

All Saints Alive

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT



Armistice 11.11.18

Dear Friends,

I don't need to remind anyone that Remembrance Day is on Sunday 11th November. I hope you will be present – or attending in another town, city or village if you are away from Hertford. It is always a significant ceremony, but this year it falls at exactly the time of the signing of the Armistice one hundred years ago. At last the slaughter was over - but at such terrible cost in human lives.

We can feel rightly pleased that the end of the War came, for it at last brought hope to our nation, to Europe and most of the nations of the world that we had finally seen the end of “the war to end all wars”. Of course, that was not the case, but the end of hostilities was and is something to be valued at this time.

The 10.40 am ceremony at the War Memorial will be the time-honoured Act of Remembrance, and we share with the Mayor and many other Civic Dignitaries, with members of the Royal British Legion and the Armed Forces, with uniformed youth organisations, and with the Bishop of Hertford plus over one thousand other members of our community. As ever, we remember the fallen, the bereaved and all whose lives have been badly affected by war and violence both in the World Wars and in more recent military action.

Our service at 11.15 am in All Saints, after the Parade across Gascoyne Way, also involves the majority of those who attended the Act of Remembrance, and the church is almost full – though there has always been room for more. This year we will be giving thanks that the end of the war had finally

come, yet aware that building a lasting peace remained a huge challenge. We will consider in our service what meaning this has for us personally, for our nation and the world at large, thinking about reconciliation and building peace.

Many questions about war and death remain, of course, and I don't think any of us have all the answers. When I lead the ceremony each year I feel great sorrow that it is necessary yet also marvelling that so many come to remember.

There is also the religious side to the ceremony, and – since I do so myself - I can well imagine many people asking why God allows such things to happen. And whoever or whatever we may think God is or what that word stands for, it is a challenge to our beliefs. And if we are non-believers, it is also a huge question mark about our very humanity and any positive ideas we may have about moral progress.

Either way, the terrible nature of war on an industrial scale confronts us. As a Christian I find it hard to see how and where God should intervene when people are exercising their freedom. If we thought we could just go on behaving in increasingly inhuman ways knowing that we would be stopped if we went “too far”, would that not take away our autonomy and our responsibility?

What I do believe is that amid all our folly and madness, there remains a way of life given to us, a way of forgiveness and peace, an ideal of loving our neighbour as ourselves which is normative for fulfilling and harmonious human life (and which I feel

comes from loving God). That is what I pray and work for.

I also find the fact that for all these years people have treasured and held in their hearts the memory of those who gave their lives for freedom and peace so very moving. It is a more positive and gentle side to humanity, and a valuing of the ultimate sacrifice made. Let us keep up our remembrance, from 100 years ago to this day, and pledge ourselves to peaceful living in our homes, our community and our world.

Love,
Jo

Under Attack from Three sides:

**The terrible cost to our
Hertfordshire Regiment 30.07.2017**

Had their advance halted in St Julien the whole operation would have been a complete success, and not so costly, but the 118th Brigade made an attempt to advance beyond the village – the 4th/5th Black Watch on the left, the 6th Cheshires on the right and the 1st Hertfordshires in the centre.

The attack was a gallant effort. They crossed the Steenbeek, and the Hertfordshires continued to advance. The Black Watch and the Cheshires were unable to make as much headway, and eventually the Hertfordshires found themselves up against uncut wire and under attack from three sides.

Lt.-Col. Page was killed, as was Capt. Milne, the adjutant. Every officer became a casualty and the command fell upon R.S.M. Tite until he too fell wounded, then it was left to a sergeant to take command and to lead the Hertfordshires out when the order to retire, conveyed to them by the Chaplain, arrived. The chaplain distinguished himself by being the last man to fall back across the Steenbeck, carrying a wounded man over his shoulder.

Out of a strong battalion that started, the Hertfordshires came out about 120 strong and joined up with their neighbours from home, the Cambridgeshires, who had occupied St Julien.

The Cambridgeshires were forced to evacuate the village by the evening due to the severity of the bombardment, but it was retaken the following day. The 39th Division was relieved on August 4th, and so badly battered was it that it was withdrawn from the line.

The Hertfordshire Regimental prayer

O Lord, Make us worthy of the soldiers who have fought under the colours of the Hertfordshire Regiment and of the glorious achievements of our battalions. Create within us a fervent desire for freedom justice and truth. Give us strength, perseverance and loyalty in all undertakings so that we may prove truly valiant, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, **Amen.**

Team Eucharist- 25th November, Christ the King

The Memorial service has been moved this year because we will be having a Team Family Eucharist for Christ the King on 25th November at which we will be very pleased to welcome Bishop John Gladwin who will be preaching.

Bishop John was born in Hertford, attended Richard Hale School and was a member of All Saints' choir. He is the former Bishop of Chelmsford and on his retirement in 2009 became Chair of Citizens' Advice.

To celebrate this occasion we are planning to hold a Bring and Share lunch after the service for all who would like to attend. I would welcome specific offers of food items so that I can co-ordinate what I need to ask other team church members to provide.

Many thanks
Janet Bird