

A SERVICE FOR 75th Anniversary of VE DAY

The Greeting and Introduction

Many celebrations large and small were planned to mark this historic anniversary of the end of the war in Europe 75 years ago today. Because of the Coronavirus Pandemic most of these celebrations will look and feel very different. We will watch the big crowds, the street parties, the hugs and kisses on black & white newsreel footage knowing that none of that is possible for us here today. Services will take place behind closed doors. live streamed, recorded, ZOOMed or podcast like this one but we cannot gather to share our thanks to those who fought, worked and strived for the peace most of have enjoyed throughout our lifetimes. But I guess those who celebrated then, 75 years ago, would recognise that even if our gathering is different, forced by circumstances beyond our control. They would understand that we still gather in spirit to honour their memories.

VE Day was an historic event marking the end of fighting in Europe. But for those serving in the Far East, like my own Father, the war went on, more people died. It did not end for several more months until the 14 August 1945 when Japan surrendered to Allied Forces. Just maybe it will be possible to gather on that day this year, at least in small numbers, to mark the final end of the Second World War and honour again the sacrifice of so many made for all of us.

Heaviness may endure for a night:
But joy comes in the morning.

God has been our refuge and our strength:
A present help in time of trouble.

We come together on this day to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe, when the sounds of war fell silent.

We come together conscious of our need for God's forgiveness for the sin and the desire to dominate others that leads to conflict between people, and war between nations.

And as we remember so many people who gave their lives restraining evil and opposing tyranny, so we also come in thanksgiving for the years of peace that the nations of Europe have enjoyed since the Second World War. We gather joyfully today, as those who gathered on that first Victory day, glad of each other's company, and grateful for the laughter and love that follows times of sadness and loss.

But above all things, let us pray that God's will may be done on earth as it is in heaven, as we join our voices together and say:

**Our Father,
who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who
trespass against us.
And lead us not into
temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Luke 1.68-79

'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favourably on his people and redeemed them. He has raised up a mighty saviour for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us. Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins. By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.'

THANKSGIVING

We offer to almighty God our thanksgiving for the many blessings which enrich our lives.

As we remember both the horror of war and the joy of celebrating its' ending, teach us the ways of peace. As we treasure memories, teach us to hope. As we give thanks for the sacrifices of the past, help us to make your future in this world, until your kingdom come. **Thanks be to God.**

We hold before you those men and women who have died in active service, particularly in the Second World War, whose sacrifice brought Victory in Europe.

As we honour their courage and cherish their memory, may we put our faith in your future; for you are the source of life and hope, **Thanks be to God.**

For Her Majesty the Queen and her family, and all who under her bear the responsibility of government: **Thanks be to God.**

For those who serve in the Armed Forces of the Crown on sea or land and in the air, especially those risking their lives to help others during this pandemic. **Thanks be to God.**

For doctors, nurses, care givers, chaplains, and all who minister to those in need or distress, especially in this time of great need. **Thanks be to God.**

For the unity of all people within the Commonwealth and throughout the world. **Thanks be to God.**

For the sacrifices made, in two world wars and many conflicts since, whereby our peace has been preserved: **Thanks be to God.**

Almighty God,
from whom all thoughts of truth and peace proceed: kindle in the hearts of all people the true love of peace; and guide with your pure and peaceable wisdom those who take counsel for the nations of the earth; that in tranquillity your kingdom may go forward, till the earth is filled with the knowledge of your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

An Act of Commitment

Let us pledge ourselves anew to the service of God and our fellow men and women: that we may help, encourage and comfort others, and support those working for the relief of the needy and for the peace and welfare of the nations.

Lord God our Father,
we pledge ourselves to serve you and all humankind, in the cause of peace,
for the relief of want and suffering,
and for the praise of your name.

Guide us by your Spirit;
give us wisdom;
give us courage;
give us hope;
and keep us faithful now and always.
Amen.

The Blessing

God grant to the living, grace; to the departed, rest; to the Church, the Queen, the Commonwealth, and all people,
peace and concord;
and to us and all his servants, life everlasting;

the blessing of God almighty,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
come down upon you and remain with you, and all those for whom you have a care,
this day and evermore. Amen