

When the guns fell silent ...

We can read about the horrors of trench warfare, of rotting corpses in the mud, of men choking in gas attacks on the Western Front, but we can't possibly know just what it was like for the soldiers, or for their loved ones at home. We can hardly imagine too the overwhelming grief, the numbness, the loss of hope or optimism for the future when the guns finally fell silent on November 11th 1918.

Every year we are reminded of those terrible events when the Civic Act of Remembrance is held here at Holy Trinity, and it will be particularly significant this year which marks 100 years since the end of that war. Of course, 'remembrance' for the vast majority of us is not actually 'remembering'; we have no personal memories of war, or even of those who died in war. Is it enough, especially in this centenary year, to honour their sacrifice just by reminding ourselves of what happened all those years ago?

It is right and proper to honour those many thousands who gave their lives, but if Remembrance is to be truly meaningful we need to think about peace as well as war. In November 1918 people must have prayed fervently that such a devastating calamity would never occur again; but sadly, we know that there was to be another war barely a generation later, and that many more wars have been fought since – and are still going on today.



Les Colombes at Salisbury, May-July 2018

As our special commemoration of the Armistice here at Holy Trinity, during October and November we are planning to highlight the theme of peace. At the centre of our commemoration will be an artwork consisting of doves of peace made by people from our congregation and community. This was inspired by the beautiful art installation *Les Colombes* which was displayed in Salisbury Cathedral earlier this year, which was meant to bring a message of "hope, humanity and new beginnings". Many residents of Salisbury contributed to this, and there will be a similar opportunity for all of us to contribute to the Holy Trinity display if we would like to. After the 9.30 service at Holy Trinity on Sunday

September 9th you can see a demonstration of how the doves are made, and have a go if you wish. Subsequently there will be other opportunities to take part. We are also putting together a small exhibition on *War and Peace 1918-2018*, and there will be more items created for the church on the theme of peace.

‘Seeking Peace’, our commemoration of Remembrance 2018, is an opportunity for us to look prayerfully at our world and at ourselves; to remind ourselves of what has happened in the century since the First World War; and to consider what our faith teaches us about peace. If we truly believe that the sacrifice of the war dead should not be in vain, then each one of us must work towards peace in every aspect of our lives. It’s not the responsibility of governments, or the United Nations, or priests and bishops ... it starts with us. Trying to reach out to people who are different, learning to be tolerant of other points of view, looking for the positive rather than the negative characteristics of other individuals, races or faiths – these must surely be our tribute to those who gave their lives in war.

“Peace is not something you wish for. It’s something you make, something you do, something you are, and something you give away”. (John Lennon)

Sheila Holliday