A field of red flowers

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Description automatically generated**Worship at Home Sheet: Sunday 14th November 2021 Compiled by Pauline Zähner**

**Remembrance Sunday**

**Our call to Worship** : As we still our hearts and minds and come to you, we recall the words of Psalm 16 :

Keep us safe, O God, for in you we take refuge. Make known to us your path of life and fill us with joy in your presence.

**Hymn : Hymns and Psalms 358, Singing the Faith 132** O God our help in ages past or

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ssr-Ga3Mz6Q>

**Prayers**

Gracious God, we praise you for your great promises to us, your faithfulness and your constant love for us. We know that we can rely on you, whatever we face and we know that you are with us in all our trials and challenges, those in war time and those in peace time.

We thank you for the work done by our armed forces, their readiness to act on our behalf, the strength of their courage and the resilience that they show whether they are on active service or at home. We thank you for the sacrifice so many have made to ensure that we can live in peace and enjoy a rich a fruitful life. We thank you, too, for the sacrifices made by service people’s families and for the loved ones of all who support our service people: those who organise, cook, load and pack, repair and mend, those who offer words of encouragement, including the chaplains and those who offer medical support. Amen

The Lord’s Prayer

**Hymn : Hymns 404 and Psalms, Singing the Faith 705** It is God who holds the nations in the hollow of his hand

**Readings** : Psalm 16, Mark 13 verses 1-8 and Hebrews 10.11-14(15-18)19-25

**Hymn : Hymns and Psalms 402, Singing the Faith 696** For the healing of the nations

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXtfIE6jSYQ>

**Reflection**

Recently, I heard the true story of an 8 year old boy who, in January 1941, together with his family had been to visit his relatives. When the family returned to their home, they found, in ruins, not just their own house but most of the street in which their house had stood. Imagine their shock, their numbness, their grief and their inability to get their heads around what had happened. Did they just stand and stare for a while? At some point, it must have dawned on them – perhaps all of a sudden – how fortunate they had been at their relatives’ house one and a half hours away from the bombing. Otherwise, the unthinkable might have happened. They might be lying under the rubble, dead and possibly not yet found. Gradually, they will have wondered about their neighbours. What happened to them? Where were they?

The family stumbled, almost unknowingly, through the broken bricks and plaster of what once had been their safe refuge, their home, the place they had built up painstakingly. They had saved patiently and carefully, doing without so many things so that their children could have a nice place to grow up in, a place where they themselves could grow old. All gone, nothing left in one piece, so they thought. And yet, their 8 year old did find one treasure, one thing, just one thing which had been left intact: his Hornby train. Yes, the box was a bit more battered than when he last saw it but that train which meant as much to him as a teddy, a soft toy or a favourite doll might mean to another child was there for him. His parents, still in their state of inertia, were probably pleased that at least their child had found some treasure, something to keep him busy whilst they discussed what to do next.

Buildings whether they be our houses, our religious places of worship or our social and cultural buildings play an important role in our lives. They help us shape our environments and we see them as landmarks which are robust, representing stability and indestructability. Should they fall because of adverse weather (such as a hurricane) or be destroyed in war, their destruction is significant for us as we see in the 9/11 disaster which we describe, even though thousands of people died, as the “destruction of the twin towers”. The thought that the impressive Temple of Jerusalem might be the target of an enemy army and reduced to rubble must have been shocking to the disciples. They – nor subsequently did the Roman army who ransacked the building - didn’t yet grasp the fact that the building, itself, was much less important than the worship it stood for. Jews evolved their worship after the Temple fell in 70 A.D. but for new worshippers of Christ, temple worship would become redundant, after Jesus was crucified and rose again. Change, painful change would come for all but to those who endured gain would be greater than loss.

Jesus takes the disciples symbolically to the Mount of Olives, that place of crushing olives and the place where he will be crushed as he takes on obediently the will of his father. In answer to the question of a few disciples he gives them the promise of hope, that, as in birth, pain will be followed by rejoicing.

What treasure or sign of hope will we find this week in our readings? What will be our equivalent of the boy finding his train? What will lift us most as we go into the coming week? Will it be the message of the psalmist of Psalm 16 who has trust in the Lord as God provides for us, gives wise counsel and leads us onto the path of life in all its fullness. Will it be the message of the Mark reading inviting us to see that though there will be traumatic times these will be replaced by a better life? Maybe, it is the Hebrews’ reading which talks of Christ’s sacrifice so that our sins can be forgiven and we can move forward together in faith and confidence with a clean slate, a new start according to the new covenant that Jesus has inaugurated. All our readings this week offer us the hope of a better life to come.

**Hymn : Singing the Faith 693** Beauty for brokenness or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MO1G-o7Yj-c>

**Hymns and Psalms 559/ Singing the Faith 531** What a friend we have in Jesus <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pi1-5kmbkyQ>

*As we remember the bravery and sacrifice of those in the armed forces who have served in war time and think through others who have suffered during the periods of war we will see that, whether service personnel or others they have risked everything because they believed in a better life to follow the anxiety and fear.*

**Prayers from “The Vine” by David Adam** *Let us take our poppy*

*As we hold one of the petals*. Father, the red of this petal is like the red of the blood shed by so many in the wars of the last century. We remember members of our family who were directly involved in those wars, some in the armed forces, some left behind. We remember injury, trauma, death, courage, fear – lives changed forever.

*As we take hold of another petal*. We hold before God the violence and warfare of our own times – the simmering violence in our world today, the open hostilities and threat of terrorism. We pray, Father, that you will give us politicians and military leaders equal to the huge tasks they face – wise in judgement, calm in spirit, makers of peace.

*As we touch the centre of the poppy*, *the place where the seeds are kept, ready for new life*. Lord, take the seeds of peace which lie in the hearts of your people everywhere, and cast them generously over every continent and nation. Let those seeds germinate, grow and flourish. Beat our swords into ploughshares, our spears into pruning hooks and our weapons of mass destruction into technologies for peace.

*As we hold the green leaf:* We remember the green and growing hope which comes from faith alone, faith in a God for whom everything is possible, even in the darkest hour. May hope guide our politics, our nation, our thinking and our lives. May hope draw us ever nearer to that day when the world shall be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

In your mercy, forgive our foolish ways, help us to listen before we fight and save the innocent,  
In your mercy, hear us, Amen

**Hymn : Hymns and Psalms 81, Singing the Faith Hymn: 81 STF –** Now thank we all our God **-** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePSfu0dF8JU>

**Blessing (from “The Vine” by Tim Baker)**

May the God who mourns with his people, the Son who sacrificed his own life that we might experience the depths of God’s love and the Holy Spirit whose presence of peace never leaves us, bless us all today, tomorrow and forever.

Amen.