

Remembrance Day

November 26, 2023

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ online ministry. This week's message is titled Remembrance Day. Thank you to Ed, Dave, Dianne, and Don for being part of the video. The scripture reading is Isaiah 2, 1-5. Happy birthday to Lee and happy anniversary to Chris and Rebecca.

Welcome, Announcements, Prayer

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome you all here today on a beautiful fall day, crisp weather outside, nice sparkly sunshine, and so lots to be thankful for.

Martin and Janet would like to send their thanks to those of you that sent gifts or attended or did both. The shower for Ashley took place a week or so ago.

Community Care Christmas Hamper's sign-up sheet is at the Welcome Center in the lobby that you can sign up. There is an unusually high need this year in our community. People have been hit with higher costs for groceries and so forth and for gasoline and for a lot of things, and there's a bigger need in our community. So, you can be part of the hamper situation providing for family, and there's a sign-up sheet in the lobby that you can sign up for. There's also, you can go to the Community Care website, and you can donate online towards their Christmas program.

Now, we recently got a report from Japan, and so there's a brochure on the map back there from that group. Joel, a former Great Lakes student and a resident of St. Catharines, has been in Japan for several years.

This week I had the opportunity, along with several people from our church, to witness Anna's baptism, and rebirth is always an amazing thing. And we welcome you, Anna, into our church family as a sister in Jesus Christ.

As many of you know, Jo L has been in the hospital this past week, and she's hoping, and even said last night, "I feel better. I want to go home." So that's good news on that front. In other news, Pam has been in the hospital in Niagara Falls, and there was some hope that she would get to go to Shaver on Monday, but yesterday they found a clot on her lung, and so we're not sure whether she's going to Shaver tomorrow or not. Shaver's not really, they're in the business of rehabilitation. They're not in the business of extended medical care, so we're not sure exactly what's going to happen there. Lots of concerns for people we love. Let's pray.

Our Father in Heaven, we are grateful that we can be a community of people who love you and love your word and love your gospel, and we're grateful that that brings us together today. And we're grateful, Father, that you have provided a way for us to know you and to love you and to know as human beings how we should be behaving and what we should be talking about and what our concerns should be and our attitudes. We pray, Father, as we look at the Scripture and think about what's there that we might be, with your Spirit's help, transformed into the people you want us to be here on earth. We're so grateful for Anna's decision this past week, and we pray for her as she grows in the spirit of, in your spirit and in your word, that she might become a great ambassador for you here in this world.

We pray, Father, for Jo and for the family as they rally around her and that she might be able to come home and have the peace of mind of being there and among people that she loves and in a familiar place. We pray that that might happen. We pray, Father, for Pam. We pray for her physical health and for the doctors that are attending to her. We pray, Father, that she might be emboldened by your love and your care and that she might find peace in her situation.

We pray, Father, that as a community that we can support each other in these times. And we pray that we might be able to support Jo and Pam during this time. We pray, Father, for this time that we can be together, that we might honor you, that we might raise our praise up to you, and that we might sing these songs to each other and to you, that we might teach each other, that we might encourage each other to be your people when the church leaves the building later today, that we might be blessed from our time here and emboldened to be your people in this week ahead of us. We pray these things in Jesus' name, Amen. [Music]

Communion

Remembrance. Yesterday was Remembrance Day, but we have an opportunity here to remember also. But as humans, we often forget. There are things to remember, lots of them. Times, dates, appointments, assignments. It's easy to forget sometimes. So where are my keys? Where's my phone? Always, we're trying to remember what we've done, where we place things, what needs to happen next. How we remember our past transforms our present and directs our future. We have memories, reminders of people we have known, family, significant events that we have participated in, places we've been. We remember sights, sounds, tastes. All of those are in your head. There are things you remember. Photographs, captured memories, and bring back all kinds of memories by remembering that picture. They allow us to look back.

As I said yesterday, Remembrance Day. It's a yearly memorial celebrated in many commonwealth countries and other countries have similar memorial days. And it's dedicated to remember those who died in military service and honor those who served during wartime and other times. And so, a grateful nation takes time to honor and recall the service and sacrifices of those who fought to bring peace out of conflict. And that is a constant need. We need to bring peace from conflict. So, we try to recognize and remember what has been unselfishly done for us on our behalf, done by others.

So, the Lord's Supper, this time of remembrance, "do this in remembrance of me." We realize the powerful gift of God, His own Son, for us. As we just sang, there is real power in the cross of Christ. Remembering the goodness of God moves us to respond to the world with hope rather than fear. God's love for us fuels our love for others. Remembering this gift of Christ Jesus inspires and empowers us spiritually. I'd like to read from a different translation verses from Ephesians 3, 18 to 21. And Paul is saying, he is praying for them.

Then that you will be empowered to discover what every holy one experiences, the great magnitude of the astonishing love of Christ in all its dimensions, how deeply intimate and far-reaching is His love, how enduring and inclusive it is, endless love beyond measurement that transcends our understanding. This extravagant love pours into you until you are filled to overflowing with the fullness of God. Never doubt God's mighty power to work in you and to accomplish all this. He will achieve infinitely more than your greatest request, more than your most unbelievable dream

and exceed your wildest imagination. He will outdo them all, for His miraculous power constantly energizes you. Now we offer up to God all the glorious praise that rises from every church and every generation through Jesus Christ. And all that will yet be manifest through time and eternity.

EPHESIANS 3:18-21 (TPT)

Thank you, Father. Continue to bless us as we remember with these emblems of the body and blood of Jesus. Your power, your goodness brings us comfort and faith and strength. Help us to view all our experiences through the lens of your grace and mercy. For us to be vessels of hope to others. In Christ's name, amen.

Reading

Isaiah 2:1-5

It's a lovely morning. So, the reading is Isaiah 2, 1-5, "The Mountain of the Lord."

This is what Isaiah, son of Amoz, saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. In the last days, the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as chief among the mountains. They will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. Many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, through the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us His ways, so that we may walk in His paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war any time, any more. Come, O house of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the Lord.

I would like to just take a little time, if you don't mind, to read something that I found in my husband's papers. And it's called, because of what's going on in the world today, this just makes me think about this. "If God went on strike"

It's just a good thing God above has never gone on strike, because He wasn't treated fair for things He didn't like. If He had ever once sat down and said, "That's it, I'm through. I've had enough of those on earth, so this is what I'll do. I'll give my orders to the sun, cut off your heat supply, and to the moon, give no more light and run the oceans dry. Then just to really make it tough and put the pressure on, I'll turn off air and oxygen, till every breath is gone." Do you know He'd be justified, if fairness was the game? For no one who has been abused or treated with disdain, then God, and yet He carries on supplying you and me with all the favors of His grace, for everything is free. Men say they want a better deal, and so on strike they go. But what a deal we've given God for everything we owe. We don't care who we hurt or harm to gain the things we like, but what a mess we'd all be in if God would go on strike.

Sermon

Thank you, Dianne. Good morning, everyone. [Good morning.] Psalm 46 says, "One day God will make wars cease to the ends of the earth." Won't that be wonderful? And God said to Noah, "I will remember my covenant." If there's a title for this sermon, it's Remembrance Day. And today I won't be preaching. Rather, I want to read what many people have written regarding war and their own

experiences in war, World War I, World War II, the Vietnam conflict, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine and other countries around the world. But won't it be wonderful when there will be, as God promised, no more war, no more crying, no more pain, for the old order of things have passed away. But until that day, we remember. What I want to do today is share some words, not my words, but some young people's words, what they wrote. Here's one.

A young person at a school in Manitoulin said these words, written these words.

"I am the sailor who lived overseas. I fought for Canada and all to be free. I'm the soldier who stood proud and tall. I fought for peace and freedom for all. I'm the doctor who treated the brave. I helped those in need, lives I tried desperately to save. I am the nurse who tried not to cry as I watched good soldiers lie in bed and die. I'm the pilot who fought for you. I flew for your freedom and those after you. I am the child that thinks of the sailor, soldier, nurse, pilot, and doctor. I think of all you've given me, and without you, I might not be. So every cold, gray, wet November, I think of you, and in a way, I can say, I remember."

You can't see this small little cartoon, but it's a powerful cartoon. It's an old grandpa, like some of us are, walking along with his grandchild, maybe great grandchild. And she looks up into his eyes because he has sad eyes on Remembrance Day, and she says, "Grandpa, if remembering war is so hard, why do you do it?" And there was a pause, and he picked her up and said, "Because forgetting is so much harder. Never forget."

The Scripture reminds us in the book of Hebrews over and over again, those who gave up their lives so that others could live.

I'm going to read just a couple of articles. I love this because many people know of Manitoulin Island and have been up there for many, many years. And a young student from that area, Manitoulin Island, her name is Bethany Scott, wrote this to a veteran. Here are her words.

"92 million people died in World War I and World War II. 92 million casualties." Casualty is a Latin word of accident. But tell me when the word accident ever meant slaughter. War is very far from being an accident. I read a short story this summer which made me understand why we must never forget the horrors of war and the sacrifice made by our soldiers. The story begins with a young soldier who was arriving back home from overseas after the Second World War where he was serving in the Navy. He ran into the pastor of a small church where he grew up who asked him what his most memorable moment was during his days of battle. Although painful to recall, the soldier began. He was traveling on a huge ship filled with hundreds of young soldiers who were being transported overseas which was escorted by a small ship. He used to fight off any attacks when they came across an enemy submarine. A pillar of white smoke spiraled toward them. A submarine fired a torpedo. Over the ship's loudspeaker the captain shouted, "This is it, boys." Each of the sailors was preparing to get hit. Some weeping, some praying. The captain of the small attack ship ordered his men to steer their boat into the path of the oncoming torpedo. Every single life on that small ship was lost. The soldier whispered through his tears, "The captain of that ship was my best friend. It is

written, there is no greater love than to lay down your life for a friend." I can't even begin to imagine the love it takes to lay your own life down for someone that you didn't even know, someone like me. I hope that we may understand and not take this freedom for granted every single day of our lives. It becomes clear to me why your blood still stains the battlefields today and that's why we sing in our national anthem. And I believe we are the true north, strong and free.

Interesting that in the first world war almost 10% of Canada's entire population of 7 million back then served in the armed forces. During the first world war nearly 60,000 soldiers died. The great allied victories of 1918 were spearheaded by Canadian troops. In World War II there were more than 120 Canadian warships that participated in the Normandy landings. Canada finished the war with the third largest navy and the fourth largest air force in the world. 100% of the world's population has provided 10% of the world's peacekeeping forces. Canadian soldiers in the past half century had been wonderful peacekeepers. Some 39 missions of UN mandates and six non-unjust keeping duties, places like Vietnam and Sinai and Bosnia. And so we remember the words of Jesus. "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons and daughters of God."

Some thoughts on Remembrance Day by an unknown author.

The torch has been passed to my generation and I'm proud to belong to this peaceful nation. For the youth who enlisted and answered the call, for those who came home and for those who would fall, for the airmen that flew on the thundering breeze, for the sailors who battled the high-crushing seas, for the soldiers who fought on the blood-soaked land, for those left home who all took a stand, for the mothers who lost a precious son-dear, for the wives and the girlfriends who prayed through their tears, for that generation who are grandparents now, I will never forget. And this I vow, "Your brave deeds won't die. I will always remember proudly wearing a poppy each eleventh day in November." And then another person from a school wrote these words, "You were a nurse in the war. You healed the sick and the sore. You didn't fight with a gun or a sword, but you healed with gentle hands like the Lord. You were a lady of pride. Your spread, your smile, worldwide. When I went to visit you, you would talk about school and concerts too. You were always happy day or night because you helped with the elders, even though you weren't white. And when you died one day last year, everyone was glum and there were tears. So on number eleventh Remembrance Day, I will remember your tribute to me that day. People like you make me proud to be a Canadian. You're not afraid to stand up for what you believe in. And isn't it beautiful that we live in a country where we can stand up for these things?"

And then something that all of us have probably tried to remember over the years, written by John McCrae in Flanders Fields. Earl could give us a lot more information on that. I'm sure he's been there and helped us to understand this.

In Flanders Fields, the poppies blow between the crosses row on row that mark our place. And in the sky, the lark still bravely singing, flies, scarce heard amid— among the guns below. We are the dead. Short days ago we lived. We felt dawn. We saw

sunset glow. Loved and were loved. And now we lie in Flanders Fields. Take up our quarrel with the foe. To you from failing hands that 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.

And then, dear great grandpa Fred, this is written by a young man by the name of Jeff. And here's what he says.

Although I've never met you, I just want to thank you for all the dedicated years of service you gave to our country. Thanks to you that we live now in a free country. If it wasn't for you and the rest of the soldiers, we probably wouldn't be here today. In memory of you and other veterans, I wrote this little piece of literature for you and for other veterans. Will they be remembered or will they be forgotten? Will their bravery and honor just be thought a favor of the past? Will the future generation not know how we got our freedom? Will they not know to remember them when they're to be remembered? So when you have a moment in your busy day, please take a moment. Tell younger ones of the past veterans and tell them to tell their children and their grandchildren too. And maybe in the future, veterans will be truly remembered.

My Papa.

My Papa went to war. He fought on the front line. He was a Regina rifleman. When he left in 1939, my Papa went to Germany and France. He had fought in many a battle, but when he got home, he became a farmer and looked after all his cattle. I didn't get to know you, my Papa, which I'm very sorry for because soon he developed cancer and died when I was four. I'll never forget my Papa who risked his life for you and me. But this is a time to remember who went to war to set us all free.

And then Toni McCulloch from McLean Public School writes a brief article called "Shipping Out."

He watched as he straightened his tie. A lonely tear glistens on her cheek. The smile is forced. His orders received. He's shipping out before the end of the day. Shoes polished, buttons gleaming, pants pressed smartly, cap adjusted to the proper angle. His smile is real. Excitement pulses. He's going overseas, leaving the country. She hugs him and kisses his lips softly, squeezes him tight, not letting him go. Feeble attempts. Door knob turning. She tries to be strong as he walks out the door. He bravely marches out to the curb, turns and waves at her in the door. Imprints the scene. His mind a sponge. Boldly he goes forth and joins the men waiting. Months pass, barely a word of news. Radio announces terrible descriptions. Doorbell rings. A messenger awaits. Ripped envelope, crumpled form, a piercing scream. Who is she? She is mother, wife, daughter and sister. Who is he? He is father, husband, son and brother.

War is always horrible. And war is sometimes necessary. Crushing the soul of nations is horrible. In 1960s there was a lot of anxiety, a lot of anger. You remember the Vietnam conflict. There was fighting

in the streets and so forth. And I don't know if you remember this song. I think some of you will remember this song. Some of you don't. It was written in the 1960s by a gentleman by the name of Barry McGuire who wrote the song, an anti-Vietnam song called the Eve of Destruction. They're not easy words. They're powerful words. And to this day these words still need to exist. Here are his lyrics.

The eastern world it is exploding. Bullets flaring, bullets loading. You're old enough to kill but not old enough for voting. You don't believe in war. But what's that gun you're toting? And even the Jordan River has bodies floating. But you tell me over and over and over again my friend how you don't believe we're on the Eve of Destruction. Don't you understand what I'm trying to say? Can't you feel the fears I'm feeling today? If the button is pushed there's no running away. There'll be no one to save with the world in a grave. Take a look around you boy. It's bound to scare you boy. And you tell me over and over and over again my friend how you don't believe we're on the Eve of Destruction. Yeah my blood's so mad feels like coagulating. I'm sitting here just contemplating. I can't twist the truth. It knows no regulation. And full of senators don't pass legislation. And marches alone can't bring integration. When human respect is disintegrating. The whole crazy world is just too frustrating. And you tell me over and over and over again my friend how you don't believe we're on the Eve of Destruction. And think of all the hate there was in Red China. Then take a look around in Selma, Alabama. You may leave here for four days in space but when you return it's the same old place. The pounding of the drums, the pride and disgrace. You can't bury your dead but don't leave a trace. Hate your next door neighbor but don't forget to say grace. No, no. No, no. You tell me you don't believe there is destruction.

You see on Remembrance Day we think of all of the wars fought in World War I. World War II, the Vietnam conflict, civil wars and even today what's happening in Ukraine.

So, wasn't this a happy, wonderful sermon today? But I end with good news. Because there is this promise for all of us. And John wrote about it even before these wars that we just finished talking about. It pictures in his mind in this amazing book, Revelation. Good news for all of us. And here are his words to each one of us. And then I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. And there was no longer any sea, this powerful, majestic, horrible sea. But here's what I saw. I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying to all of us, "Now the dwelling of God is with us, and he will live with us. There will be no more war or mourning or crying or pain for that old order of things has passed away and will never come again." And God said, "I am making everything new." His words are trustworthy and true. We who overcome because of Jesus, we inherit all of these things. Jesus also gave their lives for us. Jesus gives his life for us. Maybe we can return the favor and give our lives to him. Amen.

Closing

An interesting time today. We've been challenged to sacrifice our life for others, for our neighbors. And we've had this vivid example today of so many who have sacrificed their lives for freedom and for the sake of others. And late in Don's sermon, he talked about a time where there will be no wars. We're

stuck in this spot between for most of us we've never had to go to war, we've never had to fight. But we look forward to a time when there will be no wars. But what we have now is an opportunity in our lives to give up our lives for others. So, I'm challenging myself as I challenge you that in the week ahead, how are we going to give up our lives for the sake of others? Because Jesus commanded it. We're not going to be going to war, but you know what? There are people around us that need us. We need to be prayerful and intentional about how we spend our time and how we give our lives for others. Let's pray.

Our Father in heaven, we're thankful. We're thankful for so many things to live in a country where there's relative peace and freedom. We pray for those places in the world that don't have peace and freedom, where people are living anxiously, not sure about what tomorrow will bring. We pray in our own situation that we might find ways to sacrifice ourselves for our neighbors and for people around us, that we give up our life, that we don't hang on to it with pride and as a possession, but that we use our time in service for you, that we might be your hands and your feet in the world that desperately needs us. We pray, Father, for the spirit that you have given us, that it might be manifest in how we live our lives in connection with others. We pray for opportunities this week to come alongside people to be your hands and feet, and we pray, Father, for the courage to do it. We're thankful for your Son, Jesus, the ultimate example of love for us to provide us with this great salvation and this hope of a time where there'll be no more mourning and no more wars, no more weeping. We look forward to that time, but in the meantime, be with us as we try to be your people. In Jesus' name, amen.

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