

NCT SA Connected

Reimagining Church - Let's Worship Together

SUNDAY: 8th November 2020

Theme: FALLEN LEAVES

Key Text: Matthew 5:1-11; John 15:9-15, 18-21



We are invited to pause and take time to reflect this Remembrance Sunday; The following link provides a reflective video with the piece Prelude on 'Lavenham'; a video presentation of The Last Post with appropriate images to accompany the two-minute silence, and a video of a poem entitled Pure Peace. <https://youtu.be/ubdfTMRf77M>

The following words by Nick Fawcett—are the words associated with 'Prelude to Lavenham'

Lord, there are times when I have to ask, 'What?' –
times when your love is not easy to spot.
What is life's purpose and what of me here?'
Grant me some answers, Lord, make your will clear.

Lord, there are times when I have to ask, 'How?' –
times when what's preached doesn't square with life now.
Wrestling with doubt I ask, 'How can this be?'
Grant me some answers, Lord, help me to see.

Lord, there are times when the questions run fast –
times when I fear that my faith may not last.
Help me, support me, Lord, help me get through.
Lead me through darkness till light shines anew.

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Pure Peace - Stephanie Lamplough

Pure peace comes from above, it is a manifestation of selfless love
If you find you can forgive, you'll find that you can live in Pure Peace
Pure peace comes from deep inside, when you get rid of foolish pride
Only when you can forgive, will you find that you can live in Pure Peace
There are no excuses, there can be no blame
Just realisation that we're all loved the same
Like Jesus we must forgive, and then we can live in Pure Peace
Pure Peace cannot reign where judgement presides
Where labels and hatred a word divides
We need to learn to forgive, Only then can we live - in Pure Peace
Pure peace in a world which is dark and broken
Where we have not learnt from the men that have fallen
Only when we start to forgive can we truly live in Pure Peace
A peace may be seen in the word today, let it be so, dear Lord I pray
That the gift of Pure peace can be seen in each heart
So that slowly day by day the world will start to live - in PURE PEACE

Suggested Songs and Worship Resources

Song: Praise to the Lord, the Almighty the King of creation <https://youtu.be/ccjBp5MJp7g>

Song: O Valiant Hearts <https://youtu.be/7NbqT6iZwQU>

Virtual Choir: Soldiers Hymn <https://youtu.be/iQaqfpCuDYc>

Blessing: The Lord Bless You and Keep You <https://youtu.be/xRI5fmhZzxA>



Continued....

Message: Fallen Leaves (Major Liz Hancock)

Do you ever find yourself pondering the mysteries of the natural world?

The other day I was taking a walk, as I often do, through the local county park, admiring the autumnal colours which lay like a carpet beneath my feet. Colours which had just a few days before adorned the trees which lined my path and I found myself asking 'Why must leaves leave the trees'.

Well I'm certainly no arborist, when it comes to the cultivation and management of the trees in my own garden, I'd rather leave it to the experts; but as autumn is perhaps my most favourite season, none the least because let's face it, it is a season of outstanding beauty, when the natural world treats us to a last burst of colour before the onset of winter, I thought that maybe I ought to at least try to understand the reason for the Fallen Leaves.

As winter descends, trees facing punishingly cold temperatures and frigid winds, have to reduce themselves to their toughest parts - stems, trunks, branches, bark in order to survive, and so Leaves must fall.

Evergreens can hang on to their leaves through winter, because their foliage is coated in a wax that helps protect against cold, and their cells bear anti-freeze chemicals that ward off winter's worst woes. Not so for broadleaf, or deciduous, trees. The fluids that flow through their leaves are thin and susceptible to freezing, the tissues tender. Winter cold dooms the leaves, and trees save energy by getting rid of them; they become the sacrifice!

In the Gospel of John, we find verses which sit within a passage frequently referred to as 'The Parable of the Vine' a passage which describes Jesus' disciples as branches of himself, who is described as the "true vine", and God the Father the "husbandman" the one who cultivates or 'tends to' the vine. In the verses which you are encouraged to read; John 15:9-15, 18-21; Jesus knew what was about to happen to him (he was to be arrested, falsely tried, he would face death by crucifixion, prior to his resurrection and ascension). He impresses on his disciples their need to remain in fellowship with him ... He speaks of the vine and branches; I speak of a tree and its leaves. The point is, Jesus – the vine or the tree – does not cast off his branches or leaves! But do they abandon him? According to Jesus, the essence of fellowship with him is love, – a love that proves itself by obedience. And the primary proof of obedience is love for one another - Jesus said; "My command is this: love each other as I have loved you".

It is easy to say we love God, but we show it by loving God's people! And it is easy to say we love others, but we show it ultimately, how...? well v13 speaks of laying down one's life for one's friends.

Fallen Leaves Today we honour those who laid down their lives for us... Untold numbers in two World Wars and conflicts since; Fallen leaves – not shed by their nation, but "laid down their lives for their friends"! Today, we honour their memory. We recall their sacrifice. We thank God for deliverance gained at such a price.

A soldier, sailor, Airman may go to war in quest of adventure or out of high principles and ideals; but when he fights to the death it is for his mates, His friends. He will do anything for them.

We think of the great love shown by those whose names we honour today. Men and Women who took up the mantle of our Lord's example and instruction.

You see, when Jesus speaks of the love that lays down its life, he is not committing us to a path he has not himself trodden; and there is no greater love than the love of the Jesus, who laid down his life for those – once his enemies – whom he names his friends. He who left the comfort and glory of his Father's right hand, to come to a world of darkness, suffering, sin and death – to bear the taunts and rejection of men and women who questioned his motives and

challenged his authority. To open up the only way by which sinners such as you and I might be restored to life and to peace with God!

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In remembering the sacrifice of those who fell in times of war, we recognise the freedom which as a result is ours, but we must also recognise that we are each called to love and to serve, and if need be, to lay down our lives... And so I pray that God may help us to serve wholeheartedly and unreservedly! To know the dignity of true service! The fallen leaf perishes; but those who serve in the name of Christ will never perish: for he gave his life that we might live with him forever. What a price! What a victory!

My command is this: love each other as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. My command is this: love each other as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

We'll meet again

Church bells ring out, our heads are bowed,
Soft rain provides a gentle shroud;
Familiar words sound crisp and clear,
And all the people gathered here
Respond with their remembrance,
In spoken, solemn reverence...

So many names engraved in stone,
Yet, scanning them, I feel alone,
Silent among the shuffling crowd,
Grief stricken, but immensely proud
Of such brave men, who, free from pain
In Heaven's light, We'll meet again...

Stephen Pearson

Closing Prayer

Grant us Lord,
Not just peace
but reconciliation
in our world,
an end to all that divides
and destroys,
so that those previously estranged
may come together,
shoulder to shoulder,
heart to heart.
Heal our wounds,
and make us one,
in the name of Christ.
Amen.

