

With God in the Garden

Read Luke CH 22 v 14 - 20

November is often thought of as a month of remembrance focussing on the 11th hour of the 11th day when most people still remember those killed in the two great wars, plus those who have lost their lives in many conflicts since, in a two minutes silence. This year, we as a nation, have looked back to significant dates in the first and second World Wars and remembered with sorrow those who gave their lives but also celebrated with pride and thankfulness the fact that those same men and woman gave their lives for our freedom.

In London 888,246 ceramic poppies, one for each person lost, flow out of the battlements of the Tower of London. The sight is amazing, making one just stand and stare as they remember the enormity of the events and the memorial this gives in their memory.

Individuals are able to buy these poppies and later this year those remaining will be moved to The National Arboretum in Staffordshire, another place of remembrance that is a living and growing tribute to the service and sacrifice of so many. There are many, many gardens and memorials on the 150 acre site each with its own story of heroism and sadness. This unique place is spiritually uplifting and well worth visit.

Month by month, in our communion service, we remember the words of our Lord as he broke the bread and drank the cup with his disciples in the "last super" (v 19b). Remembering is very important and, although I constantly hear those around me saying my memory is not what it was, the early Christians had very good memories. As we know the scriptures were not written down for several years after Jesus' death and everything was passed down through the oral tradition (by word of mouth). We have their good memories to thank as the happenings of Easter Week were recorded and Jesus moved from the Upper Room to the Garden of Gethsemane.

On Monday 4<sup>th</sup> August this year The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge (Kate and William) were in another garden – the St Symphorien Military Cemetery Garden just outside Mons in Belgium. Mons was the scene of the first major engagement for the British in the Second World War. In that woodland, garden setting a lone piper was heard playing as the sun set casting long shadows over the memorials of German and English soldiers lying side by side. Very moving! The Duke reminded those present of the words of Nurse Edith Cavell who served on both sides of the trenches in World War One. She wrote "I must have no hatred or bitterness towards anyone". Sometimes it seems that we still have not truly learnt that lesson! Those words remind me of Jesus' words on the cross "forgive them they know not what they do". There was much symbolism in extinguishing lights on 4<sup>th</sup> August in church services and homes throughout the country but remember - the light of Jesus can never be extinguished. His light still burns brightly. We must be examples of that light today.

For discussion

1. How can we show that light as individuals in our daily life?
2. Does your local community see your congregation as a shining light?
3. Which flowers and plants do you see as shining lights in the garden?