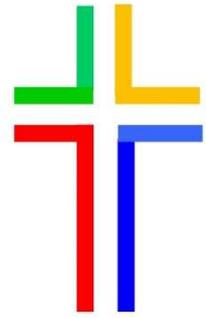


Week St Mary Methodist Church – Sunday 8 November



This is Remembrance Sunday and normally we have an act of remembrance at the war memorial followed by a joint service. This year will be different due to the lockdown, but there will be a brief ceremony and wreath laying just from 10.50am.

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.

These words are actually the fourth verse of a poem by Laurence Binyon which was written not far from here on the coast path near Polzeath. A plaque marks the spot and we came across it on one of our walks after the first lockdown was lifted. The poem was written only a few months after WWI started and long before the full scale of four years of slaughter became apparent. The first phrase is often misquoted, presumably Binyon thought grow not old was more poetic. He was too old to enlist but did volunteer in France as a hospital orderly.

I have heard the phrase 'life being on hold' applied to the disruption caused by Covid and I am sure previous generations felt the same about wartime. Perhaps, today, we should be thankful that life is only on hold and not lost, as we think about all those who did lose their lives in 20th century conflicts

PRAYER

Lord, as we start a second lockdown, help us to remain positive, to not let bitterness and anger get in the way, and to remember that the purpose is to save lives. We know it will be disruptive but let us remember previous generations who suffered even more

disruption during wars. Especially today our thoughts are of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice, those who were seriously injured, and of all those families and friends who grieved them or cared for them. **Amen**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

READING FOR TODAY Matthew 25:1-13 (NIV)

'At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ²Five of them were foolish and five were wise. ³The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. ⁴The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. ⁵The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

⁶'At midnight the cry rang out: "Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!"

⁷'Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸The foolish ones said to the wise, "Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out."

⁹"No," they replied, "there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves."

¹⁰'But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

¹¹'Later the others also came. "Lord, Lord," they said, "open the door for us!"

¹²'But he replied, "Truly I tell you, I don't know you."

¹³'Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

REFLECTION

As the arrest and death of Jesus draw near, he begins to speak mysteriously about the end times. In this passage we can see one of the ways in which Jesus tries to teach his disciples about these times, about the coming of the Son of Man as Jesus puts it. He uses a parable about ten virgins or bridesmaids. The theme is that of readiness. Both groups of bridesmaids are apparently in the right place at the right time, but only five have made proper preparations. Consequently, they find themselves taken by surprise.

This is one of a number of discourses by Jesus about final judgement. In this and adjacent passages he stresses that that no-one, not even Jesus, knows when it will occur. We must stop guessing when it will be, or looking for signs, we simply have to be prepared. And it's not simply a case of being good and claiming our reward. The way is through faith in Jesus, in his forgiveness, and through living in a way that pleases God. If we trust in Christ for salvation, then we will be ready and we can look forward with quiet expectation – as our hymn below puts it.

PRAYER FOR OTHERS

We pray for politicians and world leaders and on this remembrance Sunday, we particularly remember those in countries where there is fighting. We pray for commanding officers in those situations, and for those who serve with them. Help them to use the skills that they have to work for peace and justice.

We pray for those who lead in our community; for councillors and people in local government; for the police; for directors of companies; for heads of schools and colleges; for all those making decisions which affect the lives of others. Help them to think of people not as just numbers or names on a list, but to remember that each one is precious and unique. Amen.

HYMN H&P 246, StF 188

There's a light upon the mountains,
and the day is at the spring,
When our eyes shall see the beauty
and the glory of the King;
Weary was our heart with waiting, and
the night-watch seemed so long,
But His triumph-day is breaking, and
we hail it with a song.

In the fading of the starlight we can
see the coming morn;
And the lights of men are paling in
the splendours of the dawn;
For the eastern skies are glowing as
with lights of hidden fire,
And the hearts of men are stirring
with the throb of deep desire.

There's a hush of expectation, and
a quiet in the air;
And the breath of God is moving in
the fervent breath of prayer;
For the suffering, dying Jesus is the
Christ upon the throne,
And the travail of our spirit is the
travail of His own.

He is breaking down the barriers,
He is casting up the way;
He is calling for His angels to build
up the gates of day;
But His angels here are human, not
the shining hosts above,
For the drum-beats of His army are
the heart-beats of our love.

Hark! we hear a distant music, and
it comes with fuller swell;
'Tis the triumph song of Jesus, of
our King Emmanuel;
Zion, go ye forth to meet Him,
and my soul, be swift to bring
All thy sweetest and thy dearest for
the triumph of our King.

BLESSING

Lord, just as the five girls were ready and prepared with their lamps, help us to be always ready and prepared to serve in every part of our lives, so that places where we live may be full of the light of Jesus.
And may the Blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be upon you and remain with you always . Amen