Let me remind us of the obvious. We are all different despite our trying to conform, we look different, we think differently, we talk differently and have different values. This difference has consequences and often fuel conflict and disagreement, despite the saying that variety is the spice of life.

We disagree about little things, we argue about big things too, like dressing codes, ethnicity, politics, and religion, though we are probably a bit more reluctant to make our views known mindful of the consequences.

We have learned to navigate this difference. We live with it. At our best we may even celebrate it.

However, in various parts of the globe and through time, the differences have been pushed to the limit leading to violent clashes and bloodshed. Remembrance Sunday is held as a day to commemorate the contribution- consciously or unknowingly of those who lost their lives – both military personnel and civilians in the two World Wars and in later armed conflicts. The First World War mobilised over 70 million people and left at least 12 million dead and as many as one third of these with no grave. World War II was the deadliest military conflict in history leaving an estimated total of 70–85 million people perished.

Whatever we think if we are to reimagine the future of our community, our nation and our world, then we must continue to live on that well-worn path of being able to argue well and live creatively with difference…without ending up with casualties.

My fellow congregants we must recall those times when arguments have gone beyond words. We must remember with ‘thanksgiving and sorrow those whose lives, in world wars and conflicts past and present, have been given and taken away.’

And as we all know the evil of war remains in our world. In Colombian Conflict there are over – 400,000 Casualties; in Papua Conflict – 400,000 Fatalities; Somali Civil War – 500,000 Casualties; War in Afghanistan - 1,405,111 – 2,084,468 Dead: Korean Conflict – 4,500,000 Casualties; We also have casualties in Iraq, in Syria, in Ukraine and in other places. In these conflicts difference cannot seem to be reconciled, listening and learning is drowned out by artillery incursion. The arguing, which in some way defines what it is to be human, overflows into fighting, destruction and bloodshed. Our Gospel passage says ‘When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first. However, in these and so many other conflicts we mar God’s image in us.

But not all arguments are bad.

Our Lord also argued. He was not always meek and mild to all people.    Rather he was often a pain in the neck who challenged people deeply.    Jesus turned tables over, both metaphorically and physically. His arguing though, often with those in power, spoke to the deepest longings of the human heart.    For though he knew we are all different, he knew too, that fundamentally, beneath all the posturing, and puffing we all seek the same things.

We long for love, friendship, welcome, acceptance, mercy, forgiveness, hope and perhaps most important for today peace*.*

These are words that unite rather than divide and as his followers today we’re challenged to take them off the page and live them and so in some small way anticipate the Kingdom of which Jesus often spoke.

That means being determined to attain and maintain peace, we must keep trying to argue well and hold what differences we have creatively.   We are all different and thank God we are, for if we weren’t then life would be rather dull.

However, on this Remembrance Sunday we come together as one, to renew our commitment to seek ‘all that makes for peace. However, faced with the evil of the world we can sometimes feel powerless.    Even when we cannot do much about war-torn regions of our world, we can - in our lives, in our arguments and disagreements strive to live a different way…a way of peace and reconciliation. It will not be easy, but our Gospel passage for today says God will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict.

So my friends, if we are to attain *the very heart of the good news of Jesus Christ and believe there is a kingdom vision that takes us through and beyond terror, a vision that meets terror with trust, faith and endurance. We can only rise to this if we rest and trust in that promise that even those who met with death are alive to God of the living.*

We must remember that according to the Scripture - at the sound of the trumpet in the final resurrection, those alive and those already part of the great beyond will rise to meet the Lord, each carrying evidence of how life was lived.

As we read in 2 Thessalonians, may our God and Father direct our way and make us increase and abound in love for one another and for all humans. And may Christ so strengthen our hearts in holiness that we may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

  Whilst we’ll always argue, let us strive to play our little part in building a world in which all have a valued place, where none is left behind and where all can live in peace. Amen