



## REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICE



There was a packed church assembled for the St Faiths Remembrance Day Service on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> November, so many people came that three extra rows of chairs had to be put out and almost every seat was taken. The occasion was to remember all those who had made the supreme sacrifice on our behalf and also to rededicate our own war memorial which had recently had some much needed restoration work done by North Hertfordshire Council.

Unfortunately Charmaine was unable to be present, however the service was expertly led by our Church Wardens, Brenda and Mike. There were a number of special guests present and these included Ben Gainsford and his family, historian Aidan Lawes, Bernard Lovewell and Ray Shakespeare-Smith our local Councillors and our old friends the Hitchin Sea Cadets. We also had the Beavers, Cubs & Scouts as well as the Sea Scouts. Aiden had arranged some notice boards at the back of church with articles of interest on the effects of war and the erecting of wayside shrines.

The service started with that great hymn 'O God Our Help In Ages Past' and afterwards Aidan gave a fascinating talk about how local history was affected by the Great War. He explained that the Hitchin Curate from St Mary's had been one of those who died in the first sinking of a British ship hit by a torpedo. Aidan also explained that our memorial had been erected in 1917, before the war ended and there was a newspaper cutting at the back of church which told the story. After the war the Bishop had written to all the parishes to enquire how the war had affected local villages. Aidan also read an excerpt from a very moving poem, written from a wife's viewpoint about her husband, who had returned from war alive but a very different person to the one who had left her.

The Music Group played for the next hymn 'The Old Rugged Cross' and after this Ben Gainsford, the great, great grandson of our founding vicar, Rev G B Gainsford gave a short talk. Ben, whose family who now run Redcoats Farmhouse Hotel, spoke about the early days of St Faiths Church, and how as a mission church, it had remained the property of his great, great grandfather until his death in 1933 when it passed into the possession of the Church of England.

Brenda read the gospel reading and the Music Group played that stirring hymn 'Eternal Father, Strong To Save' which for obvious reasons is used by all seafarers. After this Hazel Beadle led the activity phase of our service. Hazel told us how to make a poppy with materials she had prepared earlier. The intention was that once people had made their poppies, they could write the name of someone they wanted to remember and there would be an opportunity to place their individual poppy in the war memorial, at the rededication part of the service.

Mike led the congregation in prayer and after this everyone joined in with singing that great hymn Jerusalem, which was sung with much gusto and commitment. A more sombre part of the service followed with Mary Brenchley leading the congregation to the war memorial as people processed out of church to Walford Davies 'Solemn Melody' played on the organ.

The congregation gathered around the war memorial. Mary rededicated the memorial and Arthur Harris laid the remembrance wreath on behalf of the whole church. This is to remember all of those who have lost their lives in all conflicts throughout the world. Those who had made their own poppies were also able to lay them at the memorial. 'The Last Post' was played by Michael Page and two minutes silence was observed and followed by 'Rouse'.

War is a ghastly and terrible occurrence – and its effects spread far and wide, reaching all parts of communities. We remember all of those, who on our behalf sacrificed their lives in conflicts throughout the world. We remember those who have been injured in body and mind. In particular we remember the families of the dead and injured, many of whom are still coping with their grief and distress to this day.

***'At the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember them'***

