Holocaust Memorial Day 2019

Rodborough Tabernacle United Reformed Church hosted a memorial service on Sunday 27 January to remember the sufferings of the Jewish people in the time of the second World War and the period leading up to it.

Commemoration was also made of the millions of other people who died in genocides of the 20th and 21st centuries, in Turkey, Russia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Rwanda and, more recently in the Middle East and Myanmar.

Rodborough is not a large community, and the average congregation at the Tabernacle is around 50, but over 200 people of different faiths, and none, joined together to show their common abhorrence of the genocide events that took place over the last 100 years.

They remembered these atrocities and affirmed their belief that God’s plan is for people to live together in peace.

“Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, “Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.” (Hebrews 12:14)

There were prayers, readings and songs from members of Christian churches, from members of the Jewish, Buddhist, Muslim, and Bahá’í faiths and from someone who ministers across faiths. A community band and a community choir offered songs of resistance, protest and peace.

The importance of the service in public consciousness was reflected by the presence of the Member of Parliament for Stroud, the Vice Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire and a Deputy Lieutenant of the county.

Two songs from a local primary school choir about peace, kindness and inclusion gave hope that relations between races in the next 100 years may be better than the last.

These life-affirming statements of the strong sense of community and common purpose in the Stroud area left people inspired to continue their resistance to intolerance and hatred.

A retiring collection was made in aid of the work of the GARAS charity (Gloucestershire Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers)