

Let it Shine!

1 John Ch 2 v 7-10

November is traditionally a month of remembrance and, as such, takes our minds back over past years. We remember the good and the bad but in recent years the emphasis as a nation has been on remembering the First World War. Many have remembered with sadness those family members who lost their lives in the, so called, 'conflict to end all conflicts'. As we know that was not so and many wars, battles and conflicts still continue to take lives and ruin many more.

"Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night". That prayer is taken from the Church of England Book of Common Prayer, and I'm sure, could have been echoed by those Christians in the trenches during WW1 who faced 'perils and dangers' both day and night. Today, we still pray that God's light – God's truth – will shine into our lives as we face the many difficult situations and uncertainties day by day.

Wars are born out of hatred, greed, mistrust and deceit, but God's light brings all evil thoughts out into the open and instead shows love, honesty, justice and peace to all. In John's first letter to the Christian Churches of the time he reminds the people that Jesus Christ was a real human being who brought God's word alive and that all who believed in him and loved God must also love one another. This was not a new commandment but that the old familiar commandment of 'loving God with all your heart and your neighbour as yourself', through Jesus, had been made visible and real. Oh that everyone could follow that commandment! Then, perhaps, wars would be eradicated, harmony would reign and people could live side by side without tension and distrust.

Ever since the amazing display of ceramic poppies round the Tower of London in 2014, churches and communities throughout the country have taken up the idea and made, knitted and crocheted poppies to display in parks and shared local areas - another reminder of the lives lost through wars. They also acted as a symbol of what our previous generations gave for our freedom today.

Earlier this year, at the age of 103, Rosemary Powell retired from selling poppies. She first started making and selling poppies 96 years ago and continued throughout her life. It was her way of remembering her father, 3 uncles, first fiancé and younger brother all lost to wars but more importantly her way of working for peace so that conflicts may cease. Peace is not just the absence of war but the living in harmony that God's light can bring, shining into lives of those who love him - a light that can overthrow darkness, today as in the time of Jesus.

For Discussion

1. During World War 1 fighting ceased on Christmas Day – showing that a small glimmer of God's light still shone –if only for a day – Discuss!! If you are old enough share your memories of WW 2!!
2. Discuss how we can show God's light shining in our communities today. How can we help to ward off the possibility of future wars?