin untold,
 into the peace of thy sheltering fold,
 ever thy glorious face to behold,
 Jesus, I come to thee.

Responsive Reading

Psalm 119:65-72

⁶⁵ You have dealt well with your servant,
 O Lord, according to your word.

⁶⁶ **Teach me good judgment and knowledge,
 for I believe in your commandments.**

⁶⁷ Before I was afflicted I went astray,
 but now I keep your word.

⁶⁸ **You are good and do good;
 teach me your statutes.**

⁶⁹ The insolent smear me with lies,
 but with my whole heart I keep your precepts;

⁷⁰ **their heart is unfeeling like fat,
 but I delight in your law.**

⁷¹ It is good for me that I was afflicted,
 that I might learn your statutes.

⁷² **The law of your mouth is better to me
 than thousands of gold and silver pieces.**

Music Ministry: "O God, Our Help in Ages Past"

Prayer for illumination
(Congregant Prepared)

Scripture

2 Samuel 23:8-12

⁸ These are the names of the mighty men whom David had: Josheb-basshebeth a Tahchemonite; he was chief of the three. He wielded his spear against eight hundred whom he killed at one time.

⁹ And next to him among the three mighty men was Eleazar the son of Dodo, son of Ahohi. He was with David when they defied the Philistines who were gathered there for battle, and the men of Israel withdrew. ¹⁰ He rose and struck down the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clung to the sword. And the Lord brought about a great victory that day, and the men returned after him only to strip the slain.

¹¹ And next to him was Shammah, the son of Agee the Hararite. The Philistines gathered together at Lehi, where there was a plot of ground full of lentils, and the men fled from the Philistines. ¹² But he took his stand in the midst of the plot and defended it and struck down the Philistines, and the Lord worked a great victory.

Sermon

As I told you all earlier at the beginning of the service.

“At the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month the guns fell silent on the Western Front, to bring to an end the First World War. Our nation and commonwealth has recalled that moment through our Armistice and Remembrance events down the decades, decades during which the men and women of our armed services have continued to pay the ultimate sacrifice.

November 11th is the day that the current and former commonwealth countries remember the men and women of our nations that went to war. As a nation we use to make this a priority in our culture and in our schools. Recently the idea of celebrating Remembrance Day has become less and less acceptable in a nation that has forgotten what war is all about.

In the church going community, the celebration of Remembrance Day has also lost its importance over time, with fewer and fewer churches participating in Remembrance Day events, sometimes by their own choice and sometime because of their exclusion by the organizers. Many people question if we should even acknowledge Remembrance Day in the church, after all if honoring veterans was important to God, there would be Scripture that showed honoring of Veterans.

The problem is that many modern-day churches and Christians read our Bibles through our own sanitized and safe culture, we tend to ignore the things that do not seem to have a direct

impact on our lives today. However, if we read our Bibles faithfully, we will find evidence of fighting, war and bloodshed in both the Old and New Testaments.

We often cannot find text that honors veterans because today the mantra of the Church is 'God is Love' which is true, God did indeed tell us to love everyone, our neighbors and even our enemies. However, we need to know that sometimes the most loving thing we can do is to fight when someone is being led astray in this world or doing evil in this world. Our God is indeed a God of Love; however, he is also a God of War, and that can be a very difficult pill for modern Christians to swallow.

Consider Psalm 144.

Psalm 144:1-2

**¹ Blessed be the Lord, my rock,
who trains my hands for war,
and my fingers for battle;
² he is my steadfast love and my fortress,
my stronghold and my deliverer,
my shield and he in whom I take refuge,
who subdues peoples under me.**

As David gets himself ready for war, he calls upon God to bless him, and for many there is a conflict, how can a God of Love bless a man who is about to go into a battle and potentially kill others?

Is war, ok? Aren't all Christians called to be pacifists?

Psalm 144:5-8

**⁵ Bow your heavens, O Lord, and come down!
Touch the mountains so that they smoke!
⁶ Flash forth the lightning and scatter them;
send out your arrows and rout them!
⁷ Stretch out your hand from on high;
rescue me and deliver me from the many waters,
from the hand of foreigners,
⁸ whose mouths speak lies
and whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood.**

David asks God to get directly involved in the battle. He asks God to deliver victory to his armies and to vanquish his enemies.

However, the real reason for this battle that David is so seriously calling out to God about appears in the last few verses of the psalm.

Psalm 144:12-15

**¹² May our sons in their youth
be like plants full grown,
our daughters like corner pillars
cut for the structure of a palace;
¹³ may our granaries be full,
providing all kinds of produce;
may our sheep bring forth thousands
and ten thousands in our fields;
¹⁴ may our cattle be heavy with young,
suffering no mishap or failure in bearing;
may there be no cry of distress in our streets!
¹⁵ Blessed are the people to whom such blessings fall!
Blessed are the people whose God is the Lord!**

David is going to war to protect the safety of his family and of God's people. This is not a war of conquest, or of power, or of wealth, it is a battle of defense. To keep from having his city overrun and his family and people being taken prisoner, to prevent distress and turmoil to God's people, King David fought in many wars.

So, let's look at the book of second Samuel and the role that God and Godly men and women play in war.

2 Samuel 23:8-12

**⁸ These are the names of the mighty men whom David had: Josheb-basshebeth a Tahchemonite; he was chief of the three. He wielded his spear against eight hundred whom he killed at one time.
⁹ And next to him among the three mighty men was Eleazar the son of Dodo, son of Ahohi. He was with David when they defied the Philistines who were gathered there for battle, and the men of Israel withdrew. ¹⁰ He rose and struck down the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clung to the sword. And the Lord brought about a great victory that day, and the men returned after him only to strip the slain.
¹¹ And next to him was Shammah, the son of Agee the Hararite. The Philistines gathered together at Lehi, where there was a plot of ground full of lentils, and the men fled from the Philistines. ¹² But he took his stand in the midst of the plot and defended it and struck down the Philistines, and the Lord worked a great victory.**

In the Scripture we see God honoring some of the men who fought in David's army.

Josheb-Basshebeth, a Tahkemonite, was chief of the Three; he raised his spear against eight hundred men, whom he killed in one encounter.

Eleazar son of Dodai the Ahohite. He was with David when they taunted the Philistines gathered at Pas Dammim for battle. Then the men of Israel retreated, but he stood his ground

and struck down the Philistines till his hand grew tired and froze to the sword. The LORD brought about a great victory that day. The troops returned to Eleazar, but only to strip the dead.

Shammah son of Agee the Hararite. When the Philistines banded together at a place where there was a field full of lentils, Israel's troops fled from them. But Shammah took his stand in the middle of the field. He defended it and struck the Philistines down, and the LORD brought about a great victory.

And if you were to continue to read through second Samuel you would see the names of more and more 'veterans' of David's armies listed out and their exploits in God's name.

Why does this list exist? Why did these men have to go to war? Why did David have to fight against the Philistines, the Amorites, the Canaanites and all the -ites in the region?

The answer is simple, because his forefathers had failed to fight against them when they were given the opportunity by God.

When the people of Israel had been wandering in the wilderness, they were told to go in and destroy the people who were living in the land.

In Deuteronomy 9 we are told:

Deuteronomy 9:1-5

9 "Hear, O Israel: you are to cross over the Jordan today, to go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than you, cities great and fortified up to heaven, ² a people great and tall, the sons of the Anakim, whom you know, and of whom you have heard it said, 'Who can stand before the sons of Anak?' ³ Know therefore today that he who goes over before you as a consuming fire is the Lord your God. He will destroy them and subdue them before you. So you shall drive them out and make them perish quickly, as the Lord has promised you.

⁴ "Do not say in your heart, after the Lord your God has thrust them out before you, 'It is because of my righteousness that the Lord has brought me in to possess this land,' whereas it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is driving them out before you. ⁵ Not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart are you going in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations the Lord your God is driving them out from before you, and that he may confirm the word that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

The Jews were told to go into the land and remove all of the nations that opposed God, to wipe them out completely.

Deuteronomy 20 tells us why.

Deuteronomy 20:16-18

¹⁶ But in the cities of these peoples that the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance, you shall save alive nothing that breathes, ¹⁷ but you shall devote them to complete destruction, the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, as the Lord your God has commanded, ¹⁸ that they may not teach you to do according to all their abominable practices that they have done for their gods, and so you sin against the Lord your God.

So, the Jews were told to destroy their enemies so that they would not be corrupted by their worship of false gods. But they failed to follow God's commands. And as a result, the people of those nations lived on as a thorn in the side of the nation of Israel.

In Judges we read:

Judges 1:27-36

²⁷ Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shean and its villages, or Taanach and its villages, or the inhabitants of Dor and its villages, or the inhabitants of Ibleam and its villages, or the inhabitants of Megiddo and its villages, for the Canaanites persisted in dwelling in that land. ²⁸ When Israel grew strong, they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but did not drive them out completely.

²⁹ And Ephraim did not drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer, so the Canaanites lived in Gezer among them.

³⁰ Zebulun did not drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, or the inhabitants of Nahalol, so the Canaanites lived among them, but became subject to forced labor.

³¹ Asher did not drive out the inhabitants of Acco, or the inhabitants of Sidon or of Ahlab or of Achzib or of Helbah or of Aphik or of Rehob, ³² so the Asherites lived among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land, for they did not drive them out.

³³ Naphtali did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh, or the inhabitants of Beth-anath, so they lived among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land. Nevertheless, the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and of Beth-anath became subject to forced labor for them.

³⁴ The Amorites pressed the people of Dan back into the hill country, for they did not allow them to come down to the plain. ³⁵ The Amorites persisted in dwelling in Mount Heres, in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim, but the hand of the house of Joseph rested heavily on them, and they became subject to forced labor. ³⁶ And the border of the Amorites ran from the ascent of Akrabbim, from Sela and upward.

If we read though the book of Judges, we see the Israelites go through cycles of idolatry, worshiping the false idols, the pagan gods of the people who they had failed to drive out of the land as God had instructed them to do. In fact, they end up spending years in bondage and captivity by these nations in their history.

Then along comes David, a man who is after God's heart, a man who is willing to stand up and fight for God's Word in this world. David fights for his nation, so that God's people may enjoy

peace. David's legacy to his son Solomon was a nation that had peace on every side. However, that peace came at the price of warfare and bloodshed.

Yes, David was a charismatic leader, a man who loved God, and a man who wanted to create a place for God's people that was peaceful and protected, and for those reason many men of the nation of Isreal came at fought in his armies. And God enshrined the names of many of them in the Scriptures. So, we need to ask ourselves, why did God do that? Why did he ensure that the names and exploits of these warriors were recorded for future generations of followers? For our encouragement. God wants us to learn from their example. And there are a few lessons that we can take from his lessons for us and apply to our world today.

The first lesson is that we need to remember the price of freedom. Valient warriors do not fight for the sake of killing, they do not fight for payment, power or rewards. In fact, if you can think back to Sunday School and the story of David and Goliath, one of the little facts that is often missed is that Goliath had been out there for 40 days waiting for someone to come fight him. Saul had offered great wealth to anyone who would face Goliath, he said the man would marry into his family and that his family would be exempt from taxes for the rest of their lives. yet no one had stepped forward to face Goliath on the battlefield.

Do you remember what David said when he stepped forward to face Goliath? It was not about wealth, exception from taxes or the marriage possibilities. Instead, he steps forward because Goliath is blaspheming God, and David knows that he must do something.

1 Samuel 17:44-47

⁴⁵ Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. ⁴⁶ This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. And I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, ⁴⁷ and that all this assembly may know that the Lord saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hand."

David steps forward to do something great for God. He fights because there was a reason to fight – he answers the call of the Almighty God, not so that the nation of Israel would be exalted, but so that the entire world would know the God of Israel.

Why do we fight in the world today? Most nations take up arms for the sake of freedom. The veterans that served in the military today fought for the freedom of you and I and people all around the world. They paid the price with their bodies, their blood and their lives to preserve freedom. We need to remember that Freedom is not free, it always comes with a cost, a human cost.

This leads to the second lesson; we need to honor those who fought for our freedom. Abishai, the brother of Joab son of Zeruiah was chief of the Three. He raised his spear against 300 men, who he killed. He was honored among the heroes of the armies of David. He became the commander of an army, even though he was not originally part of the forces of David.

Veterans deserve to be honored. Most often today, when we think about the men and women who served, we thank them for their service, but we need to go one step further and honor them for their service. When we see a veteran on Remembrance Day. Or any other day we should be thanking them for their service, because they deserve our honor, our respect and our gratitude for the sacrifices that they have made. We should be doing so because of the sacrifices that they have made, so that we did not have to sacrifice ourselves.

Think about all of the ways in which you can show respect, honor and gratitude to the men and women who make sacrifices for our country in their service.

Next, we need to learn from their examples. Every hero of the army of David is described as standing their ground or taking a stand. They do not turn and run from a fight, they do not slink away in retreat, they stand their ground and trust in the Lord to lead them to victory in the face of opposition.

They do not stop to consider the number of people opposing them - Josheb-Basshebeth fights facing 800-to-1 odds.

They do not stop to consider whether or not their allies will stand with them - Shammah, who draws a line in his pea patch and says, "No Further!" Even though all his fellow soldiers ran, Shammah stood his ground.

They do not stop and consider how long their fight will be - Eleazar - who fought so long that his hand froze to his sword. Frozen? No, but he had gripped his sword for so long and so hard he couldn't open his hand.

They stop their ground and fight regardless of numbers, regardless of allies and regardless of duration because they fought for their God, they fought for God's people, and they knew that they would be victorious because it would all go according to God's will.

The last thing that we need to learn is that God's soldiers never fight alone. The Lord is always with them, and therefore we need to support them through our prayer.

As Christians we should be praying for those who are in harm's way. So, we need to call out to God in prayer for the men and women who serve around the world protecting those who need protection, serving those in need and bringing freedom to the oppressed.

Psalm 144:5-8

**⁵ Bow your heavens, O Lord, and come down!
 Touch the mountains so that they smoke!
⁶ Flash forth the lightning and scatter them;
 send out your arrows and rout them!
⁷ Stretch out your hand from on high;
 rescue me and deliver me from the many waters,
 from the hand of foreigners,
⁸ whose mouths speak lies
 and whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood.**

Pray for God to protect them from the enemies that they face, physically and spiritually. Pray for God to protect them from enemies that they face socially and mentally. Pray for God to protect them as they sacrifice their lives in service.

So today, let's thank God for our veterans, those who fought to protect and to free people and nations in the past. Those who are fighting to protect and free people and nations today and those who stand ready to fight, to protect and to free people in the future if they are called to do so. Pray for the veterans, pray for the soldiers, pray for their families. Pray the Lord would be with them and use them according to his will. Pray that their sacrifice would be sufficient to allow us to live in peace all the days of our lives.

Let us pray,

For Grace

We ask not of you, O Father,
 silver and gold,
 honor and glory,
 nor the pleasures of the world.
 Grant us grace to seek your Kingdom
 and your righteousness,
 and give us what we need for body and life.
 Behold, O Lord, our desire.
 May it be pleasing in your sight.
 We present our petition to you through our Lord Jesus Christ,
 who is at your right hand,
 our mediator and Advocate,
 through whom you sought us that we might seek you;
 your Word, through whom you made us and all things;
 your only Son, through whom you call us to adoption,
 who intercedes with you for us,
 and in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;
 to him, with you and the Holy Spirit,
 be all honor, praise, and glory, now and forever. Amen.

Source: Augustine of Hippo

Hymn #742: “Lead On, O King Eternal”

Lead on, O King eternal:
the day of march has come;
hence forth in fields of battle
thy tents shall be our home:
through days of preparation
thy grace has made us strong,
and now, O King eternal,
we lift our battle song.

Lead on, O King eternal,
till sin's fierce war shall cease,
and holiness shall whisper
the sweet Amen of peace;
for not with swords' loud clashing
nor roll of stirring drum,
but deeds of love and mercy,
thy reign of peace shall come.

Lead on, O King eternal:
we follow, not with fears,
for gladness breaks like morning
where'er thy face appears:
thy cross is lifted o'er us;
we journey in its light;
the crown awaits the conquest;
lead on, O God of might.

Invitation to Offering

Offering

Offertory Prayer

(Congregant Prepared)

Closing Hymn #209: “O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go”

O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
that in thine ocean depths its flow
may rich er, fuller be.

O Light that followest all my way,
 I yield my flickering torch to thee;
 my heart restores its borrowed ray,
 that in thy sunshine's blaze, its day
 may brighter, fairer be.

O Cross that liftest up my head,
 I dare not ask to fly from thee;
 I lay in dust life's glory dead,
 and from the ground there blossoms red,
 life that shall endless be.

Pastoral Prayer

All knowing Father
 We gather in this season of remembrance,
 grateful that you hold each one of us in your memory and your mystery,
 now and for all the time to come.
 Today, we remember all those who have served to uphold justice and freedom
 in the wars of the last century,
 in conflicts of our own generation,
 and in peacekeeping and relief efforts around the world.

Today 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 a great cost.

Father, we remember before you today the victims of conflict,
 hiding in forgotten corners of the world, longing for safety and peace.
 Especially we pray for people in Israel and Gaza who fear for their lives and their future.
 We also remember the victims of violence in our own country,
 still fearful and uncertain about what the future holds for them.
 Give us the mind to pray for their protection and recovery.

Father, we remember those around us who struggle day by day;
 those who must cope with the fear of forgetting those who matter most to them,
 and those who face the fear of being forgotten.
 Help us remember to reach out in comfort and support
 so that no one is forgotten.

Father, 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.

Father of all of eternity,
help us to remember you day by day.
Keep us prepared to shine the light of your gospel into the dark corners of this world
so that hope is renewed, and need is exposed
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit
as the one true living God and in whose name we pray. **AMEN.**

Benediction

May God the Father bless you,
God the Son heal you,
God the Holy Spirit give you strength.
May God the holy and undivided Trinity guard your body, save your soul,
and bring you safely to his heavenly country, where he lives and reigns for ever and
ever. **Amen.**