Sermons at All Saints Anglican Church, Luxembourg

Preached by Rev Canon Geoff Read on Remembrance Sunday 2026

Text: Amos 5:18-24

I don't often feel totally disorientated in a European city - one of my languages can help in some way

But Helsinki was something else - words on shops and street signs were impenetrable

It was only the guidance of a kindly Finn that enabled me to navigate and enjoy that wonderful city



Stepping into the world of the OT as we hear readings like our first one can feel like that

Day of the Lord, bears for lions, walls turning into snakes, darkness not light, grain offerings, Temple life and worship

May I offer to be a kindly guide for a few minutes

We are back in mid 8C BC, and the Promised Land of the Jews has been spilt north and south

We are in the company of a farmer called Amos who senses that the rising anger within him is more than just that of a mid-term voter but is actually God calling him to be a prophet,

for God to speak through him into the unjust wealth, the unrighteous behaviours he witnesses in society that he sees epitomised in the worship practices of people at the Jerusalem Temple

saying one thing but actually living another

For worship is about that to which we give our best - or as Jesus said years later, where your treasure is, there your heart will be also

For a person of faith, that is God and His ways

For those who don't identify in that way we can still think about deepest and life-shaping values which direct how we use our best in time and attention and actions

Amos takes a much-spoken and anticipated religious hope for the people of his day, the Day of the Lord

a time when wrongs would be righted, enemies defeated and the country would be seen and acknowledged as great again

He takes this notion and he says: Yes, do long for that, but you have to realise that God takes us all really seriously, He is radical

so it involves all and every wrong by everyone: so people of God, it includes you

Amos' call to true worship is to "let justice flow like a river, and righteousness like a never-failing stream" (Amos 5:24).

These two words are important to Amos.

Tsedaqah, or "righteousness," refers to a standard of right, equitable relationship between people no matter their social differences.

And mishpat, or "justice," refers to concrete actions you take to correct injustice and create righteousness.

Both of these values are to permeate the life of God's people like a rushing stream fills a dry riverbed, touching, challenging and testing, transforming, all it meets

This is the foundation for true worship, the giving of our best

The opposite of worship is idolatry

the obsessive, unconditional devotion to a finite or worldly thing—such as money, power, fame, a career, or an ideology—treating it as the ultimate source of meaning, security, and self-worth

And that is a definition that works for people of faith or not alike with the emphasis on "unconditional devotion"

Such devotion lay at the root of so many of the conflicts that bring us here today.

And we see it starting to blossom again today



How it has played out, perhaps most clearly in the coarsening of social discourse to the point that any difference of opinion is seized upon with a tribal disdain for the other

How it has played out in self or national interest and the attempt to abandon the post WW2 rules-based order, the carefully constructed checks and balances and humble critical thinking and self-reflection rooted in integrity and compassion essential for life together rather than from behind walls or battle lines

As we live in our world at such a moment, at a tipping point, what are the practices that ensure it stays tipped towards for justice and righteousness?

I want to suggest two

The first is simply **How we talk about difference** and treat those who have different opinions, and how we do this well

Part of Luxembourg's national vocation is to create the space where peoples can disagree well

And many of you here have devoted your own professional lives to this calling in different ways and in different institutions

Thank you.

But, And we must find new and creative ways to ensure this continues for current and future generations

Which brings me to my second point, which is to

making a <u>sustained</u> commitment

In our Act of Remembrance, we heard words from the Kohima epitaph, used on the war memorial at the Commonwealth War Graves cemetery on the Indian Myanmar border, where those who died in some of the bitterest fighting of the Far East campaign in mid-1944 are buried

When you go home tell them of us and say,

for your tomorrow we gave out today

That was their sustained commitment



As we live in that tomorrow, what does sustained commitment for us look like?

Especially when we are in such danger of becoming a market led rather than rules based global order

What does a commitment to ensuring that things that make for justice and righteousness in our day and for the future are fit for purpose - the hard work of shaping and reshaping a rule-based order - NATO, EU, other institutions?

But / And, what about the way that plays out at the granular level of our own daily lives - in our own interactions, consumer choices, handling of difference?

In all and in both “let justice flow like a river, and righteousness like a never-failing stream”