

8th November 2020

Clarendon Park Congregational Church



Remembrance Sunday 2020

In Flanders' Fields

by John McCrae

In Flanders' fields the poppies blow
between the crosses, row on row,
that mark our place: and in the sky
the larks, still bravely singing, fly
scarce heard amid 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 our 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.



Remembrance Sunday

by Revd. John Bentham

Today we are going through some fairly difficult times trying to deal with the challenges that Covid 19 brings. Some try and comprehend and compare it to the suffering & the struggles that the nation went through during the two World Wars. I have to differ on such thoughts!

Although we may have lost someone close during this pandemic, or not been able to visit family and friends, and found things a little bit different, a little bit uncertain and been fairly hard up financially. I could never begin to imagine what the people went through having to deal with the survival of World War One and Two, those within the theatre of War – and those surviving back home. Nothing Can Compare.

There are few sounds more evocative than that of the chilling sound of a trench whistle breaking the silence that was the prelude to a generation of young men leaving their trenches, going over the top and becoming engulfed in the storm of war, many of whom would never return home again. Many since then, especially in World War Two have also known sacrifice for others like no other. We have to also remember the tragedy continued long after the last shot had been fired in anger. The chaos that followed; the refugees, the hunger, the bereaved, the lost, the injured, those both physically and mentally scared forever.

Remembrance Sunday is also about The partners who grieve, The families who struggle, The veterans who remember, The aircrew who fly, The children who wait, The homeless who shiver, The seamen who sail, The unemployed who despair, The soldiers who fight, The disabled who strive, The heroes who serve.

Today we will pray for them, Today we will remember them... We live in a world that continues to struggle with evils of terrorism, the emergency services respond putting their lives on the line, Armed Forces & Intelligent Services also continue to respond to situations in

places previous generations had forgotten existed. Today we will pray for them.

Today is an opportunity to remember the sacrifices of those who lost their lives, or are, or have put their lives on the line for our freedom. Violet Szabo, was an SOE agent (Special Operations Executive) whose heroic story is told in the movie, 'Carve her name with pride'. Violet too laid down her life in the cause of freedom. As an SOE agent she had a personal code poem to protect her communications. It speaks today on this Remembrance Sunday.

The life that I have is all that I have,
and the life that I have is yours

The love that I have of the life that I have
is yours and yours and yours

A sleep I shall have, a rest I shall have
yet death will be but a pause,

For the peace of my years in the long green grass
will be yours and yours and yours.

So during this remembrance - as we commemorate the past, let us take time to remember also that we have a God who loves us for Jesus laid down his life so that we could have a new and everlasting relationship with God – A God who has a different and better purpose for us, and that part of our responsibility is to work towards that very aim of a better world and to care for others.

Today and in the future the responsibility for working towards that peace, is

Ours ... and Ours ... Ours.

Your friend and Minister

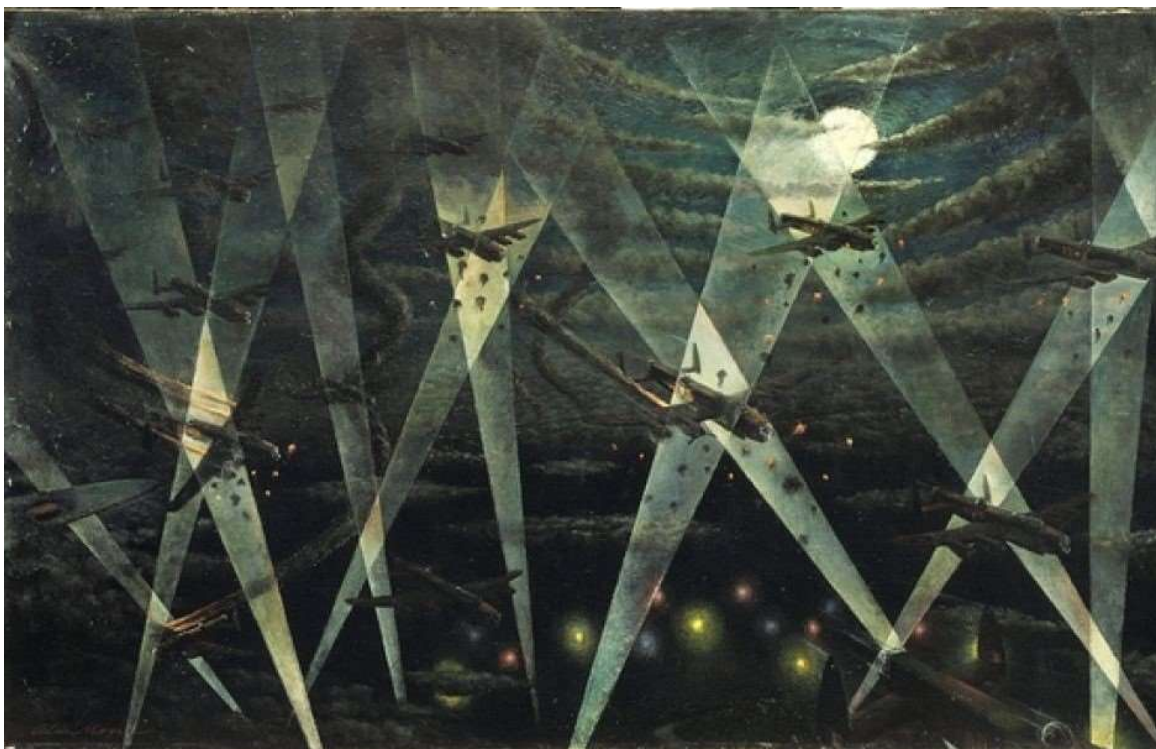
John



We are making a new world, by Paul Nash;



By the light of the moon, by Alan Moore;



As a young girl, I remember the whole town walking down to The Square. The brass band was playing, people were dancing, laughing, singing..... and crying. It was not until some years later that I realised the enormity of what we had lived through.

Dinah Corby, on VE Day in Raunds, Northamptonshire.



My mum, as a 10-year old in Poland, lived in what was Russian territory prior to WW1. My grandfather and his two eldest sons were in the Polish army. The Russians reclaimed the land and put my grandmother and younger members of the family in cattle trucks bound for Siberia.

Jadzia Foster, Wigston.

Ever-living God,
We remember those whom You have gathered
from the storm of war into the peace of Your presence;
may that same peace
calm our fears,
bring justice to all peoples
and establish harmony among nations.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

Almighty God,
Stretch forth Your mighty arm to strengthen and protect the armed
forces; grant that meeting danger with courage and all occasions
with discipline and loyalty, that they may truly serve the cause of
justice and peace, to the honour of Your holy name, through Jesus
Christ our Lord.
Amen.

But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle,
willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of
partiality or hypocrisy. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in
peace for those who make peace.

James 3:17-18

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you,
that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all.

1 John 1:5

O God, our help in ages past

by Issac Watts and William Croft

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home.
Beneath the shadow of Thy throne
Still may we dwell secure;
Sufficient is Thine arm alone,
And our defence is sure.
Before the hills in order stood,
Or earth received her frame,
From everlasting Thou art God,
To endless years the same.
A thousand ages in Thy sight
Are like an evening gone;
Short as the watch that ends the night
Before the rising sun.
Time, like an ever rolling stream,
Bears all its sons away;
They fly, forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day.
Our God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be Thou our guard while troubles last,
And our eternal home.





Poppy 1, by Joseph

"A most pathetic thing happened that afternoon. A young gunner subaltern was on his way up to observe a machine-gun position. Just as he got outside my door a shrapnel shell burst full in front of him. The poor fellow was brought in to me absolutely riddled. He lay in my arms until he died, shrieking in his agony and said he hoped I would excuse him for making such a noise as he really could not help it. Pitiful as nothing could be done for him except an injection of morphia. I always will remember that incident, particularly as he was such a fine-looking boy, certainly not more than 19."

Unknown, October 1914

"Edith and Olive and me have talked it over and we want to go and make aeroplanes."

Evelyn Waugh, Put Out More Flags

"If you wake up in the morning, it is a good day."

Heather Morris, The Tattooist of Auschwitz

'I would say to the House... "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat"... Victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory however long and hard the road may be; for without victory there is no survival'.

Winston Churchill, 13th May 1940

God rest us.

Rest that part of us which is tired.

Awaken that part of us which is asleep.

God awaken us and awake within us.

Amen.

Leunig.

Hedd, perffaith hedd – peace, perfect peace.



Heroes' Cross, Bușteni, Transylvania, by Gwyn



Victory, Welsh National War Memorial

Distraught, a story by Codrin Gramaticu, 12.

6 am. I wake up, drowning in blistering sweat. I've got 'The Mares' again. I rub my eyes and open the ragged window blinds. A harsh sun ray pierces my squinting eyelids and I get an unpleasant feeling in my stomach. The street is completely desolate, no apparent sign of life. I open the window and nothing. I can just barely hear a rustic car engine throttling and some vermin scuttling in the sewers. No sign of life whatsoever. One week after it happened and the devastating effects are still in action. Not a single soul dares to walk along the grim street. Some grieving, some people stay inside as a form of respect, and some are simply terrified. A heavy, painful mist of sorrow has fallen on the grimy streets of London. I can hear a gentle murmur from the various households; not the warm, joyful, comforting tone you hear in festive times usually, but a low, grief-ridden melancholy. They call their families and relatives frequently with a worried, monotonous chatter. I have no television signal, no warm fireplace, no telephone, but most importantly, I have no relatives or any shoulder to cry on. Instead, I spend my hours listening through the cheap, grey walls to people's conversations with their families. I enjoy this for the simple reason that I get a warm glow inside when I hear the blissful relief as others find out that their families are safe. I break out of my thoughtful trance when suddenly the clouds darken and I hear a low rumble. I don't think much of it, 'probably bad weather', so I lie back down on my bed. I suspect something is wrong when I hear the pitch and speed of the low chatting increase and the rumbling grows yet louder. For the first time in seemingly countless days, I see faces peek out of their windows. But not happy faces. Faces of pure distraught and terror. 'It can't be happening again can it?' A blinding red light shines across and an ear-piercing alarm outpowers the screams. Planes motors roar at me and transmit me into a state I can only describe as pure **terror**. They're back for round two.

Bang



Clarendon Park Congregational Church, by Primrose R. Davies

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.

Psalm 46:1

I lift up my eyes to the hills—
from where will my help come?
My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.

Psalm 121:1-2

But this I call to mind,
and therefore I have hope:
The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases,
his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.

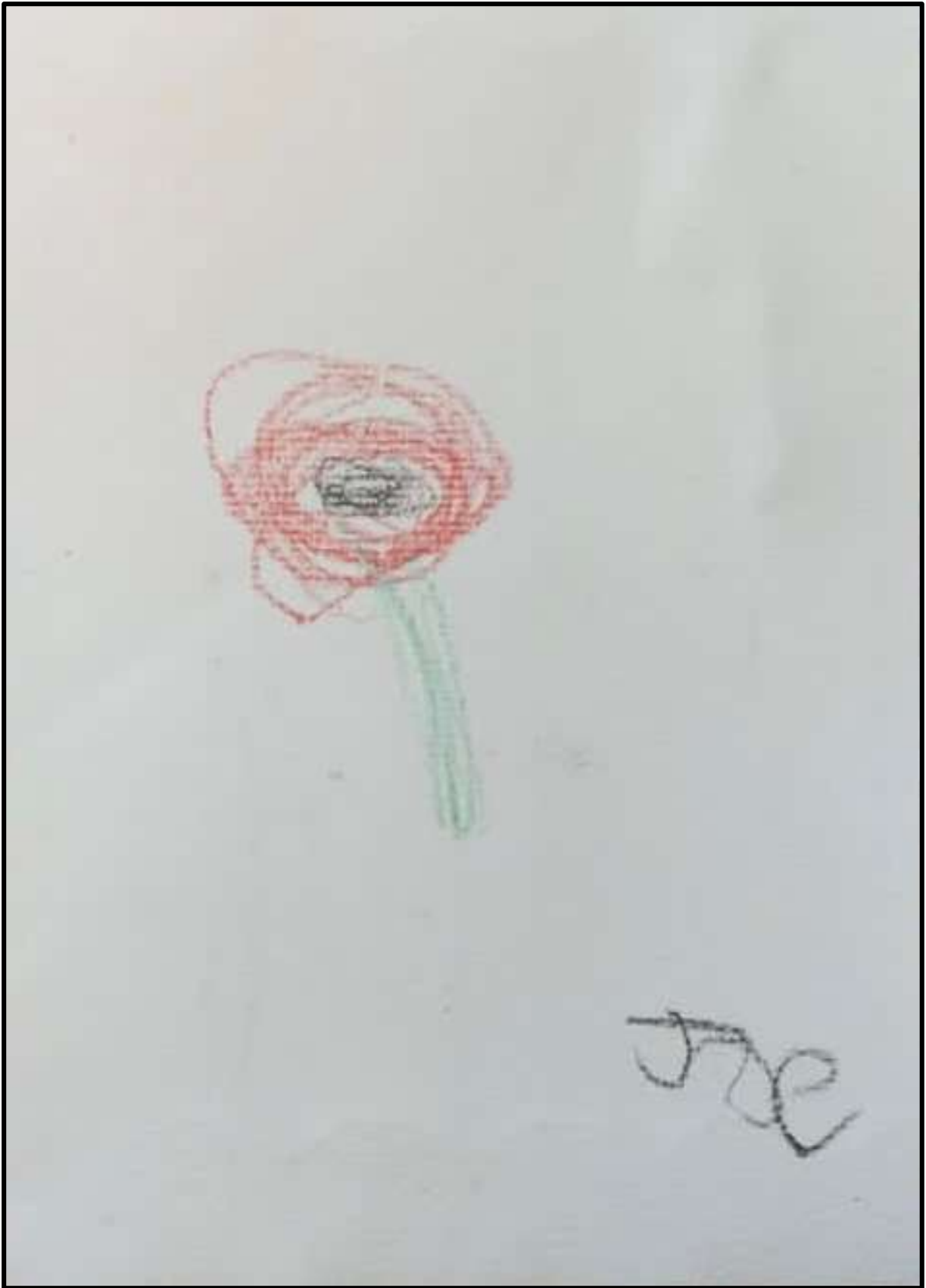
Lamentations 3:21-23

But those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.

Isaiah 40:31

He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

Micah 6:8



Poppy 2, by Joseph

Remembrance and thankfulness

by Gwyn

In our modern world it is easy to forget what has gone before, and dismiss history as not being relevant. But our past, and especially our recent past, has shaped our nation into what it is now. It does not help that our National Curriculum teaches history as moving almost seamlessly from the Romans to the Tudors to World War II. Not only is so much omitted or brushed over, but the Second World War is seen by young minds to be as distant to the past as Julius Caesar or King Henry VIII. But many alive today experienced WWII. Many of these are amazed how in such a short period of time we have moved from 'All gave some, some gave all' to every man for himself (or should I say every man, woman, or gender neutral for themselves?). Along with this fragmentation of society we have seen a loss of our traditional cultural values. Those of us who are churchgoers have been hit twice, for Britishness and Christianity are intrinsically linked. The traits of tolerance, acceptance, kindness, and grace, were taught through Jesus Christ. The Second World War saw an attempt to remove our belief in freedom of expression and equality. Millions of brave people throughout the world gave their lives to defend this. This is something we must never forget. Those criticising Britain and Britishness today would do well to remember that if it was not for the stoic heroism of this country and her allies, they would not be able to enjoy such a platform. We must remember that the United Kingdom was born out of the respectful inclusion of so many individual voices. It is steeped in the innate values of families and communities, diverse in the truest sense but united in the want and need to call this island home. We are all privileged to be the custodians of our heritage. Our heritage and culture which is perhaps the richest of anywhere in the world. From Henry Purcell to David Bowie; Stonehenge to the Tower of London to the Shard; the Highlands of Scotland, the Fens, and the Downs; from Thomas Gainsborough to David Hockney: Elizabeth I, Oliver Cromwell,

William Gladstone, Winston Churchill; foxglove, hollyhock, daisy; Stephenson, Telford, Bazalgette, Whittle; Newton, Faraday, Darwin, Turing, Crick; badger, weasel, robin, squirrel; Chaucer, Blake, Byron, Hardy, TS Eliot, Dylan Thomas. The list is endless. We must be thankful for the past, for allowing us such an open future. A future where our young should be able to flourish in freedom, imagination and creativity, continuing to allow us to be proud of who we are. So, as we sit in our comfortable homes on this most solemn of days it is hard for us to imagine the atrocities of war. But many of our members still remember first-hand the Second World War, and their parents may have experienced life during the Great War. These are not events of ancient history, but horrors to which we can, and should, relate. Loving families torn apart. For an example of how power corrupts even family love we need only look to the descendants of our great queen, Victoria. In 1914 seven of her grandchildren sat on European thrones, those of Britain, Russia, Romania, Greece, Germany, Spain and Norway, and all took sides during the Great War. Cousin against cousin in the most hideous of conflicts. It was hoped that the Great War would be the war that would end all wars, but this was not to be. We must now somehow learn to place love and peace above the quest for power and greed, for to ignore this lesson is to risk sliding back towards darkness. Let us pray.

Eternal Father,

We remember Ypres, the Somme, Mons and Verdun.

We remember the Western Desert, el Alamein, and the Normandy beaches.

We remember Dresden, Hiroshima and the Burma Road.

We remember Korea, Malaya, the Falkland Islands, Northern Ireland, Iraq and Afghanistan.

We remember all wars across all nations.

We think of all who have suffered as a result of conflict,

and ask You to give us peace:

for all who have died in the violence of war,
each one remembered by and known to You;
please give peace.

For those who love them in death as in life,
offering the distress of our grief
and the sadness of our loss;
please give peace.

For all members of the armed forces
who are in danger this day,
remembering family, friends
and all who pray for their safe return;
please give peace.

For civilian men, women and children
whose lives are disfigured by war or terror,
calling to mind in penitence
the anger and hatreds of humanity;
please give peace.

For peacemakers and peacekeepers,
who seek to keep this world secure and free;
please give peace.

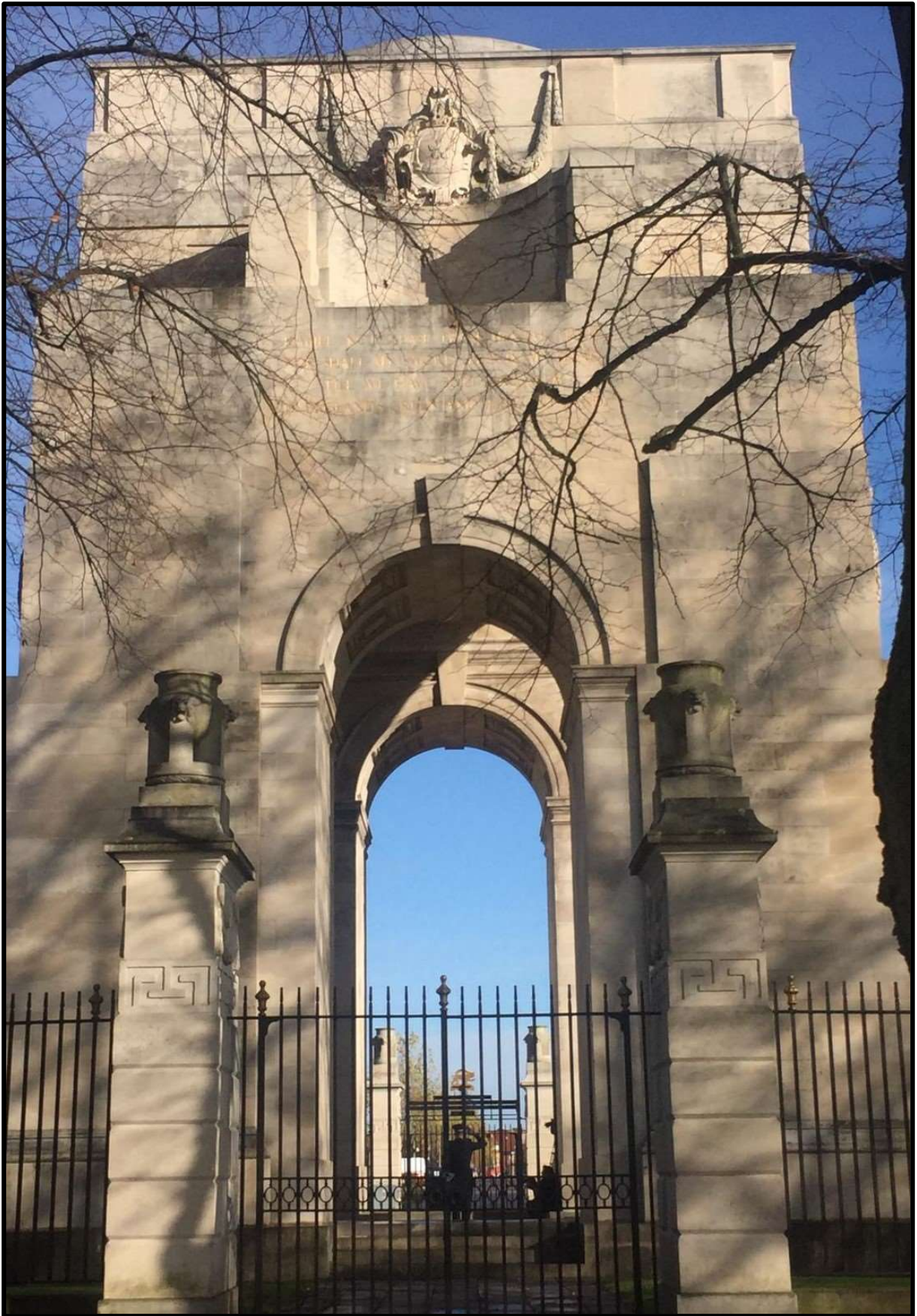
For all who bear the burden and privilege of leadership,
political, military and religious;
asking for gifts of wisdom and resolve
in the search for reconciliation and peace;
please give peace.

O God of truth and justice,
we hold before you those whose memory we cherish,
and those whose names we will never know.
Help us to lift our eyes above the torment of this broken world,
and grant us the grace to pray for those who wish us harm.

[May I suggest that you pause here and take some time for quiet reflection]

Lord of Peace,
As we honour the past,
may we put our faith in Your future;
for You are the source of life and hope,
now and for ever.
Amen.





Leicester War Memorial, by Jason

Top left – ANZAC Memorial, Sydney

Top right – Polish War Memorial, Ruislip

Btm – Clarendon Park Congregational Church, by Primrose R. Davies



Suicide in the Trenches

by Siegfried Sassoon

I knew a simple soldier boy
Who grinned at life in empty joy,
Slept soundly through the lonesome dark,
And whistled early with the lark.
In winter trenches, cowed and glum,
With crumps and lice and lack of rum,
He put a bullet through his brain.
No one spoke of him again.
You smug-faced crowds with kindling eye
Who cheer when soldier lads march by,
Sneak home and pray you'll never know
The hell where youth and laughter go.





Clarendon Park Congregational Church, by Primrose R. Davies

To the glorious memory of the following members and adherents of
this church who gave their lives in the Great War, 1914-1918

Arthur Allen

Douglas Anderson

Henry C. Brice

Mabel E. Chadwick

Frederick Culverwell

Oscar Gait

Frederick Grant

James Gunn

John Hammans

Charles Jarvis

Frederick Jarvis

George Knight

William Lacey

William Leeson

George Lines

Frederick Luck

R. Ockendon

Eustace Shaw

Christopher Stafford

Samuel Smith

Walter Swann

Benjamin Thrall

Leonard Woodward

Ernest Wyatt

**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.**



