

## Bride Valley Telephone Service

**5 November 2023 All Saints. The service will be available on 01308 293062**

Hello, and welcome to the Bride Valley Telephone service. My name is Paul Cheater, and I'm one of the three Lay Worship Leaders in the Benefice.

Before we begin our service, let's have a few moments of silence, so that we can prepare ourselves for worship. *Silence*

Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

So we sing our first hymn: O God, our help in ages past

1 O God, our help in ages past,  
our hope for years to come,  
our shelter from the stormy blast,  
and our eternal home;

4 A thousand ages in thy sight  
are like an evening gone;  
short as the watch that ends the night  
before the rising sun.

2 Under the shadow of thy throne  
thy saints have dwelt secure;  
sufficient is thine arm alone,  
and our defence is sure.

5 Time, like an ever-rolling stream,  
bears all its sons away;  
they fly forgotten, as a dream  
dies at the opening day.

3 Before the hills in order stood,  
or earth received her frame,  
from everlasting thou art God,  
to endless years the same.

6 O God, our help in ages past,  
our hope for years to come,  
be thou our guard while troubles last,  
and our eternal home.

*Isaac Watts (1674-1748) (Public Domain)*

Our first reading today comes from the Book of Revelation, chapter 7, verses 9 to 17

After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honour and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!"

Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?" I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, "they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. 'Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat down on them,'<sup>1</sup> nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd; 'he will lead them to springs of living water.' 'And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.'"

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

HYMN: I vow to thee my country

1 I vow to thee, my country, all earthly things above,  
entire and whole and perfect, the service of my love:  
the love that asks no question, the love that stands the test,  
that lays upon the altar the dearest and the best;  
the love that never falters, the love that pays the price,  
the love that makes undaunted the final sacrifice.

2 And there's another country, I've heard of long ago,  
most dear to them that love her, most great to them that know;  
we may not count her armies, we may not see her King;  
her fortress is a faithful heart, her pride is suffering;  
and soul by soul and silently her shining bounds increase,  
and her ways are ways of gentleness and all her paths are peace.

*Cecil Arthur Spring-Rice (1859-1918)(Public Domain)*

Our second reading comes from St Matthew's Gospel, chapter 5, vv 1 to 12

Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them.

He said: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

### **ADDRESS:**

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, now for ever. Amen

Let me begin with three quotes. Two from authors, and one from the Bible.

No one can tell you about grief, about its limitless boundaries, its unfathomable depths. No one can tell you about the crater that is created in the centre of your body, the one that nothing can fill."

"No one ever told me that grief felt so like fear. The same fluttering in the stomach, the same restlessness. I keep on swallowing."

"I will remember them, and my soul is downcast within me. Yet this I call to mind

and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." *Lamentations 3:20-23*

Today we remember all those who gave their lives in the two world wars, as well as those who paid the ultimate sacrifice in other conflicts. For many of us it will be a time of personal reflection, too, as we remember those whom we love but see no longer.

For those who lost their lives while engaged in battle, we know that they believed that they were fighting for something in which they believed passionately: something for which they were prepared to give their all, and, if necessary, to die for it.

Some of you will have heard me talk before about faith, hope and love. But when it comes down to it, that's what we are really focusing on as we remember those who gave their lives. People, often young people, who had the faith to believe that they were fighting for a cause in which they believed: a faith that gave them the assurance that even if they were to die, then they had not died in vain. Many of them, my own father having been one of them, developed a greater awareness of their own personal faith and belief during the fighting and awfulness of war.

As has been said before by others, the inevitable and entirely understandable question about war, often asked, is why, if God is an all-loving God, He can allow such terrible things to happen. And as I also said, God has given us the gift of free will: the ability to act in the way we want to. He is not a controlling father, he is a loving one, who allows us to do as we choose, but is there for us when we need him to be, to offer help, courage, strength and wisdom. But it's up to us to ask, just as we seek advice and help from our

parents when we need it. Those who gave their lives had hope. Hope that their courage, their bravery, their willingness to give everything, would help to bring about a better world. Of course, they probably had the more simple, personal hope that they would survive, but I like to believe that their sense of hopefulness was much wider and all-encompassing than that.

And finally, love. Jesus went to the Cross because of his love for all of God's people. He was ready and willing, even if apprehensive, to give his life for all of us. The men and women who have given their lives on the battlefield have done so because of their own love of their country and their families. They have not been prepared to sit back and let the world order take its own course: they were ready to play their part to the full, and, through love, play their part in creating what they believed would be a better world.

So, faith, hope, love. Does any of this chime with us here, today, now? Well, yes. I believe it does. And, at a much lesser, though no less important, level, we are playing our part in making our world, even – and especially - here in the Bride Valley, a better one.

If we try to live our lives on the three core values of faith, hope, and love, then there is no limit to what we can ultimately achieve.

As St Paul wrote: 'So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love'. **Amen**

And so to our prayers. Let's pray.

Ever-living God we remember those whom you have gathered from the storm of war into the peace of your presence; may that same peace calm our fears, bring justice to all peoples and establish harmony among the nations, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Father of all, remember your holy promise, and look with love on all your people, living and departed. On this day we especially ask that you would hold forever all who have suffered during war, those who returned scarred by warfare, those who waited anxiously at home, and those who returned wounded, and disillusioned; those who mourned, and those communities that were diminished and suffered loss. Remember too those who acted with kindly compassion, those who bravely risked their own lives for their comrades, and those who in the aftermath of war, worked tirelessly for a more peaceful world. And as you remember them, remember us, O Lord; grant us peace in our time and a longing for the day when people of every language, race, and nation will be brought into the unity of Christ's kingdom.

This we ask in the name of the same Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

O God of the nations, as we look to that day when you will gather people from north and south, east and west, into the unity of your peaceable Kingdom, guide with your just and gentle wisdom all who take counsel for the nations of the world, that all your people may spend their days in security, freedom, and peace, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

Lord, you have generously blessed us with an abundance of gifts. Help us to share in that generosity by living in a way that ensures that your gifts will continue to be available for future generations. Lord in your mercy – **hear our prayer.**

O Lord God, we live in a world where some throw out food while others go to bed hungry; where some have modern amenities of life at their disposal and other struggle to find drinking water. May we learn to share with one another and, in this way, come to share in your generosity to all. Lord in your mercy – Hear our prayer We pray for our King, and for all heads of state and international leaders, that they may be guided by your Spirit to make wise decisions. We continue to pray especially for the people of Israel and the Palestinian people, Ukraine, and Afghanistan, as we do for all your people who are suffering the horrors of war. O God, give us your love for the whole of Creation – and in your mercy – **hear our prayer.**

Creator God, You have blessed humankind with understanding, imagination and memory. We pray that you may show us how to learn from past mistakes and plan for the future creatively and responsibly. Lord in your mercy – **hear our prayer.**

**Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen**

**And so we join all of our prayers together, as we say the words that Jesus taught us:  
Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth  
as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those  
who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the  
kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen**

We conclude our service by singing the National Anthem

1 God save our gracious King,  
long live our noble King,  
God save the King.  
Send him victorious,  
happy and glorious,  
long to reign over us:  
God save the King.

2 Thy choicest gifts in store  
on him be pleased to pour,  
long may he reign.  
May he defend our laws,  
and ever give us cause  
to sing with heart and voice,  
God save the King.

**The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the Fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be  
with us all, now and always. Amen.**