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# Worship Resources for Congregations Centenary of Armistice Day

----- 11 November 2018 -----

Prepared by Rev Sue Page (Defence Force Chaplain)  
for The Centre for Music, Liturgy and the Arts





## Introduction

At 11 am on 11 November, 1918 the guns of the Western Front fell silent after more than four years continuous warfare. The allied armies had driven the Germans back, having inflicted heavy defeats upon them over the preceding four months. In November the Germans called for an armistice (suspension of fighting) in order to secure a peace settlement. They accepted the allied terms of unconditional surrender.

From 1919, Armistice Day was marked with 2 minutes silence at the 11th hour to remember the fallen of WWI.

After the end of the Second World War, the Australian and British governments changed the name to Remembrance Day. Armistice Day was no longer an appropriate title for a day which would commemorate all war dead.

As we commemorate the centenary of Armistice Day, we reflect on all times of war that Australia has been involved in, we remember the fallen, but we also pray for those who returned, many damaged physically, emotionally, and spiritually. We also think of our current serving Defence force members, and above all, we pray for peace in our world.

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***Congregations will find this resource both:***

- 1. An act of Remembrance for use during a normal Congregational service  
and***
  - 2. A full Congregational Service for Remembrance Day with Sermon notes (from 2015).***
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# 1. Act of Remembrance

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## Prayer of Remembrance

Let us pray for all who suffer as a result of conflict, and ask that God may give us peace: for the servicemen and women who have died in the violence of war, each one remembered by and known to God;

Leader (L):     May God give peace

**ALL:**           **God give peace**

for those who love them in death as in life, offering the distress of our grief and the sadness of our loss;  
May God give peace

**God 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;  
May God give peace

**God give peace**

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

**God give peace**

for peace-makers and peace-keepers, who seek to keep this world secure and free;  
May God give peace

**God give peace**

for all Defence Force chaplains offering support, encouragement, acceptance, compassion and understanding wherever and whenever it is needed;  
May God give peace

**God 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.  
May God give peace

**God 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.  
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.**

## **Placing poppies of Remembrance (these can be sourced at your local RSL)**

### **Interactive Act of Remembrance 1**

Invite the congregation to create a poppy.  
Visit the Australian War Memorial website to find instructions.  
[http://www.awm.gov.au/education/programs/prepost/PRIM\\_makePoppy.pdf](http://www.awm.gov.au/education/programs/prepost/PRIM_makePoppy.pdf)

As they are making their poppy have someone read out an honour roll, or if your church doesn't have an honour roll then consider researching one either from your local area or from a specific battle. And/or read the poem, 'In Flanders Fields':

### **In Flanders Fields by Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae (1915)**

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.

At the end of the Roll of Honour or poem have someone read the Ode:  
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.

**We will remember them.**

Lest we forget  
**Lest we forget**



## **Interactive Act of Remembrance 2**

During the great wars many soldiers would receive care packages from their families back home, often they would include photos.

Have a number of boxes with photos from WW1 available, you want at least five photos for each congregation member.

The Australian War Memorial's website has thousands of photos and other items. Use the Collection database, type "First World War" in the "Collection Search" as the search term.

Pass the boxes around the congregation and ask people to take a photo from a box, ask them to consider the photos and the lives of those who served there.

Invite people to make a communal collage from the photos. Depending on the size of your congregation you can invite people to do it in small groups, to make a section of a larger collage such a Remembrance Wall.

Once the Remembrance Wall has been completed have someone say the Ode.

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.

**We will remember them.**

Lest we forget

**Lest we forget**

### **Prayer:**

Ever-living God

we remember those whom you have gathered

from the storm of war into the peace of

your presence;

we remember not only the service men and women who gave their lives, but also the ones they left behind who were forever altered by their experience of war...

We remember and give thanks for them – that through hardships and widowhood, they lived, they loved, they sought peace..

may your peace calm our fears,

bring justice to all peoples

and establish harmony among the nations,

through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.



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## **2. Order of Service**

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### **(Complete Congregational Worship Service for Centenary of Armistice Day)**

Welcome & Acknowledgement of country

Call to Worship & Intro Remembrance Day

Hymn

Prayers of Adoration & Confession

The Peace

Bible Readings: Ruth 3: 1 – 5, 4:13 – 17 (These are Year B readings from the RCL)  
Mark 12: 38 - 44

Message (inc song: Mothers, daughters, wives by Judy Small)

Prayers for Others & The Lord's Prayer

Hymn TIS 607 Make me a Channel of your peace

Act of Remembrance: placing poppies of remembrance

Hymn

Sending forth

Blessing Song

### **Acknowledgement of First Peoples**

We acknowledge the *insert the name of the traditional owners* people, who are the traditional custodians of this land. We pay respect to their tribal Elders, past and present and extend that respect to other Aboriginal people (present). We honour their continuing culture, and pray that we might all work together for justice and reconciliation in this nation.

### **Welcome**

### **Call to Worship**

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. Lamentations 3.21-23

### **Intro to Remembrance Day**

At 11 am on 11 November 1918 the guns of the Western Front fell silent after more than four years continuous warfare. The allied armies had driven the German invaders back, having inflicted heavy defeats upon them over the preceding four months. In November the Germans called for an armistice (suspension of fighting) in order to secure a peace settlement. They accepted the allied terms of unconditional surrender.

From 1919, Armistice Day was marked with 2 minutes silence at the 11th hour to remember the fallen of WWI.

After the end of the Second World War, the Australian and British governments changed the name to Remembrance Day. Armistice Day was no longer an appropriate title for a day which would commemorate all war dead.



As we commemorate the centenary of Armistice Day, we reflect on all times of war that Australia has been involved in, we remember the fallen, but we also pray for those who returned, many damaged physically, emotionally, and spiritually. We also think of our current serving Defence force members, and above all, we pray for peace in our world.

Let us worship God.

Let us sing.

## Hymn

## Prayers of Adoration & Confession

Unless it is you, Redeeming One,  
Who works within and among us?  
Our efforts are for nothing.  
May we find rest in your presence?  
For our anxious and over-worked lives.

And from the centre of this peace,  
May we become mindful of a deep joy and happiness  
For the gifts of life around us:  
For laughter and friendship,  
Food that sustains and delights,  
Hospitality expressed and received,  
And for each generation.

God of all mercy,  
Give us grace today to make a fresh start.  
We know we have not loved you with our whole heart,  
Nor have we loved our neighbour as ourselves.

As we hope to be forgiven,  
Teach us how to forgive;  
And lead us forward in a new life  
Where neither grudges  
Nor resentment have a part;  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Words of Assurance:

Hear the word to us in Jesus:  
Those who have faith will receive grace upon grace.  
We are forgiven!

**All: thanks be to God!**



## The Peace

 Bible Readings:     **Ruth 3: 1- 5, 4: 13 - 17**  
  **Mark 12: 38 - 44**

### Sermon written by Rev Sue Page for Remembrance Day 2015

*(please adapt for use and acknowledge author)*

In 2015, we saw a woman celebrated as the first female jockey to win the Melbourne Cup. On Remembrance Day in 2015, Sue Page was the first female chaplain in SA to lead the state Remembrance Day ceremony at the War Memorial.

Reflecting on these things and looking at our readings that focus on women, and not just any women, but widows, and focusing on this Remembrance Sunday, Sue thought it will be appropriate to focus our remembering on the women affected by war.

They were mothers, sisters, daughters, wives, who waved their men goodbye as they set off to fight for freedom.

They did what needed to be done in the men's absence – taking on the jobs that were left by the men going to war – truck drivers, radar operators, mechanics, and more.... All while they prayed, and worried, and waited for news of their men.

Many of them were widowed by the wars of the previous century, and up until our current conflicts – they lost their men, or if they did come home, many were injured physically and mentally, not the same men who left for war.

Of course there also was a generation of women who did not marry or married much older men, and were childless because the men their age were wiped out in WW1 or WWII.

#### **CASUALTIES OF WAR**

##### **MARIE McIVOR, 89, Brisbane, Qld**

*Marie McIvor was barely a twinkle in her father's eye when both he and her future husband joined up to fight in World War I.*

*But two of the most significant men in her life returned from the Great War with very different perspectives.*

*"[My] mother said before [my father] went to the war he was a nice happy type of person and when he came back he was an atheist and had sort of a chip on his shoulder," Mrs McIvor recalls, of the lasting impact of her father's time with the Australian Infantry in France and Belgium.*

*In contrast, her husband saw every day as "a bonus" after his British Royal Navy service. A Scot, Simon McIvor enlisted at Plymouth and was stationed on a mine sweeper in the North Sea. He was one of only two sailors who survived when their ship hit a mine and blew up. However, he lost a lung and the prognosis was so poor that the Navy contacted his family, asking where they'd like him buried.*

*"He survived pretty well for the work he did," Mrs McIvor said. "War didn't affect my husband's outlook on life because he sort of had the nice, happy nature. [His attitude was] whatever happened yesterday is gone."*

*It wasn't until after World War II that Mrs McIvor finally met her husband-to-be when they were both living in the Southern Queensland dairy community of Kenilworth. The 18-year-old spied the man 27 years her senior crossing the road in town.*



*Simon, who immigrated to Australia in the mid-1920s in search of adventure, had been knocked back from serving in World War II because of a foot injury, and was working on a banana farm.*

*"I thought why the hang hasn't someone married him?" Mrs Mclvor, now 89, remembers. "He had a kind look in his eyes." She was aware that Simon lived in the district. "I never heard anything bad about him – that goes a long way in a country town."*

*Their courtship lasted five years, due to Mrs Mclvor's reservations about the age difference. "If you meet someone, you think well there is only one person in the whole world who you can really love. It doesn't matter how old you are," she reasoned.*

*"I said to mum 'I'd rather be happy for 20 [years] than sort of miserable for 50.'"*

*Her father was not pleased with his eldest daughter's decision and didn't attend the wedding in 1951. "His oldest sister stayed at home and looked after everyone when the mother got old and ended up a single old lady of 90 when she died," Mrs Mclvor explained. "I think he had the same plans for me. It wouldn't matter who I was going to marry, that was just how it was."*

*Unlike Marie's distant atheist father, Simon maintained his Presbyterian faith and good humour after the war. Yet he spoke little of his gruesome experiences. "He was a typical Highland Scot, silent and deep. He never complained," Mrs Mclvor says. "Anyone who has been through a fair bit in the services don't talk about it and somebody who has done nothing, you'd think they won the war."*

*Mrs Mclvor didn't like to probe her husband, who died in 1967 of pneumonia, about his war record because she knew it made him sad. He told her once that after their boat blew up, they had to remove the life jackets of their dead crew mates floating in the water. "You just let them sink to the bottom. It's no grave floating around like that is it."*

*Mrs Mclvor felt the threat of war more personally when her only son Roddy was eligible for the national draft during the Vietnam War. "He was nearly ill before the ballot. Six, eight, 10 came up and his birthday was nine. Can you imagine being the mother of someone who got killed? They'd never get over it."*

*Mrs Mclvor has witnessed many lives ruined from serving in Vietnam. "The first [two] wars they had a different attitude," she said. "The last one was duty and the others were experience. I felt like a lot of them joined up because [it was a trip] overseas."*

*Despite her family's war service, and Mrs Mclvor's belief that veterans should be remembered for their sacrifices, Anzac Day was never especially commemorated in the Mclvor house. To this day Mrs Mclvor has little time for war. "It's a waste of young lives, an absolute waste."*

### **Cosima Marriner**

*We hear a lot about the Aussie diggers stories but we hear very little about the stories of the women that were left behind to carry on," she said.*

*"These women fought for public recognition and expression for their loss.*

*"They campaigned for subsidised aged nursing care and built affordable housing."*

*When World War II ended, many Australians celebrated, but thousands of war widows were faced with an uncertain future.*

*The war widows' pension was below the basic wage and many women and children faced living in poverty. The War Widows' Guild became a powerful lobby group, influencing government on issues such as pensions, education benefits and health care.*

(source: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/ww1/three-soldiers-widows-recall-war-and-peace-20140710-zt2wh.html#ixzz3qnMOjM6X>)



Like Ruth and Naomi, and the widow in Mark's gospel, these women made their way in the world, doing what they need to do to get on with life – to survive, and seeking to thrive.

Walter Brueggemann sees the threshing floor, where Ruth "goes to" Boaz (many commentators see a sexual component to the story at this point), as a place where God works mysteriously with and through human beings to make a radically new future imaginable, no matter how things look and work today. Brueggemann finds this future for Israel rooted in the simple things of this story: faithfulness, love, loyalty, trust, hard work, interdependence, sharing, mourning and rejoicing, community, the promise that each new child represents. Through these very real experiences of everyday people, God works wonders and moves along the grander story of which we are all a part, as we learn at the end of this one, when we meet Obed, the grandfather of David and the ancestor of Jesus.

Perhaps, in many ways, it is still a man's world, but women have managed nevertheless in every age to bear children, raise families, take care of business, farm the land, and sometimes, even to give expression to their artistic longings. In fact, throughout the ages, most women (except the very wealthiest, and the wives of the wealthiest men) have had to do physical labor all day in order to survive. Naomi and Ruth's survival skills are less important than the depth of their concern for each other, for that kind of concern, built on faithfulness and loyalty grounded in commitment and care for one another is something upon which to build churches, communities, and a better world. The covenant of care is a place, and an experience, where we can get a taste, just a taste, of God's own steadfast and life-giving love for us. In Ruth, we might even say that we understand just a little better what it means to be created in the image of God, an image we encounter in the most unexpected of people, in the most unlikely of circumstances.

A story of widows who have no living children becomes a story of birth. A struggle to survive becomes the means by which God restores hope to these women and to Israel's unborn generations. God sets into motion a promise – who will be David – through Ruth, the Moabite. The book of Ruth affirms that God works through surprising people and in unexpected ways in order to bring restoration to God's people.

### **Song: Mothers, daughters, wives by Judy Small**

<https://youtu.be/1CZ-UpLCG78>

(**Judy Small**, is a judge of the Federal Circuit Court of Australia who was previously an Australian entertainer, folk singer, songwriter, and guitarist. Known for her feminist, often patriotic, and political songs, usually following a traditional theme, she produced twelve albums, hundreds of songs and has been described as being among the most popular political singers in Australia) source: Wikipedia



## Prayers for Others

O Lord our God, you hear our prayers before we speak, and answer before we know our need. Although we cannot pray as we ought, may your Spirit pray in us, drawing us to you and toward our neighbours. We pray in silence for the world, our nation, situations and people we know of who need your love and care. We ask these prayers in Jesus' name. Amen.

### **The Lord's Prayer**

## Song TIS 607 Make me a Channel of your peace

## Act of remembrance (see page 2-4)

## Prayer of Remembrance

Let us pray for all who suffer as a result of conflict, and ask that God may give us peace:

for the servicemen and women who have died in the violence of war, each one remembered by and known to God;

L: May God give peace

**ALL: God give peace**

for those who love them in death as in life, offering the distress of our grief and the sadness of our loss;

May God give peace

**God 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;

May God give peace

**God give peace**

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

May God give peace

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for peace-makers and peace-keepers, who seek to keep this world secure and free;

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for all Defence Force chaplains offering support,  
encouragement, acceptance, compassion and understanding  
wherever and whenever it is needed;  
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for all who bear the burden and privilege  
of leadership, political, military and  
religious; asking for gifts of wisdom and  
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May God give peace

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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.  
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.**

## Placing poppies of Remembrance to honour Armistice Day

### Prayer:

Ever-living God  
we remember those whom you have gathered  
from the storm of war into the peace of

your presence;

we remember not only the service men and women who gave their lives, but also the ones they  
left behind who were forever altered by their experience of war...

We remember and give thanks for them – that through hardships and widowhood, they lived, they  
loved, they sought peace..

may your peace calm our fears,  
bring justice to all peoples  
and establish harmony among the nations,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.



## Hymn

## Blessing

Restored in spirit,

**may we take new risks in service.**

Renewed in body and mind,

**may we join God in creating justice for all.**

Secure in new hope,

**may we live with joy into the future.**

Go in love to give birth to love,

carrying hope into all the world.

## Blessing Song:

### Suggested Hymns or Songs

This is the day

A new commandment

All people that on earth do dwell

Lord of the Dance

Make me a channel of your peace

The old rugged cross

There is a green hill far away

Now the Green Blade rises

The Servant Song

Battle Hymn

What a friend we have in Jesus

Immortal Invisible

Be thou my vision

May the mind of Christ my saviour

Shout to the lord

O God of every nation

Abide with Me

I Vow to Thee my Country







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