

Longfleet Baptist Church

Newsletter No 200
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Link Up!

‘Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.’
1 Peter 3:9

For the rest of November:

On Sunday 8th November it is Remembrance Sunday. Our service will start at 10.45am and we ask everyone to be seated by that time.

On Sunday 15th November we will be looking at the theme of The Temple

Then on Sunday 22nd November Ken will be taking another Sunday off and Stephen Chaloner will be leading our service.

Finally on Sunday 29th November we will be joining Parkstone Baptist Church at their service which starts at 10.30am.

Then in the evening the Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Baptist Cluster will be holding a Cluster Advent service at Christchurch Baptist Church at 7pm. Anyone wanting to attend but needing a lift should see one of the leadership and we will see what can be arranged.

Every year, around this time, the media loves to stir up controversy about poppies. Red ones, white ones, rainbow ones, homemade ones, Scottish ones, paper ones, metal ones… Does the fat bit go at the bottom? Should the leaf point to 11 o’clock? Frankly it’s all a bit absurd. As an Army veteran, who lost friends in Iraq, Afghanistan and Northern Ireland and whose father, uncle and grandparents all served in the Forces, I’m really not bothered whether someone chooses to wear a poppy or not, and in fact you’ll only see me wearing mine on Remembrance Sunday and Remembrance Day.

For many people who have or who are serving, and their families, everyday is Remembrance Day. Every day they think of the friends and loved ones they have lost, and the physical and psychological cost of having served, to themselves and to their friends.

Whilst there may be elements of human behaviour in times of conflict that we can honour, such as courage, sacrifice, steadfastness and so on, what we must never do is honour war itself. We should be abhorred by the violence that humans have and are committing against one another and against the rest of creation. In a recent Hot Topic sermon, we thought of war and the use of force – how sometimes the just use violence may be the only option. However, we mustn’t detach ourselves from the reality that in two World Wars and numerous other conflicts, millions of humans have suffered and died, and significant damage has been done to our planet.

Other Notices:

On Sunday 15th November we will be holding a Church Members' Meeting after the morning service. Members, please bring your lunch as usual and we will provide drinks. Agendas and other paperwork will be sent in advance of the meeting.

On Saturday 21st November we will be holding our annual concert for Poole Lifecentre and Foodbank with Bournemouth Male Voice Choir. between 4 – 5pm. Tickets are free but we ask that those attending either bring items from the Foodbank Christmas Parcels list or donate towards the running cost of the Foodbank. Tickets can now be ordered either from our church website or from our Facebook page. If you have a problem doing this then see Kim or Janet to order tickets.

If you are unable to attend the concert you can still contribute food for the Christmas parcels. There are copies of the shopping list of suitable items in the entrance by the offering box.

Writing in around 700BC both the prophet Isaiah and the prophet Micah prophesied a time when 'they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.' Tragically, in the intervening 2700 years, this prophesy has not been fulfilled.

We're told that we should wear our poppies with pride, but that I cannot do. Whilst I believe in the just use of force; that on occasion it is absolutely right and necessary to use violence to prevent a greater violence, that is not something which makes me proud. Having led Remembrance Services in England, France, Belgium, Turkey and Cyprus, and seen the hundreds of thousands of white tombstones, each one marking a young person who died; having stood on the beaches of Dunkirk, Normandy and Gallipoli; having stood in the mine craters of the Somme; having ministered to hundreds of soldiers who served in recent conflicts - it makes me sad, it makes me angry, it makes me disappointed.

Whether or not you choose to wear a poppy this Remembrance Season, I encourage you to spend some time in reflection; forget the government and media propaganda and rhetoric, and remember that real people, really suffer as a result of human greed and envy. Remember the words of God spoken through his prophets and his Messiah – Ps46 'He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire.' Mat 5:44 'love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.'

Rev Ken Adolphe