

Christmas Truce

Order of Service for Sunday, December 14, 2014
Jim Fisher and Bob Dickens, Worship Associates

Gathering Music Wayne Smith

Welcome & Announcement UUCE Board Member

Call to Worship/Ringing the Bell Jim Fisher

This service commemorates the Centenary of the 1914 Christmas Truce on the WWI battlefields of France. As that brief pause in hostilities between British, German and other allied forces was marked by an exchange of grace and of song, we will share lessons and carols to celebrate and pray for peace on earth and goodwill to all.

Prelude Lilja Hanson will play Der Kleine Nordlander, by Cornelius Gurlitt

Chalice Lighting Jim Fisher
Excerpts from Christmas Truce Carol Ann Duffy

The Christmas Truce by Carol Ann Duffy (2014)
www.theguardian.com/books/2011/nov/11/christmas-truce-poem-carol-ann-duffy

Christmas Eve in the trenches of France,
the guns were quiet.
The dead lay still in No Man's Land –
Freddie, Franz, Friedrich, Frank . . .
The moon, like a medal, hung in the clear, cold sky.

But it was Christmas Eve; *believe*; belief
thrilled the night air,
where glittering rime on unburied sons
treasured their stiff hair.
The sharp, clean, midwinter smell held memory.

Then flickering flames from the other side
danced in his eyes,
as Christmas Trees in their dozens shone,
candlelit on the parapets,
and they started to sing, all down the German lines.

Men who would drown in mud, be gassed, or shot,
or vaporised
by falling shells, or live to tell,
heard for the first time then –
Stille Nacht. Heilige Nacht. Alles schläft, einsam wacht ...

*Cariad, the song was a sudden bridge
from man to man;
a gift to the heart from home,
or childhood, some place shared ...*
When it was done, the British soldiers cheered.

All night, along the Western Front, they sang,
the enemies –

carols, hymns, folk songs, anthems,
in German, English, French;
each battalion choired in its grim trench.

And all that marvellous, festive day and night,
they came and went,
the officers, the rank and file,
their fallen comrades side by side
beneath the makeshift crosses of midwinter graves ...

... beneath the shivering, shy stars
and the pinned moon
and the yawn of History;
the high, bright bullets
which each man later only aimed at the sky.

Hymn 225 Oh Come, Oh Come Emmanuel - Congregation

Piano Response Winslow Hanson will play Yiki by John Robert Poe.

Time for All Ages Bob Dickens readings from Silent Night

Joys & Sorrows Jim Fisher

Christmas Day <http://www.christmastruce.co.uk/>

Dear Will,

I received your letter yesterday pleased to say. I am keeping fit and well. We are having very trying weather but are looking forward to the spring. The Battalion has had a very rough time of it up to this present as I dare say you have seen by the papers. I am sorry to say I have not received Fred's parcel. I have had 5 parcels sent out that I know of and have only received one. We had a funny experience this morning. Firing became slack and we had the order not to fire unless the Germans fired. Soon after one of the Germans got out of their trench and called to us to go half-way (our trenches and theirs are about 150 yards apart in places). About a dozen of us went forward and soon all our chaps were out of the trenches shaking hands with the Germans and exchanging cigarettes. One gave me some cigars and biscuits and as I had nothing else handy I gave him Fred and Gert's Christmas Card as a keepsake. You might tell Fred and Gert when you see them that their card will travel further than they expected. Must close now as I have not much time. Hoping you and Nelly are keeping well and wishing you both a Happy and Prosperous New Year.
Your affec. Cousin Fred.

You are invited to briefly share your personal joys or sorrows. Raise your hand and an usher will bring you a microphone.

Musical Offering Sean Mercer Let There Be Peace on Earth[#]

[#]Let There Be Peace on Earth

Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.
Let there be peace on earth the peace that was meant to be.
With the spirit inside us, united all are we.
Let us all walk together in perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me. Let this be the moment now.
With every step I take let this be my solemn vow.
Take each moment and live each moment with peace eternally.
Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.

(Repeat)

Reading

Bob Dickens

Writing on Christmas Day to a friend at Low Fell a Gateshead soldier serving with the BEF writes:-

I will now describe my Christmas. Last night the Germans lit up their trenches and started calling across merry Christmas. We responded in the same way and then we started singing songs to one another, carols etc. We then sang the Austrian national anthem and they responded with God Save the King after which we cheered lustily. By this time all shooting had stopped. We walked about the parapets of the trenches and called out to one another. Then some of our chaps walked out and met some of the Germans half way, wishing each other a merry Christmas, shook hands and said they would not fight today.

We had communion this morning in a farm about half a mile away. We set out before day light to be on the safe side. It was very strange. The farm had been bombarded and consequently it was in a bad way. Where we held the service half the roof was off. I don't suppose I shall ever go to such another service - it was so reverent and the surroundings so rough.

When we came back we decided to come along the top although we would be in full view of the enemy. We got back safely and then some of our chaps started kicking a football about outside the trench. Then the Germans showed themselves and to cut a long story short it finished up with us meeting one another half way shaking hands exchanging fags and souvenirs and parting the best of friends. One has given me his address to write to him after the war. They were quite a decent lot of fellows I can tell you. I know this seems an unbelievable story but it is fact. I am sure if it was left to the men there would be no war.

Musical Offering

Choir Brightest and Best

Offering

Jim Fisher

We had communion this morning in a farm about half a mile away. We set out before day light to be on the safe side. It was very strange. The farm had been bombarded and consequently it was in a bad way. Where we held the service half the roof was off. I don't suppose I shall ever go to such another service - it was so reverent and the surroundings so rough.

And though we gather here in this lovely church tucked in the Maine woods, even here we must steward our resources to sustain our place of reverence. We will now collect the morning offering. If you are a first time visitor, please let the plate pass you by. Your presence is a gift.

Musical Offering

Carol Rosinski, et al. Christmas Eve Dream

Reading

Member of the Congregation – Private Benjamin Calder, Scotland

Private Benjamin Calder from Buckie Scotland

"I must say I spent a merrier Christmas in the trenches than I expected. There was a truce for a while so that we could bury our dead, after which we had a short service over the graves. The chaplain read the 23rd Psalm and then the German chaplain read it in German. It seemed queer for us to be lined up on either side of the graves- German on one side and British on the other. After the service the Germans asked if we would not shoot that day or the day after.

We were speaking to the Germans and got souvenirs from them. I got a little box of ground coffee and so I had coffee for breakfast that morning. We also got nuts, sweets and chocolate from them. The Germans seem to be well off here. They have plenty of "fags" and tobacco, and we also got some of them. You will hardly credit this, but it is the truth. Fancy shooting at them and then going over to wish them a Merry Christmas! I don't think it has happened in the world's history before. You would have thought that peace had been declared, as there was no shooting on Christmas Day or the day after. I am enclosing a small piece of ribbon which I got from a German. One of our chaps got a helmet. Remember me to all at home. Wishing you all a Happy New Year."



Meditative Hymn251 Stille Nacht / 252 Silent Night, Holy Night**Reading**

Jim Fisher

Future nature writer [Henry Williamson](#), then a nineteen-year-old private in the [London Rifle Brigade](#), wrote to his mother on Boxing Day: "Dear Mother, I am writing from the trenches. It is 11 o'clock in the morning. Beside me is a coke fire, opposite me a 'dug-out' (wet) with straw in it. The ground is sloppy in the actual trench, but frozen elsewhere. In my mouth is a pipe presented by the [Princess Mary](#). In the pipe is tobacco. Of course, you say. But wait. In the pipe is German tobacco. Haha, you say, from a prisoner or found in a captured trench. Oh dear, no! From a German soldier. Yes a live German soldier from his own trench. Yesterday the British & Germans met & shook hands in the Ground between the trenches, & exchanged souvenirs, & shook hands. Yes, all day Xmas day, & as I write. Marvellous, isn't it?" ^[21]

HymnOh Tannenbaum / Oh Christmas Tree (in order of service)*** CLOSING WORDS**

Bob Dickens from Silent Night

"**O Tannenbaum**" ("O Christmas Tree") is a [German Christmas song](#). Based on a traditional folk song, it became associated with the [Christmas tree](#) by the early 20th century and sung as a [Christmas carol](#).

O Tannenbaum - Anschütz (1824)	O Christmas Tree
<p>O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum, Wie treu sind deine Blätter! Du grünst nicht nur zur Sommerzeit, Nein, auch im Winter, wenn es schneit. O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum, Wie treu sind deine Blätter!</p>	<p>O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree, Your branches green delight us! They are green when summer days are bright, They are green when winter snow is white. O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree, Your branches green delight us!</p>
<p>O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum, Du kannst mir sehr gefallen! Wie oft hat nicht zur Weihnachtszeit Ein Baum von dir mich hoch erfreut! O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum, Du kannst mir sehr gefallen!</p>	<p>O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree, You give us so much pleasure! How oft at Christmas tide the sight, O green fir tree, gives us delight! O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree, You give us so much pleasure!</p>
<p>O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum, Dein Kleid will mich was lehren: Die Hoffnung und Beständigkeit Gibt Mut und Kraft zu jeder Zeit! O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum, Dein Kleid will mich was lehren!</p>	<p>O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree Forever true your colour. Your boughs so green in summertime Stay bravely green in wintertime. O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree Forever true your colour.</p>
	<p>O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree You fill my heart with music. Reminding me on Christmas Day To think of you and then be gay. O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree You fill my heart with music.</p>