

Dear friends,

On Sunday 10th November, as a village, we will gather around the Hightown War Memorial to remember and give thanks for those who have lost their lives in conflicts going back over a century, and at 11am we will fall silent for two minutes. It's important that we remember, with thanks, the names chiselled out on our village memorial. The Kohima Epitaph in Northeast India reads,



'When you go home, tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow we gave our today'.

We will remember them.

At St Stephen's, we continue to pray for peace. We light the 'Peace Candle' and pray the following prayer before all of our services, and include it in our live-stream Compline, each Sunday evening:

*"Most holy God and Father,
hear our prayers for all who strive for peace
and all who fight for justice.
We pray for the leaders of the nations,
that you will guide them in the ways of freedom, justice and truth.
As we commend to you lives lost in terror and conflict,
bring us all, in the end, to the peace of your presence:
through Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose Holy Name we pray. Amen."*

We are reminded daily, on our television screens and in our newspapers, of the ongoing and seemingly escalating wars and conflicts in our world.

In my November Focus letter last year, I quoted words from Henri Nouwen, they are just as, if not more relevant this year:

"For Jesus, there are no countries to be conquered, no ideologies to be imposed, no people to be dominated. There are only children, women and men to be loved".

"As peacemakers, we must resist all the powers of war and destruction and proclaim that peace is the divine gift offered to all who affirm life".

Wherever you are on Sunday 10th at 11am, do pause, do fall silent, do remember with gratitude for those who have given their lives and, if you can, offer a prayer for peace in our troubled world. Prayers are always heard.

If you can be with us at the Hightown War Memorial, you will be most welcome to join us in church afterwards for our Remembrance Day Service.

**God Bless,
Keith**