

A VIRTUAL PRAYER MEETING FOR REMEMBRANCE DAY

We gather today as God's people, physically apart but together in spirit, to remember, to give thanks and to pray. We will remember the millions of men and women from every background and walk of life whose service and sacrifice through past conflicts have secured peace and freedom. At 11 am we will observe the customary 2 minutes' silence.

This is a solemn day when we recall the horror of war and conflict and the pain and anguish that they cause. But it is also a time for us to acknowledge that there is hope, for God made this world, loves this world, cradles it in loving hands, enters its suffering and feels its pain. We draw strength and courage from the reminder that God has a plan for our world's renewal. At the end of this present age, he will overcome evil and there will be an end to sin, sorrow, pain and death. Heaven and earth will come together as one and there will be a new age of peace, joy, justice and love. In this year's unique context, we are also mindful of the service and sacrifice of so many in protecting our world from Covid-19. We reflect on the similarities in feelings, emotions and experiences of past events with those of today:

- ✦ the sense of being part of something affecting the whole world, over which we have no control and which results in huge cost
- ✦ the separation from loved ones
- ✦ the feeling of facing something unknown and unimaginable
- ✦ the uncertainty of what the future will hold
- ✦ the spirit of sacrifice for the common good
- ✦ the desire to come together to support each other
- ✦ the acknowledgement that we are all in this together.

Declaring our faith We begin by acknowledging our faith and trust in our faithful, loving God. Sing or read the words of this favourite hymn:

Our God, our Help in ages past, Our hope for years to come, Our shelter from the stormy blast, And our eternal home!	A thousand ages in Thy sight Are like an evening gone, Short as the watch that ends the night Before the rising sun.
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Under the shadow of your throne Your saints have dwelt secure; Sufficient is your arm alone, And our defence is sure.	Time, like an ever-rolling stream, Bears all its sons away; They fly forgotten as a dream Dies at the opening day.
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Before the hills in order stood Or earth received her frame, From everlasting you are God, To endless years the same.	Our God, our help in ages past, Our hope for years to come, Be now our guard while troubles last And our eternal home!
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Isaac Watts

Reflecting on scripture Read **Psalm 46** slowly a few times and reflect on the significance of its words in today's context.

Responding in prayer

Loving God,

We praise you that you are a God who is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness,

maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.

Here in this moment together we recognise before you the terrible cost of war
and remember the bravery and courage of all who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

We thank you for the freedom we enjoy today as individuals and as a nation:

freedom to worship, freedom of speech, freedom from war and oppression.

We remember before you with immense gratitude those who made such freedom possible,
giving their lives to secure a better future for their loved ones, their nations and the world.

We praise you for victory against evil and tyranny, and those who sought to dominate and subdue,
for their dedication to fight for good, and perseverance despite their own fear and fragility.

We acknowledge before you the ongoing presence in our world today

of forces of evil and oppression,

of those who resort to killing and destruction to fight for their cause

of peoples living in fear and deprivation due to conflict and aggression,

of those who are persecuted for standing up for freedom and justice,

and those who suffer the consequences of hatred and aggression.

We thank you for the measure of peace in which we live today; may we value it and nurture it
recognising the price at which it was won.

We pray for the day to come when there will be no more war, when all people and nations of the
world will live together in harmony, and you will rule over all.

As we remember the sacrifices of the past, help us also remember your ways of peace, that we too
might work for peace and reconciliation in our families, our communities and our world.

Pray the Lord's Prayer in anticipation and longing for God's kingdom of love, peace, freedom and
justice to come.

Remembering with gratitude

As we approach 11am,

we remember with pride and appreciation those who have given their lives in service of others;

we remember with dismay the suffering, destruction and pain caused by human conflict;

we remember with gratitude those whose lives we have had the privilege to share;

we remember with sadness those whose death has caused us loneliness and pain.

We remember, not to glorify or celebrate war and conflict, but to recognise its cost

and commit ourselves to be peacemakers and peacekeepers wherever that opportunity arises.

Whatever our view, and whatever part we may have had to play in the theatre of war and conflict,
we express our common humanity in recognising the value and worth of every life lost and that to
be human is to be both marred by our common failings yet fashioned in the image of our Creator.

And in our remembrance we ask God to help us learn from the mistakes of the past and to treasure every experience which points us to the building of love and friendship, peace and harmony.

So now in silence, let us recall before God all those who have given their lives in the cause of freedom and in the service of others;

They shall not grow old as we that are left grow old:

Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning

We will remember them.

Two minutes' silence.

In the rising of the sun

and its going down

We will remember them.

In the blowing of the wind

and in the chill of winter,

We will remember them.

In the blueness of the sky

and in the warmth of summer,

We will remember them.

In the rustling of the leaves

and in the beauty of autumn,

We will remember them.

When we are lost

and sick at heart,

We will remember them.

When we have joys

we yearn to share,

We will remember them.

So long as we live

They too shall live, for

We will remember them.

Laurence Binyon

Almighty and eternal God, from whose love in Christ we cannot be parted, neither in life or by death, hear our prayers and thanksgivings for all whom we remember today, fulfil in them the purpose of your love, and bring us all, with them, to your eternal joy.

Asking forgiveness

When hatred divides nations and alienates races and cultures, Father forgive.

When covetousness leads people and nations to grasp what is not their own, Father forgive.

When greed exploits human work and ravages the earth, Father forgive.

When indifference ignores the plight of the homeless, the refugee and the prisoner, Father forgive.

When pride leads us to rely on ourselves and disregard your word and ways, Father forgive.

May the day come soon when we no longer distrust or fear one another, but are drawn together in unity of purpose, in understanding and in love.

Praying for those in need

Spend time in prayer for those you know and those known only to God:

- † for all who have died or been injured in war and conflict;
- † for all those who know the pain of grief and loss;
- † for those whose lives and minds have been shattered by terror;
- † for all who find it difficult to forgive and forget.
- † for every country affected by conflict;
- † for governments and world leaders
- † for peace-makers and peace-keepers;
- † for those who put themselves in danger in order to safeguard the lives of others;
- † for families in their concern for loved ones;
- † for all who are sick and those caring for them
- † for all who are anxious and fearful.

Mention by name all those for whom you are especially concerned today.

Loving God, we commit into your care all who are in need today.

Help us to lift our eyes above the torment of this broken world,
and grant us the grace to pray for those who wish us harm.

As we honour the past, may we put our faith in your future;
for you are the source of life and hope, now and for ever.

Listening to God

Reflect on the thoughts and images that have come into your mind as you have been praying.

Notice those that are particularly vivid and how they make you feel.

Ask God what insights he wants you to take away from this act of worship and whether there is any action he wants you to take in response. Thank him for his presence.

Blessing one another

May the love of the Father rule our hearts

May the peace of the Son guard our minds

May the joy of the Spirit fill our lives

that God's kingdom may come and his will be done
on earth as in heaven, today and every day. Amen.