

A Seasonal All Age Worship Service

(SAAW015)

Remembrance Sunday

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REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

Service Aim:

To enable all ages to remember the great sacrifices that people made in the various wars, and then to respond with thankfulness and a desire to change.

Biblical Reference(s):

John 15:12, 15:13, James 4:1-3

Outline of Service:

- Welcome: Introduce that it is Remembrance Sunday
- Opening Prayer:
- Opening Songs: A couple of songs to draw people into worship (See Appendix 1)
- Reading 1: John 15:12
- Warm up: "What do you think love is?" (with cartoon pictures)
- Reading 2: John 15:13
- Link: What is at the heart of love?
- Stories: Dramatically told stories of "Ronald and Walter"
- Talk 1: Why do we need to remember those who gave their lives in the war?
1) To be THANKFUL - for the incredible love that they have shown
- Prayers: i) Giving thanks for those who died for us
ii) Praying for those engaged in current conflicts
- Song: A song about loving others (See Appendix 1)
- Link: We need to remember those who gave their lives in the war so that,
2) We can CHANGE.
- Reading 3: James 4:1-3
- Talk 2: "I want that....," "I've got to have that....," "I will take that....."
• Root cause of war is SIN
- Drama: "Sin Jacket"
- Link: Jesus laid down his life so our hearts can be changed.
- Confession: Confession prayer and Absolution
- Song: A song celebrating what Jesus did for us on the cross (See Appendix 1)
- Summary:
- Response: Using red thread, people make an unbroken cord of love.
- Prayers: Prayer committing to unity and Lord's Prayer
- Final hymn: A song / hymn committing our future into God's hands (See Appendix 1)

Blessing:

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Notes for the service:

General notes and instructions for the service are in black font.

Prayers or responses said by the congregation together are in bold purple font.

The full script of a talk or other activity is in purple font.

Depending on the time of your service and your tradition, you may wish to include an Act of Remembrance at some point during this service.

.....

Before the Service:

Before the service, cut up pieces of red satin cord thread¹ into one metre lengths. Ensure that you have enough thread to give one piece to every member of the congregation as they arrive for the service.

Welcome:

Welcome everyone to the Remembrance Day service and explain when the Act of Remembrance will take place (if you have one).

Opening Prayer:

You may choose to use either:

- an informal prayer
- a prayer from the Church of England's "Time and Seasons"² material
- or the following prayer:

We come together today to remember:

To remember with thanks

those who have given their lives in service of others.

To remember with sadness

the suffering, destruction and pain caused by human conflict.

We come also to commit ourselves to be peacemakers and peacekeepers wherever we can.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

Opening Songs:

A couple of songs to draw people into worship as per Appendix 1

Reading 1:

The reading is John 15:12. This works well if it isn't introduced but is read dramatically from the pulpit (if you have one) by a child or young person.

"Jesus says, *"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."* (NIV)

After this reading has been read the reader stays where they are while the "Warm up" takes place and then reads the next reading from the same place.

¹ You can purchase red satin cord thread from ebay at www.ebay.co.uk by putting "2mm Rattail Satin Cord Thread" into the search bar.

² "Times and Seasons" material can be found at <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/41153/tandschristmas.pdf>

Warm up:

The congregation are asked to consider the question, "What do you think love is?" As the service leader gives various answers, so the appropriate "love is..." cartoon picture is shown or projected. These pictures can be found in Appendix 2 or online at "google images."

Jesus commanded us to love each other.

- I wonder how you would answer if I said to you, "What do you think love is?"

Would you say that "love is...."

- That special feeling?
- Or when he does things without having to be asked?
- Would you say that it is having all the patience in the world?
- Or letting him read the sports section in silence?

Might you say that love is letting your sister use your skate-board,

- Or is it baby-sitting for a friend?
- Would you say that it is giving him another chance?
- Or maybe would you say that love is about making sacrifices?

Let's hear what Jesus continues to say in John 15.....

Reading 2:

The reading is John 15:13 and is read from the same place as Reading 1.

"Jesus says, *"Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."* (NIV)

Link:

Love can be all of the things we said when we looked at the cartoons but it is also so much more.

- At the heart of loving each other as Jesus has loved us is the willingness to put other people's needs before our own needs, whatever we feel like;
- to sacrifice what we want for the good of the other person.

Today we are thinking about the greatest love that people can show each other.....

- the love that involves sacrificing one's very own life for the good of others.

On this Remembrance Day we remember those who lay down their lives in the fighting of war, so that we can live in freedom

- In World War 1 alone 6 million British men fought.
- Of those 6 million British men, 772,000 of them died, 1.7 million were wounded and 170,000 became Prisoners of war.

We are going to hear a couple of stories as we remember these brave soldiers.

Stories:

The stories are true stories³ of two soldiers, written in a semi-dramatic way and found in Appendix 3.

The two people playing the parts of the soldiers could dress up in old-fashioned clothes and stand / walk around different parts of the church / room to deliver their lines (which can be either read or learnt).

Talk 1:

This talk benefits from projecting the words, "Be Thankful" through it.

It is important to hear these stories from people who went to war on behalf of our country.

- We need to remember them and I want to mention a couple of reasons why.

1) The first reason is so that we can BE THANKFUL for the incredible love that they have shown, that has brought us freedom.

Their love was very costly.....

- They were willing to sacrifice what they wanted for the good of others.

They had to leave behind their families and friends to fight for our freedom.

- They had to cope with all sorts of hardships like lack of food, sleep and peace, as well as illness and pain.

They saw terrible things and heard terrible things which stayed with them long after the war they were serving in had finished,

- and they did it all with the hope of securing peace for others,
- for you and for me.

The way of life that we enjoy now is down to their courage and sacrifice,

- so let us BE THANKFUL to these brave men and women.

We are going to turn to the Lord now and thank Him for those who served in the wars. Let us pray.

Prayers:

You may want to project simple pictures for each prayer sentence eg a picture of war graves for the 1st sentence, a picture of someone in military hospital for the 2nd sentence, a picture of a prison camp for the 3rd sentence, a picture of soldiers from one of the world wars for the 4th sentence.

³The story about Ronald Marchant's life can be found on the Bible Society's web-site at:

<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/what-we-do/england-and-wales/world-war-1/stories/soldiers/the-man-who-saved-others-lives-at-passchendaele/>

The story about Walter Young's life can be found on the Bible Society's web-site at:

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The response to the prayers is: **“Thank you Lord”**

On this Remembrance Day we want to thank you Lord for all who have died that we may live.

Thank you Lord (PAUSE)

For all who suffered pain that we might know joy.

Thank you Lord (PAUSE)

For all who had to cope with being in prison that we might know freedom.

Thank you Lord (PAUSE)

For all those who willingly served in the armed services or on the home front, sacrificing what they wanted so that we can live in peace.

Thank you Lord (PAUSE)

Amen.

And now let’s pray for those who are currently serving in wars and conflicts. Please say the responses that are in bold.

Heavenly Father,

We bring before you those who are currently serving in wars and conflicts around the world.

For those facing the unknown,

give them courage.

For those struggling with physical exhaustion,

give them strength.

For those serving in desperate situations,

give them hope.

For those leading others and making difficult decisions,

give them wisdom

and for the families left at home,

give them comfort.

In Jesus’ holy name we pray.

Amen.

Song:

A song about loving others as per Appendix 1

Link:

This link benefits from projecting the words, “Be thankful” followed by “Change” at the appropriate points.

Earlier we said that it is important to remember people who went to war on behalf of our country so that:

- 1) We can BE THANKFUL for the incredible love that they have shown, that has brought us freedom.

We also need to remember them so that:

2) We can CHANGE

Wars don't just happen.....they begin somewhere.

- Listen to this reading from the book of James:

Reading 3:

The reading is James 4:1-3 and works well from a modern version of the Bible for example, The Message Version. It can be read by a child, teenager or adult.

Talk 2:

This talk works well if you project pictures to illustrate "I want that....," "I've got to have that.....," and "I will take that." (See Appendix 4)

Saint James helps us understand that fights and quarrels, which can then ultimately end up in wars, are actually caused by the wrong desires in our hearts.

Those wrong desires can often begin with the words, "**I want that.....**" (*Show picture*)

- When we are tiny the "I want that...." might be a toy that we have seen in a toy shop or that someone else has in their hands!

As we grow older the "I want that....." might be a bigger house, or a better job.

- It might be the "I want that....." is the ipad that your work colleague has just been given.
- It might be money, power or even land.
- It might simply be that I want my own way in every situation that I find myself in,
- or even "I want that ministry" that God has gifted someone else for.

The desire to want something is common to us all.....

- The problem comes, as St James says, when we aren't willing to ask God for what we need,
- and when we start wanting what other people have.

You see if we allow the "I want that....." desire to get bigger and bigger inside us, without bringing it to God,

- this desire can quickly become the "**I've got to have that...**" desire, (*Show picture*)
- and before we know it our heart is totally focused on getting what we want.

Eventually that desire can grow to the stage where it becomes the "**I will take that....**" action. (*Show picture*)

We might get involved in a fight so that we can take what we want.

- We might lie about others at work so that we can take that promotion.
- We might quarrel with others so that we can get our own way.
- Some people even resort to crime to take the things or the money that they want.
- At the very worst case scenario, some people even kill others so that they can forcibly take what they want.....
- And so starting with "I want that," wars can begin.

Now the reasons why we go to war are often very complex, but the writer of the book of James recognises that so often the root cause of war is the wrong desires in our hearts.

- The Bible calls this sin.
- Our hearts need to change.....but how can this happen?

We cannot change our hearts but one person can and that person is Jesus.

- Jesus came to deal with the problem of the human heart, by sacrificing His life on the cross.
- Watch this:

Drama:

The drama is called “Sin Jacket”⁴ and can be found in Appendix 5. You will need two actors who will mime throughout. If you have no actors you may like to show the drama from “You Tube”⁵

Link:

Jesus laid down His life for you and for me so that our sins could be forgiven.

- If we come to Him, confessing our sins and turning back to God, Jesus has promised to not only forgive us but to give us a clean heart;
- A heart that can trust Him for what we need, rather than taking what we want,
- A heart that is able to obey His command to *“Love each other as I have loved you”*
- A heart that is willing to sacrifice what we want for the good of others, because it is filled with the Spirit of God.
- Let’s be still for a moment as we allow the Lord to show us our sin before we confess it to him. PAUSE

Confession:

Lead into a Confession prayer. This could be:

- an informal Confession prayer led by the service leader or
- a Confession prayer from a book like “New Patterns for Worship” that the congregation can say together.

Follow this with a prayer of Absolution. This could be:

- an informal prayer led by the service leader or
- an Absolution prayer from a book like “New Patterns for Worship.”

Alternatively you could use the following prayer:

Lord Jesus we come to you believing that your death paid for our sins
We confess that we have not loved you with all of our hearts
Please forgive us

We confess that we have not loved others as you have loved us
Please forgive us

⁴ The drama “Sin Jacket” was written by James Gwyn – Thomas.

⁵ The web address for You Tube is www.youtube.com Put “Sin Jacket” into the search bar to find the drama.

We confess that we have not trusted you with our needs and have sometimes taken what belongs to other people.

Please forgive us

Lord please wash us clean from our sins and help us to live differently.
In Jesus' name.

Amen

Song:

A song celebrating what Jesus did for us on the cross as per Appendix 1

Summary:

We have been remembering this morning those who have made the greatest sacrifice of all, sacrificing their lives in wars for our freedom,

- Remembering them so that we can be **THANKFUL** to God for all that they have won for us,
- and remembering them so that as we face the fact that wars begin with the sinful desires in our hearts, we can turn to Jesus who alone has the power to **CHANGE** us.

As we come to the end of the service let's commit ourselves to loving one another,

- which results in peace amongst us, rather than conflict.

Response:

The response involves creating an unbroken cord of red thread around the church. People will be tying either end of their thread to their neighbour's thread. You may find this activity works best if you invite people to get out of their seats and make a large circle around the church. It will then be easy for them to tie their piece of thread to their neighbour's thread on both their left hand side and their right hand side. Once the unbroken cord of thread has been created move into the prayer of commitment.

On your way into the service this morning you were given a piece of red cord. Would you like to pick it up now and come and make a large circle around the church.

As a way of committing ourselves to the path of loving one another as Jesus has loved us, please tie one end of your cord to the person's cord on your LHS and one end of your cord to the person's cord on your RHS

Would you like to lift up your cord?

- Can you see that we have an unbroken cord of love?
- Let's now commit ourselves to making sure that we do nothing to break that invisible cord of love that exists between us.

Lord Jesus,

Today we commit ourselves to:

choosing love over hate,

choosing service over selfishness,

choosing sharing over greed,

and choosing peace-making over trouble making,

For the glory and honour of your name. Amen.

Prayer:

End with the Lord's Prayer.

Final Hymn:

A song / hymn committing our future into God's hands as per Appendix 1.

Blessing:

You may like to end by saying something like:

As we come to the end of the service today, go out thankful to those who have given up their lives for us in war and determined to live a life of love,
And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

Appendix 1 - Ideas for Songs and Hymns:

i) Opening Songs. Ideas include:

- Come let us worship the King of Kings (Nathan Fellingham © 2001 Thankyou Music)
- Crown Him with many crowns (Matthew Bridges and Godfrey Thring)
- Give thanks to the Lord (Chris Tomlin © worshiptogether.com songs)
- Praise my soul the king of heaven (Henry F Lyte)
- Through all the changing scenes of life (N.Tate)

ii) A song about loving others. Ideas include:

- A new commandment (Author unknown)
- Breathe on me spirit of Jesus (Tim Pownall © 1987 Sovereign Lifestyle Music)
- From heaven you came (Graham Kendrick © 1983 Thankyou Music)
- I want more of you (Chris Jackson © 2009 Powerpack)
- Make me a channel of your peace (Sebastian Temple © 1967 OCP Publications)
- More love, more power (Jude Del Hierro © 1987 Mercy / Vineyard Publishing)

iii) A song celebrating what Jesus did for us on the cross. Ideas include:

- For God so loved the world (John Hardwick © 1993 Daybreak Music Ltd)
- Here I am (Majesty) (Stuart Garrard and Martin Smith © 2003 Curious? Music Ltd)
- He was pierced for our transgressions (Maggi Dawn © 1987 Thankyou Music)
- Jesus you endured my pain (Phil Wickham © 2009 Seems Like Music & Phil Wickham Music)
- Lord I come to you (Geoff Bullock © 1982 Word Music / Maranatha! Music)
- Who O Lord could save themselves (Matt Redman and Jonas Myrin © 2008 Thankyou Music)

v) A song / hymns committing our future into God's hands. Ideas include:

- All I once held dear (Graham Kendrick © 1993 Make Way Music)
- In Christ there is no east or west (John Oxenham)
- Lead us Heavenly Father lead us (James Edmeston)
- Lord for the years (Timothy Dudley-Smith © 1967 Timothy Dudley-Smith / Oxford University Press)
- O God our help in ages past (Isaac Watts)
- We'll walk the land (Graham Kendrick © 1989 Make Way Music)

Appendix 2 –“Love is.....” pictures for Warm up

Picture 1 – “Love is...that special feeling”



Picture 2 – “Love is...when he does things without having to be asked”



Picture 3 – “Love is...having all the patience in the world”



Picture 4 – “Love is...letting him read the sports section in silence”



Picture 5 – “Love is...letting your sister use your skateboard”



Picture 6 – “Love is...baby-sitting for a friend”



Picture 7 – “Love is...giving him another chance”



Picture 8 – “Love is...about making sacrifices”



Appendix 3 – Stories Dramatized

Cast: Ronald Marchant, Walter Young

Props: Both actors dressed in old fashioned clothes.

Directions: The actors can either read out their words or learn them. To keep people's attention the actors could stand / walk around different parts of the church / room to deliver their lines

.....
(Enter Ronald and Walter)

Ronald: Hello, my name is Ronald.....Ronald Marchant. I am the youngest in my family having four older brothers and I lived in the village of Weald in Kent.

Walter: Hello, my name is Walter Young and I used to work in London for the Post Office as a sorter.

Ronald: I signed up to join the war when I was only 19 years old, but I knew that I wanted to serve my country.

Walter: I certainly didn't want to join the war as I am totally opposed to violence, but in the end I signed up in 1915, joining the London Regiment.

Ronald: My family are all Christians, and so I knew that they would be praying for me when I left home to serve my country.

Walter: My church gave me a New Testament when I went off to war, which I really treasured.

Ronald: They made me a stretcher-bearer with the Royal Army Medical Corps and I spent five years at the front bringing back the wounded from No Man's Land. We used to go out each night looking for those men who were wounded and who needed our help....but as soon as sunrise came the order was always given to not go out anymore or we might get shot.

Walter: I fought at the Somme, Ypres and Passchendaele. I was then captured by the Germans and put to work as a prisoner of war in a Prussian coal mine

Ronald: I saw some terrible things.....things that no young man of nineteen should ever see.....men screaming in agony as they were injured, men crying like babies in fear, hundreds of young men lying still on the field.....men my age....with their whole lives in front of them.....dead.

- Walter: Being a prisoner of war was the most miserable time of my life. True, life in the dirtiest and most dangerous trenches was worse while it lasted, but there was always the relief to look forward to if one survived. But life for me at this mine seemed one long round of almost unbroken misery with hardly anything to relieve it.
- Ronald: One morning I remember well.....we had just come back from the field having been out there all night when the chaplain said to me: "There are still two men out there. I'll go if you will." I really didn't want to go, because we all knew that we could be shot by a sniper, but I knew it was the right thing to do.....so off we went. As I walked with the chaplain back onto the field I said goodbye to my mother in my heart. By a miracle we found the two men and we brought them back on our shoulders still alive. I thank God for that day.
- Walter: One day while I was in the camp I felt the Lord saying to me that my fellow Prisoners of War were 'sheep without a shepherd'. And so, I asked a German officer for permission to hold a service. Amazingly it was granted and so I held a series of services, using my little New Testament in the ablutions room where the men washed on leaving the mine.
- Ronald: Amazingly I was awarded the Military Medal, for bravery and was commended as 'a most reliable NCO, a good leader of men...who showed bravery in the field'.
- Walter: I missed my family terribly and longed to return home again. We had so little food to eat in the prisoner of war camp and I was always cold. I will never forget what happened.
- Ronald: I still have nightmares about the terrible things I saw.....I will never forget what happened.

The story about Ronald Marchant's life can be found on the Bible Society's web-site at:

<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/what-we-do/england-and-wales/world-war-1/stories/soldiers/the-man-who-saved-others-lives-at-passchendaele/>

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Appendix 4 – Pictures for Talk 2

Picture 1: “I want that.....”



Picture 2: “I’ve got to have that.....”



Picture 3: “I will take that.....”



Appendix 5 – Drama “Sin Jacket”

Cast: Person (P), Jesus (J)

Props: Dark coloured jacket with the word “SIN” attached to it and draped around a chair, long white robe.

Music: For the opening scene an instrumental upbeat piece of music works well. Once the person has “died,” the music changes. The song: “Above all” (Lenny LeBlanc, Paul Baloche © 1999 Integrity’s Hosanna! Music / Sovereign Music UK) works well.

Directions: This is a mime so the actors need to use big gestures to convey what is going on.

.....
Enter Person and Jesus who stand at a distance apart, both facing the front of the church. Initially the person is bent over slightly as if not yet alive.

As the music begins, so Jesus mimes creating different things eg light, animals, birds. He then comes over and touches the person and “brings them to life.”

Once the person is “alive” Jesus brings them different things to look at / experience. (for example water, food, bird etc)

Gradually the person’s attention is drawn away from Jesus and they begin to notice the jacket. They keep looking at it. They then pick up the jacket and hold it up so the audience can see clearly what is written on it, before rejecting it, firmly placing it back on the chair and turning their back and turning back to Jesus.

The person eventually is so tempted that they go and put on the jacket. They then strut around proudly with their back to Jesus. While this is going on Jesus holds his head in his hands.

The person then detects a nasty smell coming from the jacket and tries to take it off, but can’t. The person struggles more and more to get free, getting more and more desperate, but eventually falls to their knees and dies, lying on the floor, with their back to Jesus. (At this point the music stops)

Jesus then slowly and with dignity walks over to the dead person (with different music) and grieves for what has happened to them.

He slowly takes off his white robe and places it on the chair. He then takes the sin jacket off the dead person and puts it on himself. He then goes into the shape of a cross and meaningfully dies!

The person then comes to life and examines their arms etc, realising that the jacket has gone. They are puzzled, until they turn around and catch sight of Jesus dead.

The person moves slowly to look at Jesus – expressing wonder, grief, remorse etc. They kneel down in front of Him and bury their face in their hands.

Jesus then comes to life, and removes the sin jacket, throwing it away. He goes to his white robe. He takes it off the chair and holds it out for the person to put on.

At first the person refuses, in their remorse, but then accepts it and expresses gratitude, wonder, love for Jesus.

Jesus and the person walk off slowly together, as the music fades out.

(Sin Jacket was written by James Gwyn – Thomas. It can be found on You Tube at www.youtube.com and by putting “Sin Jacket” into the search bar)