

Ardal Weinidogaeth Bro Ystumanner Ministry Area



AN ACT OF THANKSGIVING
A Celebration of Peace

HISTORICAL NOTE

On 8th May 1945, the Allied Powers formally accepted the unconditional surrender of the Armed Forces of Nazi Germany and the end of the Third Reich. Adolf Hitler had committed suicide on 30th April during the Battle of Berlin. The surrender of Germany was therefore authorised by his successor, Grand Admiral Doenitz, and the Instrument of Surrender was signed at Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force at Reims on 7th May. This surrender was formally ratified the next day.

More than one million people converged on the streets of the United Kingdom. In London, people thronged the city's streets and monuments. Winston Churchill made a radio broadcast at 3.00 pm announcing that war in Europe was finally at an end.

In the suburbs, parties were thrown, with furniture and tables brought into the street. Fancy dress parades were held for children, and many people went to church to give thanks to God for victory.

Huge crowds, many dressed in red, white and blue, gathered outside Buckingham Palace in London and cheered as the King, the Queen, and the Princesses appeared eight times on the balcony over the day and into the evening, at one point joined by Winston Churchill.

In the evening, many London landmarks, such as the Houses of Parliament, Buckingham Palace, and Nelson's Column, were floodlit specially for the occasion. There were fireworks, and effigies of Hitler burned on bonfires around the capital. On the day, crowds sang a popular song which expressed this joyous return to light: 'I'm going to get lit up when the lights go up in London'. Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret—escorted by Guards Officers—left the palace and mingled anonymously with the great crowds outside, joining in the celebrations. In the course of the day, Churchill delivered two short speeches from the balcony of the Ministry of Health building to the crowds in Whitehall. In the first he told them: 'This is your victory!', to which they roared back: 'No! It's yours!'. And during his second appearance at 10.30 pm, he conducted the crowds in the singing of 'Land of Hope and Glory'.

The exuberance of the day was tempered by the fact that, for many, this would be a time of sadness and reflection, and that because of the ongoing war in Japan, many other parts of the world would not be able to join in the celebrations. It would not be until the Japanese surrendered to the Allies on 15th August, now known as Victory over Japan Day, that the Second World War would finally come to an end.

Today, in marking the 75th Anniversary of Victory in Europe, we look back with pride and respect at the remarkable generation of men and women who helped secure peace and freedom.

*(Adapted from the Service of Thanksgiving at Westminster Abbey
for the 70th VE Day Anniversary.)*

*Today we commemorate the 75th anniversary of VE Day.
We give thanks for all who played their part
in achieving victory in the Second World War.
We remember with sorrow all those who were killed
and whose lives were changed forever.*

Call to Worship

We come before God, not to glorify war,
but to honour and celebrate those
who walked into the chaos and evil that is war:
those who were civilians and those who were military;
those who braved the censure of society
and those who gave of themselves for that society;
those who survived and those who did not;
those who were friends and those who were enemies.
None who have waded through evil, death and sorrow
are untouched in body, mind or spirit;
they are beloved of God.

On this day of memory, as we take time to reflect and to pray,
we remember the past and look to the future.

On this day when the guns once fell silent,
we come before you God, seeking your peace.

On this day of hope in the face of terror,
we come before you God, praying with all our hearts:
God our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,
help us to find the path that leads to your kingdom of peace.

Opening Prayer

**O Almighty God, grant, we beseech thee,
that we who here do honour to the memory of those
who have died in the service of their country and of the Crown,
may be so inspired by the spirit of their love and fortitude that,
forgetting all selfish and unworthy motives,
we may live only to thy glory and to the service of humankind
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Amen.

Hymn *(to sing, say or read)*

O God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
our shelter from the stormy blast,
and our eternal home:

Under the shadow of thy throne,
thy saints have dwelt secure;
sufficient is thine arm alone,
and our defense is sure.

Before the hills in order stood,
or earth received her frame,
from everlasting thou art God,
to endless years the same.

A thousand ages in Thy sight
are like an evening gone;
short as the watch that ends the night
before the rising sun.

Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
bears all its sons away;
they fly, forgotten, as a dream
dies at the opening day.

O God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
be thou our guide while troubles last,
and our eternal home!

Isaac Watts

A Litany of Remembrance *(for two voices if that's possible)*

Remember with clear eyes the horrific cost of war.

Remember with deep sorrow those who killed and were killed.

Remember with grief the blood-stained battlefields.

Remember with tears the rending of people from their homes.

Remember with compassion the bereaved and the wounded.

Remember with reverence those who risked their lives for peace.

Remember with tenderness the children's longing for freedom.

Remember with gratefulness all who forgave their enemies.

Remember with hope that the kingdom is planted with small seeds.

Remember with confidence that faith, hope and love abide.

All: Remember with joy that our Saviour is the Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 58: 6-9a, 10-12

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go

before you, the glory of the LORD shall be your rearguard. Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

If you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

Eseia 58: 6-9a, 10-12

“Onid dyma'r dydd ympryd a ddewisais: tynnu ymaith rwymau anghyfiawn, a llacio clymau'r iau, gollwng yn rhydd y rhai a orthrymwyd, a dryllio pob iau? Onid rhannu dy fara gyda'r newynog, a derbyn y tlawd digartref i'th dŷ, dilladu'r noeth pan y'i gweli, a pheidio ag ymguddio rhag dy deulu dy hun? Yna fe ddisgleiria d'oleuni fel y wawr, a byddi'n ffynnu mewn iechyd yn fuan; bydd dy gyfiawnder yn mynd o'th flaen, a gogoniant yr ARGLWYDD yn dy ddilyn. Pan elwi, bydd yr ARGLWYDD yn ateb, a phan waeddi, fe ddywed, ‘Dyma fi.’

Os rhoddi o'th fodd i'r anghenus, a diwallu angen y cystuddiol, yna cyfyd goleuni i ti o'r tywyllwch, a bydd y caddug fel canol dydd. Bydd yr ARGLWYDD yn dy arwain bob amser, yn diwallu dy angen mewn cyfnod sych, ac yn cryfhau dy esgyrn; yna byddi fel gardd ddyfradwy, ac fel ffynnon ddŵr a'i dyfroedd heb ballu. Byddi rhai ohonoch yn adeiladu'r hen furddunnod ac yn codi ar yr hen sylfeini; fe'th elwir yn gaewr bylchau, ac yn adferwr tai adfeiliedig.

Luke 2: 8-14

The beginning of the everlasting Gospel of Peace

(as introduced in the Thanksgiving for Victory Order of Service from 1945)

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will

find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.’ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!’

Luc 2: 8-14

Yn yr un ardal yr oedd bugeiliaid allan yn y wlad yn gwarchod eu praidd liw nos. A safodd angel yr Arglwydd yn eu hymyl a disgleiriodd gogoniant yr Arglwydd o'u hamgylch; a daeth arswyd arnynt. Yna dywedodd yr angel wrthynt, ‘Peidiwch ag ofni, oherwydd wele, yr wyf yn cyhoeddi i chwi y newydd da am lawenydd mawr a ddaw i'r holl bobl: ganwyd i chwi heddiw yn nhref Dafydd, Waredwr, yr hwn yw'r Meseia, yr Arglwydd; a dyma'r arwydd i chwi: cewch hyd i'r un bach wedi ei rwymo mewn dillad baban ac yn gorwedd mewn preseb.’ Yn sydyn ymddangosodd gyda'r angel dyrfa o'r llu nefol, yn moli Duw gan ddweud: ‘Gogoniant yn y goruchaf i Dduw, ac ar y ddaear tangnefedd ymhlith y rhai sydd wrth ei fodd.’

Credo for Peace

**We believe in God:
a communion of three Persons,
a communion of Life,
a communion of Love,
a communion of Peace.**

**We believe in Jesus:
God and human,
Prince of Peace.**

**We believe in his Gospel
the Good News,
God's message of peace.**

**We believe Jesus died, rose,
and sent us the Holy Spirit,
so we could live in his peace.**

**We believe in baptism
that makes us one family in Jesus,
crucified and risen from the dead
to lead us to eternal peace.**

**He is our hope.
Through him, we pray for peace;
with him, we work for peace;
in him, we live for peace:
the peace of God's children,
to the glory of God.
Amen.**

Tribute to the Millions

Let us remember those who so selflessly gave
their lives at home and abroad,
whose sacrifice enables us to enjoy
the peace and freedom we have today.

Let us remember those who came home
wounded physically and mentally,
and the friends and family who cared for them.

Let us remember those who returned
To restore their relationships and rebuild their working lives
after years of dreadful conflict and turmoil.

Let us remember the families that lost
husbands, sons and sweethearts.

Let us remember the servicemen, merchant seamen,
miners, brave civilians and others
from Commonwealth and Allied countries
who fought, suffered and died
during four years of war.

Let us remember those in reserved occupation
and the brave people who kept us safe on the home front –
the doctors and nurses who cared for the wounded,
the women who toiled in the fields,
those who worked in the factories,
who all played such a vital role
in the war effort at home.

THE LAST POST (*find a recording, play your own, or imagine it!*)

2 minutes silence

REVEILLÉ

The Prayers

Trusting the promises of God, and with faith in his mercy,
let us pray to the Lord.

Let us give thanks for the selfless and courageous service and sacrifice of those who brought peace to Europe, and for the good example they have given us;
let us bless the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

We pray for nations still devastated by war, for their people and their leaders, and for those who suffer the effects or memories of past wars; for veterans, for those who mourn, and for all innocent victims whose lives have been shattered by the cruelty of others;
Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Let us give thanks for those who work for peace and liberty throughout the world, for the Armed Forces of the Crown, and for all who strive to bring an end to injustice and oppression;
let us bless the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

We pray for those in our own day who have grown weary or lost hope as a result of violence or terror; for all refugees and displaced people, and for those who seek to address the causes of discord and distrust;
Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Let us give thanks for the reconciliation of former enemies, for the flourishing of goodwill between them, and for the many blessings we enjoy as a result of the sacrifices which have made for peace;
let us bless the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

We pray for the young people of our own day and for all who will shape the future of this nation, that they may be inspired by those who have gone before them to serve as they have been served;
Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Inspired by the remembrance of those who made the ultimate sacrifice,
let us pray for the coming of God's reign among us
as Jesus himself has taught us:

Ein Tad ...

Our Father ...

Prayer of Confession

**God of every nation,
as we remember those that gave their life for our sake,
let us be stirred to action in their memory.
We confess that we have not done all that is possible
to promote peace and justice in our world.
We have not loved our neighbours, let alone our enemies.
Forgive us for failing to live up to your commandments.
Empower us to work for your Kingdom in this world,
and welcome us by your grace into your Kingdom in the next.
Amen.**

Assurance of Forgiveness

God is just and forgiving.
God receives us as we are,
lifts us up and calls us again
to be people upholding justice and peace.
We receive God's pardon and peace,
knowing that all sins are forgiven.
Thanks be to God!

Act of Rededication

*It was intended that this should be led by a VE Day Veteran and a child.
The pronouns have been changed to allow us to use it in our own homes,
alone or with others.*

They fought for peace, that the world might never again know such
violence and destruction.
Will we work for peace and reconciliation in our homes and communities,
and promote peace throughout the world?
With the help of God, we will.

They fought for justice, that the scourge of prejudice and oppression might
never again take root in our societies.
Will we work for a world in which hatred and injustice never have the final
word, and where all people can flourish with dignity and hope?
With the help of God, we will.

They struggled so that the whole human family might know good will, security, and freedom.

Will we always acknowledge how precious are the gifts which God has entrusted to us, and exercise the freedoms and responsibilities we have with gratitude and humility?

With the help of God, we will.

May almighty God, who has given us the will to undertake these things, bless us with the strength to perform them.

Amen.

Hymn (*Tune: Repton of Dear Lord and Father of mankind, if you want to sing*)

Written by Louis Kinsey, a parish minister in Aberdeen and an Army Reserve chaplain with 205 (Scottish) Field Hospital. He has served as a chaplain in Iraq and in Afghanistan. He writes:

'This hymn was written out of a personal longing for the return of Christ and the advent of his fulfilled and completed kingdom, when young men and women won't ever have to go to war again. The texts that inform the verses (indicated below) lead from the Old Testament prophetic hope of Isaiah on to the fulfilment of that hope in Jesus Christ, the Lord, who is himself wounded (v.4) as the means by which peace is finally accomplished. The final verse, in this time before Christ's return and a new heaven and earth are established, is a prayer that the peace of Christ will fill our hearts, in the face of much that could overwhelm us with anxiety, and for boldness when so much of the world's suffering threatens to quench faith.'

Come soon, the day, when peace shall reign

And nations fight no more

When spears are turned to pruning hooks

And love displaces hateful looks

When none shall train for war

When none shall train for war

(Isaiah 2:4 NIV)

Come soon, the day, when Christ the King

Will rule in all the earth

When nations live beneath his law

To glory in their strength no more

And dwell in love and peace

And dwell in love and peace

(Micah 4:3 NIV)

Come soon, the day when love is crowned
And sin at last cast down
When faithful hearts can rest in peace
And battles of the soul will cease
When Christ at last appears
When Christ at last appears

(1 Peter 2:11 NIV)

Come soon, the triumph of the Lamb
Who bears the wounds of love
The Lord of lords and King of kings
He comes, and in his victory brings
All those who love his name
All those who love his name

(Revelation 17:14 NIV)

Come soon, eternal day of peace
May hate and war be gone
Let justice flow and love abound
When men and women gather round
The Lamb upon the throne
The Lamb upon the throne

(Ecclesiastes 3:8 NIV)

Come, peace of Christ to fill our hearts
And make our spirits bold
A peace, not as this dark world gives,
The peace of Christ, for Jesus lives
And fills our hearts with love
And fills our hearts with love.

(John 14:27 NIV)

Peace Prayer

**God of many names,
Lover of all peoples,
we pray for peace,
in our hearts,
in our homes,
in our nations,
in our world,
the peace of your will,
the peace of our need,
the peace of Christ.
Amen.**

The Blessing

God grant to the living, grace;
to the departed, rest;
to the Church, The Queen, the Commonwealth,
and all humankind, peace and concord;
and to us sinners, life everlasting;
and may the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among us and remain with us always.
Amen.

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM *(sing or listen to a recording)*

Call to Worship: Adapted from Lisa Frenz, in *A Worship Service of Remembrance and Healing* (2003), and Gord Waldie, posted on *Worship Offerings* (worshipofferings.blogspot.ca/).

Opening Prayer: Adapted from *A Service of Remembrance* at the Cenotaph to commemorate 70th anniversary of VE Day.

A Litany of Remembrance: Written by Carol Penner, and posted on *Leading in Worship* (carolpenner.typepad.com/).

First Reading from Isaiah: Used in the *Service of Thanksgiving* at Westminster Abbey for 70th Anniversary of VE Day in 2015.

Second Reading from Luke: Used in official *Thanksgiving for Victory* Order of Service from May 1945.

Credo for Peace: Posted on the Renfrew County Catholic District School Board website (rcdsb.edu.on.ca/religiouseducation/school-prayer-2/monthlyseasonal-prayer/).

Thanks for the Millions: From official VE Day 75 website (veday75.org).

The Prayers: Used in the *Service of Thanksgiving* at Westminster Abbey for 70th Anniversary of VE Day in 2015.

Prayer of Confession: Written by Rev. Robb McCoy, and found on his website (fatpastor.wordpress.com).

Assurance of Forgiveness: From *I Was in Prison and You Visited Me*, Worship Resources for Social Justice Sunday, posted on the website of the The Social Justice Network.

Act of Rededication: Adapted from the *Service of Thanksgiving* at Westminster Abbey for 70th Anniversary of VE Day in 2015.

Hymn 'Come soon': written by Louis Kinsey © Jocky Music 2013. Posted on the Church of Scotland's *Resourcing Mission* website (resourcingmission.org.uk/sites/default/files/Come_soon_the_day.pdf).

Peace Prayer: Posted on the All Saints-Fulham website. Adapted.