

SUNDAY November 9, 2025

“We Will Remember them”

Psalm 121 844 VU Ephesians 4: 25-32 and 5: 1-2 John 15: 9-17

When was the last time you went out of your way to do something for someone else? That is the action you took for this other person caused you to change your plans, maybe spend some money to buy something, or even called you into questioning whether you should or not do what you actually did? If we cannot answer this question too easily, that is we cannot recall when we actually did something for another person, then the second question is this- why not?

What prevented you from acting on impulse, intuition or just to do it? Was there something or someone blocking you? Maybe it was another person's comments which hurt as to why you shouldn't; or somebody told you that couldn't and so you did not or even another person said you aren't able. Did this occur?

But what have you thought about since then? I should have, could have and would have? This is often called second- third guessing oneself in light of what others may say- complaints or compliments; negatively or positively. But what is underlying all of these things is this- how do you know what is the right/ proper/ acceptable thing to do? And should you go by what your inner self is saying?

As we reflect on the many stories of people who served Canada in times of war, battles or in peacekeeping missions these stories tell us of the courage, desire and inner want to help others. In the November 1, 2025 edition of the Windsor Star, the Life Story of Pte. Joel V. Wiebe is shared. The story tells about this young man who grew up knowing that one day he would enlist in the Canadian Forces. He enrolled in the fall of 2004 and did his basic training. In 2006, Joel made the decision to volunteer for an upcoming deployment to Afghanistan, which was scheduled from February to August 2007. When he told his mom the news and she asked him why, he said, “Mum, because we are needed there. We need to continue to make a difference. Girls can't even go to school there! What if (his sisters) Michelle, Marcie or Amanda would have been forbidden to attend school? I want to go and I want to be a part of this.” Pte. Wiebe went to Afghanistan to make a difference in the lives of girls and women. But on the morning of June 20, 2007, just one day before his 23rd birthday, Joel lost his life. While conducting resupply operations between two checkpoints six kilometres west of FOB Sperwan Ghar in the Panjwaii District, southwest of Kandahar City, Afghanistan, Private Joel Vincent Wiebe, along with Sergeant Christos Karigiannis and Corporal Steven Bouzane, were killed when their vehicle struck an improvised explosive device.

Why did these young men enlist? To help others in order to make a difference in their lives so that they might have a better life. What we often take for granted is not so in countries around the world. What we experience as inconvenience is really life and death to some people. Yet we wonder. They gave their lives for the sake of others.

ON this Remembrance Sunday we listen to these stories of bravery and courage because we need to hear the stories of real people who wanted to and continue to make a difference in the world. But as we know peace has not been long lasting in our world for there seems to be conflicts arising all the time. Conflicts of power, greed and uncertainty of safety for all. So what are we called to do? We are called to remember what happened in the past, to share our ideas/thoughts and stories so that what occurred in the past will not be repeated.

We are also called to remember and pray. Psalm 121 is often used in remembrance services of the RCL because of the phrase “from where does my help come?” My help comes from the Lord. Just where did people in the past gain the courage and willingness to do what needed to be done? Help came from God. Just like help which supported the families at home not knowing what was to come each day. Yet we might not be able to remember helping someone else with a simple task? The Psalmist also states that the “Lord is your keeper, your shade, and will guard your comings and goings. These words have offered much hope to soldiers in the past and for each of us today. Because God offers you the help you need, when you need it. God holds your life always.

Paul writes to the Ephesian church his rules of living which include speaking truth, be angry yes but discuss with others; speak well so what you say will give grace to whoever hears. Be kind, tender-hearted and forgiving. And live in love as Christ loved. These instructions seem easy but the problems of the world arise from these rules not being followed. So if we consider what we might do to assist in striving for peace in our world- we need only to live love as Christ taught and do what Paul has written.

As we gather this day we take time to remember the stories of people whose lives were lost in battles far from home. WE remember people not just lists of numbers of deaths and casualties who trained to serve. And we remember their sacrifice for others. This is truly love as Jesus described it in John 15: there is no greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. But we also know that Jesus himself would die not on a battlefield with guns firing all

around him, but on the cross in agony and pain. However it was Jesus' death then enables us to remember those people who died in battle sacrificing themselves for our sakes and our futures.

As you drive around to various cemeteries in this area, look for the many flags placed by people on the gravesites of soldiers- men and women who died and were buried after serving their country. Many returned to live full lives yet they returned forever changed knowing the value of life and what we take for granted here in Canada. We must also remember those who died and are buried in foreign lands. Still remembered and loved and still teaching us today the need to say 'never again.'

Let us reflect on this poem written in 2019 by Joshua Dyer who was 14 when he wrote it

One thousand men are walking

Walking side by side

Singing songs from home

The spirit as their guide

they walk toward the light milord

they walk towards the sun

they smoke and laugh and smile together

no foes to outrun

these men live on forever

in the hearts of those they saved

a nation truly grateful

for the path of peace they paved

they march as friends and comrades

but they do not march for war

step closer to salvation

a tranquil steady corps

the meadows lit with golden beams

a beacon for the brave

the emerald grass untrampled

a reward for what they gave

they dream of those they left behind

and know they dream of them

forever in those poppy fields

there walks one thousand men

Let us pray. May peace prevail on earth O God. May peace prevail. Amen.