

# Baptist Peace Fellowship

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# Readings for Remembrance Day

## Remember

Remember Ypres, the Somme, Mons, and Verdun.

Remember the Western Desert, El Alamein, the Normandy beaches.

Remember Dresden, Hiroshima and the Burma Road.

Remember Korea, the Falkland Islands, Northern Island, Iraq.

Remember the courage, the comradeship, the ingenuity,  
the spirit of working together for a common cause,  
the planning together for a better world that would come with peace.

Remember the call to arms, the patriotic songs, the posters,  
the partings which were such sweet sorrow, the sound of the drum, the skirl of the pipe, the prayer that God would be on our side.

Remember the carnage, the colossal, stinking, bloody horror;  
the ripped bodies on the wire,  
the platoons of which only three out of forty lived.

Remember the widows of sixty years and more,  
the old men and women living now who never knew their fathers.

Remember the love that was lost, the wisdom wasted,  
the minds that were twisted and the limbs distorted.

Remember the wealth of nations being fired from guns, dropped as bombs: smashing schools, homes, factories, churches and hospitals;  
ruining crops, destroying trees,

Remember the hope of a whole generation

left to evaporate in the sands of a desert or sink forever in the oceans of the world.

Remember this day the children who will die while the world spends its wealth on arms; the young who have no work while others in their generation are trained to fight;

The ambulances that will not come while we argue about how many troop carriers we need;  
the research into disease left neglected while brilliant minds are used to study more effective destruction.

Remember the one who asked us to remember him.

*Graham Cook*

## Waste

Waste of Muscle, waste of Brain,  
Waste of Patience, waste of Pain,  
Waste of Manhood, waste of Health,  
Waste of Beauty, waste of Wealth,  
Waste of Blood and waste of Tears,  
Waste of Youth's most precious years,  
Waste of ways the Saints have trod,  
Waste of Glory, waste of God -  
War!

*G A Studdart Kennedy*

## The Dove

One olive tree above the flood  
and one branch is the sign of solid land again.  
You bring hope, messenger of peace.  
What olive leaves do we discover  
in the world's flood of pain?  
The fall of a dictator,  
a pact between old enemies,  
a government halving its spending on arms,  
a family embracing different cultures,  
a doctor's care in a war-torn land,  
and children with uncorrupted eyes.  
Jesus of the olive grove  
you knew the agony of doubt.  
Shall we be saved?

Yes, in the garden dawn;  
yes, in the upper room  
and yes, where the tree of life  
bears leaves to heal the nations.  
*Bernard Thorogood*

### **Pax Domini**

Peace is a presence  
not  
an absence of noise;  
not the void,  
the treaty'd end to battle,  
cessation of hostilities;  
Peace  
fought for,  
won,  
kept,  
proves but soulless illusion  
without  
Peace as gift,  
..."Peace I leave with you,  
my peace I give to you..."  
and the giver.  
*Kenneth Carveley*

### **There is only one way.....**

There is only one way to kill a wrong idea.  
It is to set forth a right idea.  
You cannot kill hatred and violence by  
    violence and hatred  
You cannot make men out of love with war by  
    making more effective war.  
Satan will not cast out Satan,  
though he will certainly seek to persuade us  
    that he will,  
since of all his devices this has been  
    throughout the ages the most successful.  
To make war in order to make peace!  
How beguiling an idea!  
*A Maude Royden*

*The following meditation for Remembrance Sunday was written at a war cemetery set in the edge of a cornfield near Arras. Looking at the row upon row of military gravestones and crosses in this area brought a vivid reminder of the cost of conflict whether in resisting aggression or peacemaking.*

### **At a war grave**

Christ,  
what is this sea of stone  
sown with the wheat,  
that cries for peace?  
What loves,  
bright promises and dreams  
cut stubble-short  
here  
lie buried deep?  
Christ  
who makes the tomb  
a place of living hope,  
unite their offering  
to your sacrifice;

By your power  
let not this grain  
remain  
fruitless and  
alone,  
but from it  
may we share a harvest  
rich in faith and love  
in which  
life begins anew,  
Lord, let this be so.  
*Kenneth Carveley*

# Prayers

## A Bidding Prayer

aware of the voices clamouring to be heard on  
Remembrance Day:  
those who demand that gratitude be shown to  
those who have made the supreme sacrifice  
and given lives for sovereign and country  
those to whom this is irrelevant past history  
those who wish to remember and expect others  
to do so  
those to who, today is but a re-opening of  
wounds and a delay in healing  
those who glory in war and those who loathe it  
those who see war as a cruel necessity and  
those who see it as an evil in which no-one  
should participate  
deliver us all from an insensitive polarising of  
attitudes.

## An Act of Remembrance

Let us remember before God the men and  
women of all nations who have died as a result  
of war - those who we have known and whose  
memory we treasure; those we never knew, and  
those who died unknown. We will remember  
all who have lived in hope, but died in vain -  
the tortured, the innocent, the starving and the  
exiled, the imprisoned, the oppressed and the  
disappeared....

*Then may be said,* ‘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’

*All then say...* ‘We will remember them’

*Silence follows for two minutes*

*Then is said:* ‘Living God, by whose love we  
are united with one another across the  
boundaries of time and space, bring us to a new  
remembrance of your love and life, reflected in  
earth and sky, and every person who ever lived.  
Teach us to be reconciled to one another and to  
you, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

## An Intercession

Living Lord, in a dark hour you spoke of the  
gift of peace, we seek that gift for ourselves.  
Grant us, we pray, the inner serenity which  
you alone can give that we may become  
messengers of peace to a strife-torn world.

Leader: Give peace in our time, O Lord

**Response: Give peace in our hearts, O Lord**

We pray for all who suffer for their fidelity to  
the calling to be your witnesses; all who suffer  
for trying to live by the truth they have  
received and all who are slandered, ill-treated,  
falsely imprisoned or tortured. Crucified and  
risen Lord, may they, sharing your anguish,  
know that they will also share your victory.

Leader: Give peace in our time, O Lord

**Response: Give peace in our hearts, O Lord**

We pray for all who suffer as a result of the  
wickedness and folly of others. We especially  
pray for those who suffer from the breakdown  
of law and order, or from the absence of just  
and humane laws and are thus denied the  
freedom to realise their birthright as your  
children on this earth.

Leader: Give peace in our time, O Lord

**Response: Give peace in our hearts, O Lord**

We pray for those who are fighting; injury,  
disfigurement, death, their constant  
companions; nerves and bodies strained  
beyond endurance, the streams of compassion  
drying up within them, their only goal the  
destruction of the ‘enemy’.

Whatever the colour of their skin - we pray for  
them.

Whatever the sound of their tongue - we pray  
for them.

Whatever the insignia they wear - we pray for  
them.

Leader: Give peace in our time, O Lord

**Response: Give peace in our hearts, O Lord**

We pray for all those who have been broken in battle; for those who weep and for those who can no longer weep; for those who feel the anguish and for those who have lost the capacity to feel for all prisoners and for all jailers; for those who exist in war-torn lands and for those who no longer have a homeland.

Leader: Give peace in our time, O Lord

**Response: Give peace in our hearts, O Lord**

We pray for all those who stir up strife; for all who make a profit out of the misery of others; for all who are led into vice as they seek a momentary forgetfulness; and for all who believe that war is inevitable.

We bring to you particular needs .....  
and we remember those who have died.

Lord, we pray that you may hold us fast amidst all the evils of this world that at the last we may enter into the peace and joy of your kingdom.

Leader: Give peace in our time, O Lord

**Response: Give peace in our hearts, O Lord**

**A Blessing**

Grace and mercy, righteousness and truth have come to us from God. Jesus has declared it, and the Spirit has made it known. The light shines, and the darkness cannot overcome it

**All: Lead me from death to life, from falsehood to truth**

**Lead me from despair to hope, from fear to trust.**

**Lead me from hate to love, from war to peace.**

**Let peace fill our hearts, our world, our universe.**

Mercy and truth are met together,  
righteousness and peace have kissed each other. The peace of Christ be with you.

**All: And also with you**

*(all may share a sign of peace, before leaving)*

**Prayer**

O Lord, our hiding place, give us wisdom, we pray, to look for no hiding place apart from You in life or death.

Now hide us In Your own presence from the provoking of others  
and keep us so from the strife of tongues.  
Teach us to seek peace and pursue it.

*Christina Rossetti*

**Prayer**

There was a time, Lord,  
when an eye for an eye  
and a tooth for a tooth,  
though brutal,  
limited the damage.

Now nations can maim or kill  
those they do not see;  
technology has made war  
impersonal and people so cheap.

In the face of this  
I sense my inestimable weakness  
and rely on your inestimable strength.

*From: 'Pray Now',*

*Church of Scotland Panel on Worship*

**A Responsive Prayer**

**WOMEN:** We live in two worlds: the one that is and the one that might come to be.

Nothing is ordained for us, neither delight nor defeat, neither peace nor war. Life flows and we must freely choose. We can, if we will, change the world that is into the world that ought to be, as we are taught of old:

**ALL: Let us depart from evil & do good;  
seek peace & pursue it.**

**MEN:** Let us be disciples of the prophets of all times, loving peace and pursuing it, loving all human beings, and bringing them to the Word of God.

**ALL: Let us depart from evil & do good;  
seek peace & pursue it.**

**WOMEN:** For God calls us to harden not our hearts nor shut our hands against the poor, our kin; we must open our hands to them. Nor shall we stand idly by while our neighbours bleed.

**ALL: Let us depart from evil & do good;  
seek peace & pursue it.**

**MEN:** Let justice well up as the waters and righteousness as a mighty stream, for justice and right ways shall lead to peace; it shall bring quietness and confidence for ever.

**ALL: Let us depart from evil & do good;  
seek peace & pursue it.**

**WOMEN:** The we shall sit under our vines and under our fig trees, and none shall make us afraid again.

**ALL: Let us depart from evil & do good;  
seek peace & pursue it.**

**MEN:** Peace will remain a distant vision until we do the work of peace ourselves. We must not be content to make peace in our families and in our communities alone; we must go forth and work for peace wherever people struggle in its cause.

**ALL: O God of peace, inspire us to banish hatred and oppression, war and bloodshed. Help us to establish one human family, doing your will in love and peace. Help us to make the world a sanctuary of goodness and blessing, compassion and mercy. From this day on, let us see the world in a new light: Justice, justice in peace shall we pursue!**

# Prayer Based upon Revelation

Read Revelation 6:1-8 and 19:11-13

Lord, we have seen the White-horsed Rider in our world, going out to conquer and subdue. We have seen conquering and subduing done in the name of freedom and democracy, and in the name of the fight against terrorism, and we are ashamed. We seem only to be able to solve our differences in history and our varying perspectives on life by means of violence and bloodshed. Help us to change and to find new ways to live together.

**Bidding:** May the darkness and evil of this world be transformed into goodness and light.

**Response:** By the power of the crucified and risen Christ.

Lord we have seen the Red-horsed Rider in our world carrying a sword in his hand with which to kill. We have seen horrible examples of slaughter and killing with sword, machetes, handguns, automatic weapons and suicide bombs. It seems as if no one is safe, on the streets, in churches or mosques, in restaurants nor hotels. Countless other acts of savagery, not so well publicized, fill our world. Help us to change this and support those who fall victims of such senseless rage.

**Bidding:** May the darkness and evil of this world be transformed into goodness and light.

**Response:** By the power of the crucified and risen Christ.

Lord, we have seen the Black-horsed Rider in our world, weighing out credits and debits, surplus and lack in such a way that the hungry are forgotten and the satiated left with more than enough. We are aware of countless millions in our world whose condition is made worse by our positions of privilege. Help us to have the courage to change this, and reflect in our living the scales of justice and truth.

**Bidding:** May the darkness and evil of this world be transformed into goodness and light.

**Response:** By the power of the crucified and risen Christ.

Lord, we have seen the Pale-horsed Rider named Death in our world, followed by his companion Hades. We know of the cunning ways in which they operate, bringing misery throughout the world through plague and sickness, famine and disease. We are all too aware of the spectre that is AIDs and the devastation being wrought above all in Africa, where whole villages are wiped out and hope dwindles away. Help us to fight this, and to stand up to death and his minions, declaring them to be powerless in the face of divine Truth.

**Bidding:** May the darkness and evil of this world be transformed into goodness and light.

**Response:** By the power of the crucified and risen Christ.

Lord we have also seen another white-horsed Rider in our world, whose name is Faithful and True. He bears a robe dipped in blood and answers to the Word of God. Help us to follow him bravely and courageously. You have come to us in the person of your Son, Jesus Christ, the sacrificed Lamb who is worthy. In his name we dare to pray these things.

**AMEN.**

*Larry Kreitzer*

# Resources for Children

## Prayers for and by children

A very good selection of prayers written by and for children to voice their concerns in an ever-changing world, including subjects such as friends and families, feelings and attitudes, war and peace, is 'Prayers for a Fragile World'.

This was compiled by Carol Watson and published by Lion (originally available through Traidcraft). Below are some examples from the book of particular relevance in the context of Remembrance Sunday; you may also wish to use some as examples to encourage your children to write appropriate prayers that can be used in a service.

Father

Thank you for life.

Thank you for people.

Thank you for all the races of the world.

You made us different shapes, sizes and colours-

each with a language and culture of our own.

Although we are so different, yet we are the same.

We are all human beings.

We share the same needs, desires, hopes & hurts.

Thank you Lord, that whatever our race or colour,

we are all your creation and you love us.

Help us to love each other.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Father,

How can you bear it?

What must you think when you see....

the anger

the hatred

the killing

and the endless wars?

What must you feel

When you see....

the bombs,

the guns,

the tanks

and the missiles?

Can you forgive us for the cruelty we inflict on one another?

We are sorry, Lord.

We are not worthy of your love.

Father,

forgive

the tension,

frustration,

anger,

jealousy

and spite.....

that is in our lives.

Help us to love our enemies

forgive those who harm us

and try to understand

each others problems.

Dear heavenly Father, Hello God,

Wars have been raging between Can you hear me

countries for years, and many lives above all the noise?

have been lost for no reason at all

It's us fighting

People are vain and greedy one another and want more power and money.

Please help us to be happy Please help us with what we've got. to stop all our wars

Amen Amen

## The Weight of a Snowflake

"Tell me the weight of a snowflake", a coaltit asked a wild dove. Nothing more than nothing", was the answer.

In that case, I must tell you a marvellous story", the coaltit said. "I sat on the branch of a fir, close to its trunk, when it began to snow - not heavily, not in a raging blizzard: no, just like in a dream, without a sound and without any violence. Since I did not have anything better to do, I counted the snowflakes settling on the twigs and needles of my branch. Their number was exactly 3,741,952. When the 3,741,953rd dropped onto the branch - nothing more than nothing, as you say - the branch broke off."

Having said that the coaltit flew away.

The dove, since Noah's time an authority on the matter, thought about the story for a while, and finally said to herself: "Perhaps there is only one person's voice lacking for peace to come to the world."

*In 'New Fables, Thus spoke the Marabou' by Kurt Kaufer*

## "Tusk, Tusk", by David McKee

A Red Fox Picture Book, published by Random House Children's Books, 20 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 2SA; first published 1978, Red Fox Edition 1990

(suitable for 5-8 year olds).

### Summary of the story:

Once there were black and white elephants who could not live together. They decided to fight each other and all were killed, apart from a few of each colour who had hidden in the jungle rather than fight. Years later the grandchildren emerged from the jungle - they were grey! They began to live in peace until they noticed that some of them had big ears and some of them had small ears....

### Ways of using the book:

(i) Read it to a small group, show the pictures and then ask questions such as "Why did the black and white elephants fight each other?" The last questions should be "What do you think happens next?" and "What would be a good ending?"

(ii) An adult might tell the story (perhaps elaborated as appropriate) while the children mime the actions, holding pictures of elephants on long sticks. The peace-loving elephants could hide behind a screen covered in leaves (painted, made earlier). End the story as it does in the book. The message can be made clear by following up the action with a suitable prayer, probably asking forgiveness for the way we feel threatened by differences, our inability to live together in a diverse world, and that we continue to fight each other, generation after generation. This could be prepared in previous Sundays by the children and presented in a suitable slot in the Remembrance Sunday service.

# An Act of Remembrance and Reconciliation

*This act of worship embraces the griefs and thankfulness which people experience on Remembrance Day, and attempts to link the worshippers in solidarity with all who suffer the effects of war and conflict. It can easily be adapted to include current areas of war and concern. It can also be used as a springboard for prayers and action for peace. During the response to each section a member of the congregation or the reader might place a flower (a white poppy) on a map of the world or in front of a globe. All members of the congregation are invited to give a sign of their commitment to work for peace. If possible, this should be linked with a situation where the congregation or individual member is already involved or concerned. It could take the form of signing a petition, or letter of protest or solidarity, or making a financial offering to the work of a peace group or campaign.*

**LEADER:** Let us remember the two World Wars, and other conflicts which have devastated the lives of so many in the last 100 years; we think especially of those known to us.

**READER 1:** We think of those who fought and gave their lives in a spirit of patriotism and duty; those who went reluctantly to a war not of their own making, and those who refused to fight through conscientious objection and were pilloried for their stand.

We think of those who did not return, or those who returned injured or scarred in body or mind, and of refugees unable to return to their own homes.

We think of those left grieving and bereft, struggling to rebuild their shattered lives.

**ALL: We give thanks for acts of heroism and courage**  
**We rage at lives lost in futility and fear.**

**LEADER:** Let us remember the horrific effects of our use of, and experimentation with, nuclear weapons.

**READER 2:** We think of the suffering of the people of Japan, victims of our weapons of war, and those of the Pacific Islands who have suffered in our heedless nuclear testing.

We think of those who must choose between the physical and moral risks of working in the arms trade, and the cost of losing their livelihood.

We think of those who by their constant vigilance in peace camps act as a challenge to

the morality of our reliance on military defence.

We think of those who campaign for disarmament, and those involved in patient negotiations to secure peace.

**ALL: We give thanks for acts of heroism and courage**  
**We rage at lives lost in futility and fear.**

**LEADER:** Let us remember those engaged in the struggle for justice in Central and South America.

**READER 3:** We think of those whose compassion compels them into political action for justice.

We think of those under threat of torture and death, and those forced to leave their homes in fear.

We think of those whose friends and relatives have disappeared into the blank walls of official silence and unanswered questions.

**ALL: We give thanks for acts of heroism and courage**  
**We rage at lives lost in futility and fear.**

**LEADER:** Let us remember those who are working and fighting for peace and justice in the Middle East and within the continent of Africa.

**READER 4:** We think of those who are torn between their desire for peaceful protest and the demand for armed struggle, and of those facing the despair of seeing no solution but violence.

We think of those rising to claim their dignity in a system which denies it, and of the privileged who risk loss to speak out in challenge and solidarity.

**ALL: We give thanks for acts of heroism and courage**

**We rage at lives lost in futility and fear.**

**LEADER:** Let us remember those caught up in violence and strife in Northern Ireland and Afghanistan.

**READER 5:** We think of those who are the victims of illegal terrorism and of authorised brutality.

We think of those who are caught up in a spiral of violence and revenge, and of those who grow up in a world shaped by fear and anger. We think of those who live with the risk and vulnerability of trying to create a space for reconciliation.

**ALL: We give thanks for acts of heroism and courage**

**We rage at lives lost in futility and fear.**

**LEADER:** Let us remember those who, in living memory, we have been taught to label our enemies.

**READER 6:** We think of the Germans, the Italians and the Japanese, of the Russians and Cubans, the IRA and the Argentines, the Iraqis and the ???

We think of them, people like ourselves, remembering their dead, struggling to forgive and overcome bitterness, praying and hoping for peace.

**ALL: We give thanks for acts of heroism and courage**

**We rage at lives lost in futility and fear.**

**LEADER:** God of Peace, Lover of Justice, Take our thanksgiving and turn it into active compassion for the victims of aggression and violence, whether they are labelled aliens or allies, enemies or friends. May they experience the grace of forgiving, and the healing power of love.

Take our rage, and turn it into potent anger at all forms of injustice, all attempts to dominate others through violence, all identification of right with force.

May our anger burn until we see peace built of the foundations of justice and freedom from oppression.

*(At this point people are invited to make their sign of commitment to peace-making, as explained in the preface, to the singing of a simple song or chant e.g. one of the versions of Dona Nobis Pacem from Taize or Iona).*

**ALL: God of Peace, Lover of Justice, take our thanksgiving and our rage as we share in your work of making peace**

# An Alternative Act of Remembrance

## Introduction

The last century saw the war to end all wars  
- and another world war within 25 years  
The last decade saw conflicts within many  
lands,  
between many ethnic groups  
in Africa, the Balkans, Asia... (include as  
appropriate)  
The last year has seen fragile moves towards  
peace reversed,  
through actions and lack of action  
in Israel/Palestine, Congo, Angola... (include as  
appropriate)  
Lord, we name you as the Prince of Peace,  
who urged us to love our enemies,  
to do good to those who hate us.  
We stand in silence before you now as we  
remember  
all those who have perished in war  
all those who have lost limbs, homes, family,  
county...

*(A period of silence)*

We pledge ourselves to work for peace and  
reconciliation  
in our homes, our neighbourhood, our country  
and our world.

## A Meditation: Poppies

'In Flanders fields the poppies blow, between  
the crosses,  
row on row.'  
Blood red poppies, symbols of lives lost in  
bloody battle,  
of bodies disfigured, of families shattered,  
... but a sign too of new life in war-ravaged  
soil.  
The red dissolves to white as the blood is  
drained.  
White poppies rise, symbols of lives lost  
as a consequence of war,  
of bodies maimed, of families broken,  
... but a sign too of peace, of hope,  
of working together across the barriers

for justice, forgiveness and reconciliation.

## A Blessing

Send us out to be beacons of peace  
in a dark world of conflict  
Make us instruments of peace  
for whoever we meet  
and wherever we go,  
In the name of the Prince of Peace,  
Our Lord and saviour, Jesus Christ  
Amen.

*Gillian Collins*

# A Litany of Remembrance

L: Sisters and brothers in Jesus Christ, let us remember those who have lived, worked and spoken of God's peace in this and previous times.....

Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace

**R: Stand with us now.**

L: Mary Magdalene, witness to the resurrection

**R: Stand with us now.**

L: Paul of Tarsus, apostle of peace

**R: Stand with us now.**

L: All the saints who have trod the path of peace

**R: Stand with us now.**

*(all are invited to add names)*

**R: Stand with us now.**

L: All who have died in war, since the 'war to end all wars'

**R: Stand with us now.**

L: Let us stand in silence with all who witness for peace – because the Prince of Peace is among us and is preparing to take up his cross

*Silence*

L: Jesus says, "Whoever would be a follower of mine must forget self, take up the cross and follow me"

Jesus also says, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God"

## Penitential Prayers

Leader: Lord Jesus, by your cross and resurrection

**Response: deliver us**

Leader: by your witness to the truth

**Response: deliver us**

Leader: by your passion and death

**Response: deliver us**

Leader: by your victory over the grave

**Response: deliver us**

Leader: From the desire for power

**Response: deliver us**

Leader: from the conspiracy of silence

**Response: deliver us**

Leader: from the worship of weapons

**Response: deliver us**

Leader: from the slaughter of the peoples

**Response deliver us**

Leader: from the nightmare of hunger

**Response: deliver us**

Leader: from the peace that is no peace

**Response: deliver us**

Leader: from the security that is no security

**Response: deliver us**

Leader: from the politics of terror

**Response: deliver us**

Leader: from the despair of this age

**Response deliver us**

Leader: By the light of the gospel

**Response: give us peace**

Leader: By your healing of the nations

**Response give us peace**

Leader: By hunger and thirst for justice

**Response: give us peace**

Leader: By the coming of your kingdom

**Response: give us peace**

# Remembrance Hymns

## For what shall we pray?

1. What shall we pray for those who died  
those on whose death our lives relied?  
Silenced by war but not denied,  
God give them peace.
2. What shall we pray for those who mourn  
friendships and love, their fruit unborn?  
Though years have passed, hearts still are  
torn;  
God give them peace.
3. What shall we pray for those who live  
tied to the past they can't forgive.  
haunted by terrors they relive?  
God give them peace.
4. What shall we pray for those who know  
nothing of war, and cannot show  
grief or regret for friend or foe?  
God give them peace.
5. What shall we pray for those who fear  
war, in some guise, may reappear  
looking attractive and sincere?  
God give them peace.
6. God give us peace and, more than this,  
show is the path where justice is;  
and let us never be remiss  
working for peace that lasts.

## A Hymn to Peace

1. This Vision of Peace  
How old and how new!  
The greater our need,  
The clearer it grew.  
Yet side-by-side nations,  
drummed up to resist,  
Still glare across frontiers  
That cease to exist.

2. This Vision of Peace  
Is making us one;  
No longer we ask  
Who lost and who won.  
Concern for each other  
Is healing old wounds,  
For all is forgiven  
Where goodwill abounds.
3. This Vision of Peace  
It soars from above;  
It springs from the heart  
Of crucified love.  
Deride it, defeat it,  
It shames our despairs.  
How blest are the peace-makers,  
God's Kingdom is theirs.

Fred Pratt Green

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*Tune: Paderborn*

## A Hymn for Peace

1. O Christ who by a cross made peace your  
sign,  
who gives your peace in water, bread and  
wine:  
O Spirit Christ who is our spirit's home,  
teach us the secret of the true shalom.
2. We speak of peace when in our hearts we  
war  
and, unforgiving, keep our grudges sore;  
we promise peace while yet we strive to  
win,  
and in our enemy see not our kin.
3. Two deaths now face the starving and the  
fed -  
the blinding bomb, the simple lack of bread;  
with riches of the earth at our command,  
from weaponry to welcome turn our hand.

3. The selfishness which is our human curse,  
the arsenal of hatred which we nurse -  
all are dispelled when in our hearts we say:  
"There is no way to peace - peace is the  
way."

*Shirley Murray*

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*Tune: Sursum Corda*

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The hymn below is from an earlier generation, included in both Psalms & Hymns and the Christian Endeavour Hymnal. One of the older members of the BPF felt this to be a hymn worthy of wider knowledge even now, so the version given below has been altered slightly from the original, to make it more accessible for today's generation.

1. Through centuries of sin and strife  
Has streamed the crimson flood,  
As man with scant regard for life  
Has shed his brother's blood:  
Now lift your banner, Prince of Peace  
And let the cruel war cry cease.
2. In war, 'mid uproar loud and rude  
Your servants seek repose.  
See conflict day by day renewed  
And brothers turned to foes.  
Then lift your banner, Prince of Peace  
Make wrongs among your people cease.
3. Still heavenwards the poor upraise  
Their loud unanswered cry:  
But wealth its selfish interest pays  
And needs forgotten lie.  
Lift high your banner, Prince of Peace  
Let greed retreat and love increase.

4. Your gospel, Lord, is grace and love  
O send it far abroad  
Till every heart receptive prove  
And praise the reigning God.  
Come lift your banner, Prince of Peace  
And give the weary world release.

*J.Hampden Gurney (altered)*

*Tune: Tydi a roddaist (or Palmyra)*

## A Hymn for Remembrance Sunday

1. God! As with silent hearts we bring to mind  
how hate and war diminish humankind,  
we pause, and seek in worship to increase  
our knowledge of the things that make for  
peace
2. Hallow our will as humbly we recall  
the lives of those who gave and give their  
all.  
We thank you, Lord, for women, children,  
men  
who seek to serve in love, today as then.
3. Give us deep faith to comfort those who  
mourn,  
high hope to share with all the newly born,  
strong love in our pursuit of human worth;  
"lest we forget" the future of this earth.
4. So, Prince of Peace, disarm our trust in  
power,  
teach us to coax the plant of peace to flower.  
May we, impassioned by your living Word,  
remember forward to a world restored.

*Fred Kaan*

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*Tune: Stoner Hill*

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# Two Meditations

## Remembrance Sunday - A Personal View

On Remembrance Sunday many people look back with sadness, particularly those who lost family or friends, or suffered physically or mentally themselves in past conflicts. I believe that as Christians we should not take life and that war is not Jesus' way of overcoming aggression and injustice. He commanded us to love our enemies. Nevertheless I feel we must sympathise with all people who look back in sorrow or anger at what happened as the result of wars. We should comfort those who mourn and remember that God feels for all who suffer. We should then go on to encourage people to consider that the debt we owe to those who died is to work for a peaceful world, that those who gave their lives did not do so in vain. It is a great sadness to think that the 1914-1918 War was supposed to end all wars.

I think we should pray and work together that wars should be no more, that future generations should not have to suffer from man's inhumanity to man. Instead of taking up arms to kill we should attempt to negotiate and find means of reconciliation between hostile factions, Wars do not result in lasting peace. It is up to us all to ask forgiveness for the way we have spoilt God's creation and seek ways to show that God loves all his people and wants us to live together in peace.

Jesus said, "Pray for those who persecute you."  
Paul said, "Conquer evil with good".

*Pat Kember*

## Yorkhill and Yarrows

Our fourth child Colin was born with a hair lip and cleft palate. When he was about nine months old, he went into Yorkhill Children's Hospital in Glasgow for an operation on his lip.

He had his operation on a Monday morning: on Tuesday the wee soul looked as though he'd

had a fight with Frank Bruno. I still remember his accusing eyes, how, even puffed up and half-closed, they managed to convey his bewilderment and offence. It was almost as though he were asking, "Why are you letting this happen to me? Why am I suffering? Why don't you do something, my Daddy?" And it's so hard to take, for no matter how much you love the child, you are impotent to answer or take away the pain.

As I left the hospital that morning, I found myself thinking about the offence of life; thinking of the vast numbers of my sister and brother human beings for whom life is an offensive puzzle. The suffering children of Africa sprang immediately to mind, as do the many suffering children around the world today. To the humiliated, the abused and oppressed of the world, surely life is an offence ... and that cannot be God's will; cannot be the will of the God whose demand for justice is like a drumbeat running right through the Bible.

As I left the hospital that Tuesday morning, despite my discomfort at being unable to do anything for Colin, I was full of admiration for the surgeon's skill, the nurses' care and the dedicated and cheerful work of the myriad of ancillary workers. My mind boggled, and still boggles, at the array of magical and wonderful tools of the healing people, the X-ray machines, the dialysis machines, the lasers, the microscopes, even the humble drips that are so often, literally, life-givers. The fruits of our modern technology.

I left Yorkhill Hospital that Tuesday morning to go to Yarrows, the famous warship builders on the River Clyde, where I was the industrial chaplain. Here was another community of people, men and women whose incredible skills, imagination and inventiveness was every bit as wonderful as those of the hospital. From being among the hospital workers who make

up a community of healing, I was now among a community of workers whose great skills were being used to create tools of death. . . . For sadly, that's what warships are, and once we've built them, the best we can hope for is that they will never be used.

The contrast between what we ask decent, hardworking folk to do at Yorkhill and Yarrow's struck me so clearly that day . . . and has never left me.

"The war to end all wars" has been fought, and still from here to the furthest-flung corners of the globe, the clamour for more and more and better and better arms continues unabated. The dream of creating "a land fit for heroes" has been dreamt, and still old men sleep under railway arches, children are abused, women despair.

When will we ever learn?

The great prophets of old consistently told of the faith of those who put their trust in chariots. They were doomed.

I attended the launch of a Type 22 Frigate, the last of its kind, HMS Cumberland. She was launched by the Princess of Wales. Intoning the traditional words, "I name this ship Cumberland. May God bless her and all who sail in her", she cracked the bottle of champagne on the magnificent bow. The shipwrights down below knocked away the crucial stocks, and, so slowly at first, but quickly gathering momentum, she slid into the water, the environment for which she was created.

When the time came for her to finally leave the yard, she sailed down the river, a magnificent and awesome sight, armed to the teeth with all the latest and most sophisticated weapons that modern technology can produce. There was no denying her beauty, nor the pride in the building of her, yet the best we can hope for was that she should never fire her mighty guns in anger; that one day she would go to the

scrapyard with every missile on board still in its silo.

*Erik Cramb*

# Poppies: White or Red - Either, Neither or Both?

In discussing the wearing of poppies on Remembrance Sunday it was clear that different personal responses existed even in a small group of BPF members meeting together. Below is given some information concerning the white poppy, which can often be misunderstood. There then follow three examples of individual responses which you may find helpful to read. Perhaps you can encourage members of your church to explain their stances in a similar way, but obviously personal to them. This could also form a useful topic for a children's spot.

## The White Poppy

To wear a white poppy is to question the concept of militarism, and how we remember and honour those who died in the wars of this century, civilians as well as combatants, foes as well as friends. The white poppy is not a sign of disrespect to the Haig Fund or the endeavours of the military, but an acknowledgement that non-combatants have also died or lost loved ones as a consequence of war. It is also a recognition of the tragic loss of life experienced by both sides of a militaristic dispute; many of the personnel on both sides were reluctant conscripts who died for a war they did not understand or acknowledge. It recognises the thousands of non-combatants on both sides that are inadvertent victims of wars carried out in their supposed interest. The white poppy was first introduced in 1933., and increasing numbers of people are rejecting the conventional view that wars, armies and military exploits are an acceptable way of solving conflict.

White poppies can be obtained from the Peace Pledge Union, 1 Peace Passage, London N7 0BT  
Tel: 020 7424 9444 Web: <http://www.ppu.org.uk/>

## Why I wear a red and a white poppy

The red poppy is worn to remember with sadness men and women in the armed forces who were killed in the 1st or 2nd World War. It can also be worn to remember any ordinary man, woman or child killed as a result of the 1st or 2nd World War. Many people in my church (Queen's Road, Coventry) wear the red poppy to remember people in Coventry just going about their ordinary business who were killed especially in the air raids on November 13th and 14th 1940 and April 10th & 11th 1941. I wear it to remember my father who was in the Merchant Navy and who was killed at the beginning of the 2nd World War. He was not in the "armed forces". His boat ferried harmless cargoes between countries and it was blown up when it hit a magnetic mine. I was just over 2 years old when he was killed so I cannot remember him at all. I wear the white poppy as a poppy of peace to remember especially people who have been killed all over the world directly or indirectly through wars. I remember with shame that many of the weapons have been made in this country and sold (for profit) when the wars have nothing to do with this country. I remember too that these weapons have been bought with money which should have been spent on clean water supplies, health, food and education provision. I believe what it says in the Bible. Jesus says "Love your enemies"; the 6th commandment says "Thou shalt not kill".

*(Margaret Betteridge)*

## Why I do not wear a red poppy

(a) Although a pacifist, I have an interest in the history of the 1st World War and over the past 10 years or so have visited many of the war graves in Northern France and Belgium. The symbol of the red poppy there is a very potent and moving one, especially seeing swathes of the flowers at former battle sights. But to me it is a symbol of horror and bloodshed: indeed this may well have been the response in the early days when it became the symbol of remembrance, but the slogan so often used

to sell the red poppy "Wear your poppy with Pride" is completely alien to me and one to which I cannot subscribe. I wear my poppy with sadness and as a pledge to work for peace. I find the white poppy is the only one I can wear to indicate my feelings unambiguously.

*(Gillian Collins)*

(b) The red poppy reminds me that my father, whom I never knew, was killed in the 1914-1918 war, the war that was said to end all wars. Mother married again when I was about 4 years old and we lived in a different, unpalatable environment of poverty and strange surroundings. I have often wondered if this, following the traumas and deprivations of the war years, precipitated her death when I was about 7 years of age. If the casualties of war, such as the maimed, blind and others affected by being in the war, are in need of charitable support such as the Earl Haig's Fund, why have not succeeding governments adequately provided for their continual daily needs as they are presumably accepted as heroes like all who were killed in so-called wars of necessity? It is so unfair to serve one's country and then be asked to remember them by the purchase of a poppy. For their sake I usually buy a poppy but do not wear it.

*(Frank Smith)*

# Voices from Hiroshima and Nagasaki

(6th and 9th August 1945)

*When the bomb exploded, heat, light, gamma radiation and pressure were all released, burning many people beyond recognition and simply obliterating others. Hundreds received mass cremation and others died unrecorded after fleeing to the country and mountains.*

60 years ago the atom bombs were dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The word 'Hibakusha' is the Japanese term for the victims of these bombings. These stories tell something of the horror of the moment and the prolonged suffering caused by the bombings.

It was a very hot morning on 6th August. The sun was shining brightly, I was polishing a pair of sunglasses. Suddenly there was a flash – a blazing light – that turned the sky into a furnace. For a moment I could not open my eyes. Then I grabbed my helmet and ran to the window, thinking that it was a small bomb. I looked out and saw a boy – a 16-year-old boy – begin to melt, his skin crumbling off from the head down. His eyes were still open in horror. At first I thought the bomb had only hit our plant. Then the blast pushed me back into the room which began to cave in on top of me ... I crawled out from under the rubble and shouted "I'll help you, I'll help you". But there were very few who could be helped. About 1,500 of the workers were already dead, another 500 would die the next day. Within an hour there were between 10,000 and 30,000 charred bodies floating in the river.

*Masaniro Sadanaga*

oooOOOooo

On August 9th Mikiko Yamada, then a 16-year-old student nurse, was on her way home to Isahaya, 30 kilometres west of Nagasaki city. She went to Nagasaki on 19th August and stayed for a week, helping the injured and removing corpses, at a distance of 2.5 kilometres from the epicentre. Speaking of her memories she says, "By no word can I describe the terrible sight of the dead and injured".

While engaged in first-aid activities she began to develop acute symptoms of diarrhoea which was followed over the years by the onset of more than ten complex diseases that spread all over her body; a cranial tumour, liver trouble, nervous disorder and so on. Later she married and suffered eight miscarriages before being able to bear her first child, a son. She says, "I want everybody to understand that many Hibakusha are still suffering in this way, simply from the secondary radiation of the ravaged city.

*Hibakusha, edited and published by the Japanese Confederation of A- and H-bomb Suffers Organizations*

oooOOOooo

The city was in flames, but after three days we had to go in and try to find the people and take them out of the ruins. .... sometimes a wash-basin contained nine or ten people, because their size had shrunk to such a small amount... you just couldn't believe this was a whole person. There was no time to dig individual graves; we had to dig mass graves. They tried to identify people by jewellery or belongings, but many could not be identified.

*Eye witness account, The World at War, Thames Television*

oooOOOooo

It's been a strange sort of peace since August 6th 1945, when a small atomic bomb killed 140,000 people in Hiroshima. We've seen about 200 wars fought with conventional weapons, killing some 50 million people. That didn't greatly upset us – most of the victims lived in the developing world, far from our homes. But we were involved: most of the

weapons that killed them were made in the  
factories of Europe and North America.

*Glen Williams, updated figures from Peace  
Pledge Union*

oooOOOooo

To remember the past is to commit oneself to  
the future. To remember Hiroshima is to abhor  
nuclear war. To remember Hiroshima is to  
commit oneself to peace. Let us promise our  
fellow human beings that we will work  
untiringly for dis-armament and the  
banishment of all nuclear weapons; let us  
replace violence and hate with confidence and  
caring. Peace must always be the aim; peace  
pursued and protected in all circumstances. Let  
us embark upon the steep and difficult path of  
peace.

*Pope John Paul II*

# Voices from the Great War

This pack was originally compiled in 1998. November 1998 marked the 80th anniversary of the end of the 1st World War, the Great War as it became known. Below are some extracts taken from the book '1914-1918: Voices & Images of the Great War', accounts and impressions from those who lived through it (compiled by Lyn MacDonald, published by Penguin, 1991).

We spent our second Christmas of the war in Senlis. Strict orders had been issued against any form of truce on the trench line. The Germans caught one of our men on patrol and we shelled them when they started singing carols. But it is a commentary on modern war that commanders should fear lest the soldiers on each side become friendly. Our soldiers have no quarrel with 'Fritz', save during the heat of battle, or in retaliation for some blow below the belt. If whole armies fraternised politicians on both sides would be sore set to solve their problems. Yet it is possible that if there had been a truce for a fortnight on the whole trench line at any time after the Battle of the Somme the war might have ended.

*Colonel W.N. Nicholson, Suffolk Regiment,  
Staff Officer attached, Highland Division*

Last night a strange thought came to me. I was with a Working party in the trenches. We had come up the communication trench, zig-zagged our way thither for a mile and a half or more. Now this time of year the communication trench is a thing of beauty. On either side the piled earth has covered itself with vegetation, fresh thick grass, heavy growths of bunched white daisies interspersed with blood-red poppies. The daisies are, in fact, camomile, so I am assured by one who is by way of being a botanical expert. And through the camomile and poppies we make our way to the line. Through camomile and poppies we make our way back to rest and peace for a brief spell. Through camomile and poppies are borne the wounded, their bandages of white splashed with scarlet, like the flowers themselves, and

through camomile and poppies passes the last sad procession when, over the line, death has suddenly shaken his dread spear.

*2nd Lieutenant Ewart Richardson, 4th  
Battalion, Prince of Wales' Own (Yorkshire  
Regiment)*

Before we left England our Chaplain preached several sermons on the effect of danger and suffering on men out here. He said that being constantly in danger of losing one's life made men think of the serious side of life and fly to religion as the only source of comfort. My own experience is quite the contrary. In the bombing raid I was on recently the language was so bad that even the men themselves commented upon it. Men go to their deaths with curses on their lips and religion is never mentioned or thought of. Instead of 'Gone West', being killed is spoken of as being 'Jerked to Jesus'. Why is it? I can only put it down to the fact that life out here is one of continual hardship and suffering, that in war there is no place for a God of Love, no time for the softer emotions, and no inclination to worry about a future when the present is a hell that the devil himself would be proud to reign over.

*Private J Bowles, 2nd/16th (County of London)  
Battalion, Queen's Westminster Rifles*

Being as how we were in the Church Lads Brigade we were supposed to be very religious. But I don't know! I got hold of two souvenirs. One was a German belt and its got Gott Mit Uns on it - and that means 'God's with us'. And I also got hold of one of our badges with Dieu

et mon droit on it, and that more or less meant 'God's on my side'. Well, both sides believed that. But it made you think.

*Rifleman Ralph Langley, 18th Battalion,  
(Church Lads Brigade), Kings Royal Rifle  
Corps*

On the ninth all Batteries were relieved by the 42nd Divisional Artillery and orders were issued to march to Quiévy to rejoin the Division. We moved on 11 November Armistice Day, and we heard the announcement of the Armistice when we were still in the Forêt de Mormal on a cheerless, dismal, cold misty day. There was no cheering or demonstration. We were all tired in body and mind, fresh from the tragic field of battle, and this momentous announcement was too vast in its consequences to be appreciated or accepted with wild excitement. We trekked out of the wood on this dreary day in silence. We read in the papers of the tremendous celebrations in London and Paris, but we could not bring ourselves to raise even a cheer. The only feeling we had was one of great relief.

*Gunner B.O. Stokes, 13th Battery, New  
Zealand Field Artillery*

I was engaged to a dear boy who joined up when he was eighteen and came through (as we thought at the time) without a scratch. He used to tell me about his life in the trenches (Passchendaele, the Somme, Mons). Some time after, my fiancée was taken ill, recovered, but the illness recurred and was diagnosed as consumption, or tuberculosis. Then the doctors realised it was caused through being gassed twice during the conflict; it had eaten away one lung and was affecting the other. At that time there was no cure for TB. He died after four years, just faded away. I was broken-hearted. He had no war pension as it was too late to apply. When I think I could have been a happy grandmother today if it hadn't been for that terrible war.

*Miss Kathleen Gibb*

