

8 November 2020

West Kirk of Calder & Polbeth Harwood

By: Rev Dr Jonanda Groenewald

Reading: Mark 8:34-35

Hymn: CH4 220 The day you gave us

Remembrance Sunday

READING

Mark 8:34-35

The way of the cross

³⁴ Then Jesus called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it.

MESSAGE

One hundred years ago, on Remembrance Sunday, the cenotaph in London was unveiled. A symbol.

Something to help future generations remember those who paid the ultimate sacrifice during the 1st and 2nd World Wars. Lots of other war memorials all over the world, including the one here in West Calder, has the exact same purpose.

Under normal circumstances, lots of people would gather around these memorials, these symbols of remembrance, today. Because of Covid19

we are not able to that this year – but that doesn't mean we won't remember.

Every time we see a war memorial, we remember, we think of the cost of war. But we don't *need* a memorial in order to remember that: Remembering is something we can do anytime, anywhere.

In our own homes, or on our doorsteps, today, we will remember.

In a way, symbols link us all together. Just like the poppy, linking us all together in our remembering; or the symbol of the rainbow, linking our nation together in supporting the NHS during this pandemic.

For me, the most important symbol of all times, is, of course, the cross. In our Bible reading Jesus refers to suffering as taking up the cross.

The cross is the symbol of suffering, and the ultimate sacrifice paid by Jesus – to save us all.

Jesus said that living life, and following him, won't always be easy.

Soldiers across the ages and across the world have all carried their crosses. As did their families. The symbol of the cross on war graves remind us of that...

But the symbol of the cross reminds us about more than suffering. It reminds us about victory too. Because by dying on the cross, Jesus conquered death; by giving *his* life, he gave us LIFE everlasting.

And this is always true. Not only when we are in the church, or looking at a cross; the love God showed us in Jesus is everywhere, all the time.

The symbol of the cross is just a reminder of that.

As we pause to remember today - lives lost in the past, *and* at the moment all over the world - let's decide anew to strive for peace and harmony, and to live in love.

May our handling of a very difficult time today, become a symbol of hope for generations to come.

Amen

HYMN

CH4 220 The day you gave us, Lord, has ended

The day you gave us, Lord, has ended;

The darkness falls at your behest;

To you our morning hymns ascended,

Your praise shall sanctify our rest.

We thank you that your Church unsleeping,

While earth rolls onward into light,

Through all the world her watch is keeping,

Nor rests from worship day or night.

As o'er each continent and island

The dawn leads on another day,

The voice of prayer is never silent,

Nor dies the song of praise away.

The sun that bids us rest is waking
Your children 'neath the western sky,
And hour by hour fresh lips are making
Your wondrous deeds resound on high.

So be it, Lord! Your throne shall never,
Like earth's proud empires, pass away;
Your Kingdom stands and grows for ever,
Till all your creatures own your sway.

BENEDICTION

Receive the blessing of God, and go in peace:

God, grant to the living grace,
To the departed rest,
And to all people unity and peace.

And the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with
you all and with all whom you love, on this Remembrance Sunday, and
forever more.

Amen