

Playing before the Service by Lorraine Eldridge:  
'Lift Thine Eyes' from the Oratorio 'Elijah' by Mendelssohn



Crowds at Trafalgar Square celebrate VE Day in London, marking the end of the Second World War in Europe Picture: PA/PA Wire

**Welcome to this 10.00am Service of Holy Communion on 10<sup>th</sup> May  
Commemorating the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VE Day 8<sup>th</sup> May 1945**

Heaviness may endure for a night:

**All: But joy comes in the morning.**

God has been our refuge and our strength:

**All: A present help in time of trouble.**

**Hymn: 'O God our help in ages past'**

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 your throne  
your saints have dwelt secure;  
sufficient is your arm alone,  
and our defence is sure.

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

A thousand ages in your 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:  
O be our guard while troubles last,  
and our eternal home.

Isaac Watts | William Croft  
*Words and Music: Public Domain*  
CCLI Licence No. 463770

Dear Friends, we have come together on this day to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe, when the sounds of war fell silent on this continent. There are memories of a parent shouting "Did you know the War is Over?" Some people were sent home from work in celebration. The next day, in jubilation, Mums and Dads were recalled bringing out sandwiches and homemade cakes and lemonade for street parties, with tables decked with small Union Jacks. In other parts of the country, people were quite unaware of the news, cut off from the outside world, not because they were evacuated, but living or working in rural places and they heard later that they'd missed the parties.

Others were not celebrating, because they were part of the Royal Norfolk Regiment, the East Anglian Division sent to Singapore. Research showed the Allied army had to surrender to the Japanese and the men spent 3.5 years as Prisoners of War. Many were doing gruelling work in Thailand. Many did not return and if they did, not till some time after VE Day.

There are a whole spectrum of memories, including intensely personal ones, of children not recognising their returning Fathers, or Fathers their children which you can find on St Mary's Website, but here is another.

Victory Day in Europe May 8th 1945. I was nearly fifteen years old working at the Norfolk Hotel in Brighton when the manager announced the surrender of Germany at Luneburg Heath. The busy hotel went suddenly quiet for a few seconds, then everyone was kissing and hugging each other with jubilation. Then the cheering started and went on and on.

Free drinks were given to the service men that were in the hotel. I seem to remember the bar never closed that day.

Realisation came to us all we were safe. We'd lived through the Battle of Britain and from thirty five miles away seen the terrible fires of London burning. It was with relief we realised that there would be no more sneak raiders crossing the channel at low level; no machine gunning and bombs dropping on towns in the south of England. Our prayers had been answered. Quietly people went to churches to give thanks to God.

My Dad arrived the day before VE Day at my grand parents home, after serving four years in the Middle East. When we met he did not know me. I had not seen him for nearly five years.

I prayed thanking God for the safe return of my Dad, and having the loving grand parents I lived with through those days. They helped me keep my faith by ensuring that I went to Sunday School each week. VE Day was a working day for me, but the happiness on every ones faces is something I shall never forget, and today we celebrate that day seventy five years on with prayers, but we must remember the ones who did not come home and those that were injured and had to adjust to a new way of life. Have faith in God.

Many stories were left untold. Wherever we are now, we are here to give thanks today.

## Let us have a moment of silence

**Let us pray:** O God of truth and justice, we hold before you in thanksgiving, both those men and women who died in active service and those who lived through, remembering all 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.

We hold in our thoughts and prayers Everyone throughout the world in these extremely challenging times. May we be reassured that God is with us and will bring us through this pandemic together.

Grant us Lord, the wisdom and the grace to use aright the time that is left on earth. Strengthen us to follow the steps of your Son, in the way that leads to peace and the fullness of eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Lord be with you

**All: And also with you**

### Prayer of Preparation

Almighty God,  
to whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known,  
and from whom no secrets are hidden:  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you,  
and worthily magnify your holy name;  
through Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**

### Prayers of Penitence

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,  
with all your soul, with all your mind,  
and with all your strength.’

The second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

**All: Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

### **Confession**

**Most merciful God,**

**Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,**

**we confess that we have sinned**

**in thought, word and deed.**

**We have not loved you with our whole heart.**

**We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.**

**In your mercy**

**forgive what we have been,**

**help us to amend what we are,**

**and direct what we shall be;**

**that we may do justly,**

**love mercy,**

**and walk humbly with you, our God.**

**Amen.**

### **Absolution**

Almighty God,

who forgives all who truly repent,

have mercy upon us,  
pardon and deliver us from all our sins,  
confirm and strengthen us in all goodness,  
and keep us in life eternal;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**

### **Hymn: 'Dear Lord and Father of Mankind'**

Dear Lord and Father of mankind  
Forgive our foolish ways  
Re-clothe us in our rightful mind  
In purer lives Thy service find  
In deeper reverence praise  
In deeper reverence praise

In simple trust like theirs who heard  
Beside the Syrian sea  
The gracious calling of the Lord  
Let us like them without a word  
Rise up and follow Thee  
Rise up and follow Thee

O Sabbath rest by Galilee  
O calm of hills above  
Where Jesus knelt to share with Thee  
The silence of eternity  
Interpreted by love  
Interpreted by love

Drop Thy still dews of quietness  
Till all our strivings cease  
Take from our souls the strain and stress  
And let our ordered lives confess  
The beauty of Thy peace  
The beauty of Thy peace

Breathe through the heats of our desire  
Thy coolness and Thy balm  
Let sense be dumb let flesh retire  
Speak through the earthquake wind and fire

**O still small voice of calm**

**O still small voice of calm**

John Greenleaf Whittier | Charles Hubert Hastings Parry

*Words and Music: Public Domain*

*CCLI Licence No. 463770*

### **Collect**

**Risen Christ,**

**your wounds declare your love for the world**

**and the wonder of your risen life:**

**give us compassion and courage**

**to risk ourselves for those we serve,**

**to the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

### **Two Readings from the New Testament**

#### **Acts 7: 51 – 8: 1**

The Apostle Stephen proclaimed: “You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! <sup>52</sup> Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him— <sup>53</sup> you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it.”

<sup>54</sup> When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. <sup>55</sup> But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. <sup>56</sup> “Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”

<sup>57</sup> At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, <sup>58</sup> dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul.

<sup>59</sup> While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” <sup>60</sup> Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep. And Saul was there giving approval to his death.

This is the Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

#### **1 Peter 2: 2 – 10**

<sup>2</sup> Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, <sup>3</sup> now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

<sup>4</sup> As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him— <sup>5</sup> you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house<sup>[a]</sup> to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup> For in Scripture it says:

“See, I lay a stone in Zion,  
a chosen and precious cornerstone,  
and the one who trusts in him  
will never be put to shame.”<sup>[b]</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe,

“The stone the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone,”<sup>[c]</sup>

<sup>8</sup> and,

“A stone that causes people to stumble  
and a rock that makes them fall.”<sup>[d]</sup>

They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.

<sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. <sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

This is the Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

**Hymn: ‘Lord of all hopefulness’**

**Lord of all hopefulness  
Lord of all joy  
Whose trust ever child-like  
No cares could destroy  
Be there at our waking  
And give us we pray**



Your bliss in our hearts Lord  
At the break of the day

Lord of all eagerness  
Lord of all faith  
Whose strong hands were skilled  
At the plane and the lathe  
Be there at our labours  
And give us we pray  
Your strength in our hearts Lord  
At the noon of the day

Lord of all kindness  
Lord of all grace  
Your hands swift to welcome  
Your arms to embrace  
Be there at our homing  
And give us we pray  
Your love in our hearts Lord  
At the eve of the day

Lord of all gentleness  
Lord of all calm  
Whose voice is contentment  
Whose presence is balm  
Be there at our sleeping  
And give us we pray  
Your peace in our hearts Lord  
At the end of the day

*Words: © Jan Struther 1931, 1982 Oxford University Press*

*Music: Public Domain*

*CCLI Licence No. 463770*

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to:

**John 14: 1 – 14**

**All: Glory to you, O Lord.**

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God<sup>[a]</sup>; believe also in me. <sup>2</sup> My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take

you to be with me that you also may be where I am. <sup>4</sup>You know the way to the place where I am going.”

<sup>5</sup>Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

<sup>6</sup>Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup>If you really know me, you will know<sup>[b]</sup> my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

<sup>8</sup>Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”

<sup>9</sup>Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? <sup>10</sup>Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. <sup>11</sup>Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. <sup>12</sup>Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. <sup>13</sup>And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup>You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**All: Praise to you, O Christ.**

### Talk

Many memories, thoughts and prayers for this 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Commemorating VE day, are running through this service. You will also find another folder on St Mary’s Website, with memories which have been shared with me.

What do our Bible readings teach us today? **Human beings can make terrible mistakes. Saying sorry may not be enough for the memories to be taken away, but forgiveness, though costly, is free, for us all to give and to receive a new start.**

Jesus Christ declared he was the way and the truth and the life.

His life was dedicated to bring us into a relationship with God, in whom there are continual new starts, with hope every day, which lasts forever.

In Scripture there are so many examples of the mistakes, the ‘making, breaking and remaking’ of promises between God’s people and Himself. Yet, Stephen’s courage, humility and love stand out in the reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Whatever the cost, Stephen

was faithful to God and his Saviour Jesus Christ. Though only fallible himself, Stephen's words echoed Jesus's own on the cross. 'While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep. And Saul was there giving approval to Stephen's death'.

This very same Saul, who had given orders for Stephen and so many followers of Jesus Christ to be killed, was actually later transformed into an Apostle himself. We have him to thank for most of the writings in the New Testament. That is an incredible example of repentance and forgiveness and redeeming love. God had a plan and a purpose to bring about through even Saul and the fatal mistakes he committed. He, who was later renamed Paul.

The love of God is stronger than death. The love we can receive from God and pass on to others is stronger than hate and greed and any kind of evil. The ultimate victory Jesus won dying on the cross and coming through, to the other side of death, was for the love of all people for all time....so that they may come to know peace. This is not the well won fragile peace of war, that struggles to stand the test of time. This is the peace that passes all human understanding and can only last forever, because it's found through Jesus Christ, in a relationship with the Creator of time and eternity.

Jesus lived for us. May we live for him. Let us serve others in his name, in the hope that many will truly be able to live their lives fully and freely; symbolised by caring for each other; the kind of compassion and pulling together that we see around us all the time in this time of Coronavirus Pandemic. This virus will leave its indelible mark on our shared history, like every conflict in which humanity's been involved. But may its true legacy, of the handclapping thanksgiving, which has affected the whole world, never be lost. We have seen a kindness and compassion that leads a person to serve another, even to the ultimate cost. That is the love of God at work in and through his created people; our hearts beating with his. May the love of God be in us, for now and forever. Let's cherish the freedom which was won for us and continue to share God's love with all humanity, as we live out our lives through faith in Him. **Amen.**

## The Creed

**We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is,  
seen and unseen.  
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,**

the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary  
and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.  
We believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come.  
Amen.

**Let us pray:**

We pray with heartfelt thanksgiving,  
for all those who brought the victory to Europe which we commemorate today.  
We remember all those who were not part of that jubilation.

We pray for all those who have suffered as a result of conflict;  
for all those who have died;  
for all those who have been bereaved;  
and for all those whose lives were changed beyond recognition.

We pray for all those who still serve their country  
and those who are left behind.

O God of truth and justice,  
we hold before you those whose memory we cherish and those whose names we will  
never know.

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 trust in your presence,  
and our faith in your future;  
for you are the source of life and hope,  
now and for ever. **Amen.**

The response to "Let us pray to the Lord" is "**Lord, have mercy**"

"Let us pray to the Lord" "**Lord, have mercy**"

For the peace that comes from God alone, for the unity of all peoples working together for good, which we witness every day, especially in these critical times

“Let us pray to the Lord” **“Lord, have mercy”**

For the Church of Christ, our Bishops and the whole people of God throughout the world

“Let us pray to the Lord” **“Lord, have mercy”**

For the nations of the world and especially for Elizabeth, our Queen, all the Royal Family and for all in those in Government and positions of authority and influence

“Let us pray to the Lord” **“Lord, have mercy”**

For Watton, our family, neighbours and friends and all the communities with whom we are connected

“Let us pray to the Lord” **“Lord, have mercy”**

For all those struggling in any kind of way at this time

For all those who are in their twilight days or hours

for those who have recently died, or for who there is an anniversary

We pause to bring their names and situations before God, in the quiet of our hearts.

“Let us pray to the Lord” **“Lord, have mercy”**

Merciful Father,

**accept these prayers**

**for the sake of your Son,**

**our Saviour, Jesus Christ.**

**Amen.**

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.

**All:**

**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 Peace**

The peace of the Lord be always with you

**All: And also with you.**

### **Hymn: 'Jerusalem'**

And did those feet in ancient time  
Walk upon England's mountains green  
And was the holy Lamb of God  
On England's pleasant pastures seen  
And did the countenance divine  
Shine forth upon our clouded hills  
And was Jerusalem builded here  
Among those dark Satanic mills

Bring me my bow of burning gold  
Bring me my arrows of desire  
Bring me my spear O clouds unfold  
Bring me my chariot of fire  
I will not cease from mental fight  
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand  
Till we have built Jerusalem  
In England's green and pleasant land

*Charles Hubert Hastings Parry | William Blake  
Words and Music: Public Domain  
CCLI Licence No. 463770*

The Lord is here.

**All: His Spirit is with us.**

Lift up your hearts.

**All: We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**All: It is right to give thanks and praise.**

The Lord Jesus, on the eve of His death, shared a meal with His followers. Taking the bread, He gave thanks, broke it, and offered it to them with these words: This is My body broken for you. Remember Me whenever you eat. After the meal, taking the cup of wine, He gave thanks, and offered it them with these words: This is My blood poured out for you, Remember Me whenever you drink. And so, now O Lord, we eat and drink in memory of Jesus and His great love, And in this simple meal we proclaim His death and resurrection, giving life to all people.

With your whole Church throughout the world  
we offer you this sacrifice of praise  
and lift our voice to join the eternal song of heaven:

**All: Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

**All: 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.

### Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread  
to share in the body of Christ.

**All:**

Though we are many, we are one body,  
because we all share in one bread.

Jesus, Lamb of God,  
have mercy on us.  
Jesus, bearer of our sins,  
have mercy on us.  
Jesus, redeemer of the world,  
grant us peace.

God's holy gifts  
for God's holy people.

**All:** Jesus Christ is holy,  
Jesus Christ is Lord,

**to the glory of God the Father.**

The body of Christ given for us. **Amen.**

The blood of Christ shed for us. **Amen.**

### **Time for Silent Reflection**

**Father of all,  
we give you thanks and praise,  
that when we were still far off  
you met us in your Son and brought us home.  
Dying and living, he declared your love,  
gave us grace and opened the gate of glory.  
May we who share Christ's body, live his risen life;  
we who drink his cup bring life to others;  
we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.  
Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us,  
so we and all your children shall be free,  
and the whole earth live to praise your name;  
through Christ our Lord.  
Amen**

### **Notices**

May the peace of God,  
which passes all understanding,  
keep your hearts and minds  
in the knowledge and love of God,  
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always.  
**Amen.**

### **The National Anthem**

**God save our gracious Queen  
Long live our noble Queen  
God save the Queen  
Send her victorious  
Happy and glorious  
Long to reign over us  
God save the Queen**

**Thy choicest gifts in store  
On her be pleased to pour  
Long may she reign  
May she defend our laws  
And ever give us cause  
To sing with heart and voice  
God save the Queen**

*Henry Carey | William E. Hickson  
Words and Music: Public Domain  
CCLI Licence No. 463770*

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
**In the name of Christ. Amen**

**Lorraine and Alicia:  
'Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag'  
chorus of 'We'll meet again'**