



A Service of
Thanksgiving and Rededication
on
Battle of Britain Sunday



Sunday 15 September 2023, 10.30 am

The City Church of Oxford,
St Michael at the North Gate

WELCOME to the City Church of St Michael at the North Gate. During this service of Sung Mattins, we will be remembering those who fought so valiantly for freedom and liberty during the Second World War, and in particular all those involved in the Battle of Britain which was to prove a crucial turning point in the conflict. The order of service will contain all you need to participate in our worship.

Please join us for refreshments in the parish centre after the service.

BATTLE OF BRITAIN SUNDAY commemorates a turning point in the history of the Second World War.

Hitler's objective was to eliminate the Royal Air Force, both in the air and on the ground, in order to obtain air superiority in preparation for a seaborne and airborne invasion. Operating from airfields in France and Belgium, the Luftwaffe began their first heavy onslaught early in July 1940, directed against British shipping and the Channel ports. The intent behind this first phase of the battle was to draw the Royal Air Force into combat and wear down its strength. The second phase, from 8 to 18 August, consisted of intensive day operations against coastal radar stations and fighter airfields. The third phase began after a five-day lull due to poor weather, with increased night attacks and attacks on fighter airfields in the London area.

The first daylight assault on London was made on 7 September and marked the beginning of the fourth phase, lasting most of that month, during which the capital became the Luftwaffe's primary target. These attacks, although serious in themselves, brought vital relief to the fighter airfields, which until that time had been under considerable pressure. The Battle reached a climax on 15 September, when the Luftwaffe flew more than 1,000 sorties over England during daylight hours. On that occasion the Luftwaffe lost 56 aircraft. It was, in Sir Winston Churchill's words: 'One of the decisive battles of the war.' Churchill said:

'The gratitude of every home in our Island, in our Empire, and indeed throughout the world...goes out to the British airmen who, undaunted by odds, unwearied in their constant challenge and mortal danger, are turning the tide of world war by their prowess and by their devotion. Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.'

Throughout October, the fifth and final phase of the Battle saw the decline of enemy daylight attacks on London and an increase in the night bombing

of Britain's major ports and industrial centres. At the beginning of the struggle the Luftwaffe had approximately 2,700 aircraft to launch against England. Britain had fewer than 60 fighter squadrons—around 700 aircraft—and the groundcrew had to work sometimes 16 hours a day to keep aircraft in the air. Between 24 August and 6 September alone, Fighter Command lost 103 pilots and 128 were seriously wounded; 366 fighters had been destroyed or badly damaged. Fighter Command lost over 1,000 fighter aircraft during the Battle and the Luftwaffe nearly 1,900. Through the efforts of fewer than 3,000 aircrew and all the men and women who supported them the Nazi war machine suffered its first significant strategic defeat. In all, 544 aircrew from Fighter Command were killed during the Battle, and a further 791 died before the end of the War.

At the end of the Battle, with the home base now secure, the Royal Air Force could turn to wider tasks: including the long fight for Malta, North Africa, and control of the Mediterranean; the mounting bomber offensive against Germany; the struggle for air supremacy over North-West Europe—without which the Normandy Invasion would have been impossible; and support of the invasion campaign itself. Without these essential contributions, victory in Europe would not have been possible. The Royal Air Force also played a vital role in the Far East, most memorably in the appalling conditions of the Burma campaign. Nor should we forget the unstinting efforts of our maritime airmen, who doggedly quartered the hostile seas for enemy U-boats, shipping and surface raiders. In commemorating the airmen who fought in the Battle of Britain, we pay tribute also to those who in the later years of the war served in all the Allied Forces at sea, on land, and in the air.

Today we record our continuing sense of gratitude for what was achieved in the darkest moments of war, and we rededicate ourselves to strive untiringly for peace, justice, and freedom in the world. We also remember the tireless efforts of RAF servicemen and women who, over the past 100 years, have served in nearly every part of the globe as far eastwards as Hong Kong, Borneo, and Malaya; westwards to Belize; or southwards to the Falkland Islands and South Georgia. We also acknowledge and celebrate the achievements and sacrifices of the men and women of the Royal Air Force still serving in the troubled regions of the World.

*The church is served by a hearing loop. Users should turn their hearing aid to the setting marked T. The service is led by the Revd Anthony Buckley
The service is sung by the Choir of St Michael at the North Gate, conducted by Richard Pantcheff, Director of Music.*

ORDER OF SERVICE

Organ Prelude Meditation on Keble's 'Rogationtide Hymn' (John Ireland)

We stand for the hymn

O Jesus, I have promised
to serve thee to the end;
be thou for ever near me,
my Master and my Friend:
I shall not fear the battle
if thou art by my side,
nor wander from the pathway
if thou wilt be my guide.

O let me hear thee speaking
in accents clear and still
above the storms of passion,
the murmurs of self-will;
O speak to reassure me,
to hasten or control;
O speak, and make me listen,
thou guardian of my soul.

O Jesus, thou hast promised
to all who follow thee,
that where thou art in glory
there shall thy servant be;
and, Jesus, I have promised
to serve thee to the end:
O give me grace to follow,
my Master and my Friend.

O let me see thy foot-marks,
and in them plant mine own;
my hope to follow duly
is in thy strength alone:
O guide me, call me, draw me,
uphold me to the end;
and then in heaven receive me,
my Saviour and my Friend.

We pray for Children's Church, and we remain standing.

DEARLY beloved brethren, the Scripture moveth us in sundry places to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness; and that we should not dissemble nor cloak them before the face of almighty God our heavenly Father; but confess them with an humble, lowly, penitent and obedient heart; to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same by his infinite goodness and mercy. And although we ought at all times humbly to acknowledge our sins before God; yet ought we most chiefly so to do, when we assemble and meet together to render thanks for the great benefits that we have received at his hands, to set forth his most worthy praise, to hear his most holy word, and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul. Wherefore I pray and beseech you, as many as are here present, to accompany me with a pure heart, and humble voice, unto the throne of the heavenly grace, saying after me:

We sit or kneel to pray

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father; We have erred, and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; And we have done those things which we ought not to have done; And there is no health in us. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. Spare thou them, O God, which confess their faults. Restore thou them that are penitent; According to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesu our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake; That we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, To the glory of thy holy Name. Amen.

ALMIGHTY God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness and live; and hath given power, and commandment, to his Ministers, to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the Absolution and Remission of their sins: He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel. Wherefore let us beseech him to grant us true repentance, and his holy Spirit, that those things may please him, which we do at this present; and that the rest of our life

hereafter may be pure, and holy; so that at the last we may come to his eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

OUR Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that 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.

THE PRECES & RESPONSES

O Lord, open thou our lips.

And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

O God, make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

We stand

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

Amen.

Praise ye the Lord.

The Lord's Name be praised.

We remain standing to sing

VENITE, EXULTEMUS DOMINO

Psalm 95.

O COME, let us 'sing unto the ' Lord: let us heartily rejoice in the ' strength of ' our sal'vation.

Let us come before his ' presence with ' thanksgiving: and shew ourselves ' glad in ' him with ' psalms.

For the Lord is a 'great' God: and a great ' King above ' all 'gods.
In his hand are all the ' corners of the ' earth: and the strength of the ' hills is ' his ' also.

The sea is his and ' he ' made it: and his hands pre'pared the ' dry ' land.
O come let us worship and ' fall ' down: and kneel be ' fore the ' Lord our ' Maker.

For he is the ' Lord our ' God: and we are the people of his pasture, and the ' sheep of ' his hand.

Today if ye will hear his voice, harden ' not your ' hearts: as in the provocation, and as in the day of temp'tation ' in the ' wilderness;

When your ' fathers ' tempted ' me: ' proved me, and ' saw my ' works.
Forty years long was I grieved with this gener'ation, and ' said: It is a people that do err in their hearts, for they ' have not ' known my ' ways;
Unto whom I ' swear in my ' wrath: that they should not ' enter 'into my' rest.

Glory be to the Father, and ' to the ' Son: and ' to the ' Holy ' Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ' ever ' shall be: world without ' end. ' Amen.

We sit for the lesson

Jeremiah 6:16-17

Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways,
and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way,
and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.
But they said, We will not walk therein.
Also I set watchmen over you, saying,
Hearken to the sound of the trumpet.
But they said, We will not hearken.

We stand to sing this version of Psalm 46

THE HYMN

GOD is our strength and refuge,
GOD our present help in trouble;
and we therefore will not fear,
though the earth should change!
Though mountains shake and tremble,
Though swirling floods are raging,
God the Lord of hosts is with us evermore!

There is a flowing river,
within God's holy city;
God is in the midst of her
She shall not be moved!
God's help is swiftly given,
thrones vanish at his presence
God the Lord of hosts is with us evermore!

Come, see the works of our maker,
Learn of His deed all powerful
Wars will cease across the world
when he shatters the spear!
Be still and know your creator,
Uplift Him in the nations -
God the Lord of hosts is with us evermore!

Eric Coates, Dambusters' March (arr. John Barnard)

Richard Bewes

We sit for the second lesson

Ephesians 3:13-19

I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

We remain seated as the Choir sings

TE DEUM LAUDAMUS

WE praise thee, O God : we acknowledge thee to be the Lord.
All the earth doth worship thee: the Father everlasting.
To thee all Angels cry aloud: the Heavens and all the Powers therein.
To thee Cherubin, and Seraphin: continually do cry,
Holy, Holy, Holy: Lord God of Sabaoth;
Heaven and earth are full of the Majesty: of thy glory.
The glorious company of the Apostles: praise thee.
The goodly fellowship of the Prophets: praise thee.
The noble army of Martyrs: praise thee.
The holy Church throughout all the world: doth acknowledge thee;
The Father: of an infinite Majesty;
Thine honourable, true: and only Son;
Also the Holy Ghost: the Comforter.
Thou art the King of Glory: O Christ.
Thou art the everlasting Son: of the Father.
When thou tookest upon thee to deliver man: thou didst not abhor the
Virgin's womb.
When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death: thou didst open the
Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.
Thou sittest at the right hand of God: in the Glory of the Father.
We believe that thou shalt come: to be our Judge.
We therefore pray thee, help thy servants: whom thou hast redeemed with
thy precious blood.

Make them to be numbered with thy Saints: in glory everlasting.
O Lord, save thy people: and bless thine heritage.
Govern them: and lift them up for ever.
Day by day: we magnify thee;
And we worship thy Name: ever world without end.
Vouchsafe, O Lord: to keep us this day without sin.
O Lord, have mercy upon us: have mercy upon us.
O Lord, let thy mercy lighten upon us: as our trust is in thee.
O Lord, in thee have I trusted: let me never be confounded.

Te Deum in C major (Sir Charles Villiers Stanford)

The third lesson is read

Luke 7:11-15

And it came to pass the day after, that Jesus went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier; and they that bare him stood still: and he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak: and he delivered him to his mother.

We stand as the choir sings

JUBILATE DEO

OBE joyful in the Lord, all ye lands: serve the Lord with gladness, and come before his presence with a song.
Be ye sure that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
O go your way into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and speak good of his Name.
For the Lord is gracious, his mercy is everlasting: and his truth endureth from generation to generation.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end.
Amen.

Jubilate in C Major (Sir Charles Villiers Stanford)

We remain standing to say together

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:
I And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead, and buried, He descended into hell; The third day he rose again from the dead, He ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; The holy Catholick Church; The Communion of Saints; The Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body, And the life everlasting. Amen.

We remain standing.

THE PRAYERS

Minister The Lord be with you.

All **And with thy spirit.**

Minister Let us pray.

We sit or kneel.

Minister Lord, have mercy upon us.

All **Christ, have mercy upon us.**

Minister Lord, have mercy upon us.

OUR Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil. Amen.

O Lord, shew thy mercy upon us.

And grant us thy salvation.

O Lord, save the King.

And mercifully hear us when we call upon thee.

Endue thy Ministers with righteousness.

And make thy chosen people joyful.

O Lord, save thy people.

And bless thine inheritance.

Give peace in our time, O Lord.

Because there is none other that fighteth for us, but only thou, O God.

O God, make clean our hearts within us.

And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

O Lord, we beseech thee, let thy continual pity cleanse and defend thy Church; and, because it cannot continue in safety without thy succour, preserve it evermore by thy help and goodness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

THE COLLECT FOR PEACE

O GOD, who are the author of peace and lover of concord, in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life, whose service is perfect freedom; Defend us thy humble servants in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in thy defence, may not fear that power of any adversaries, through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE COLLECT FOR GRACE

O LORD, our heavenly Father, Almighty and everlasting God, who hast safely brought us to the beginning of this day; Defend us in the same with thy mighty power; and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger; but that all our doings may be ordered by thy governance, to do always that is righteous in thy sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

We sit

THE ANTHEM

O thou, the central orb of righteous love
Pure beam of the Most High, eternal light
Of this our wintry world; thy radiance bright
Awakes new joy in faith: hope soars above

Come, quickly come, and let thy glory shine;
Gilding our darksome heaven with rays divine

Thy saints with holy lustre round thee move
As stars about thy throne, set in the height
Of God's ordaining counsel, as thy sight
Gives measured grace to each, thy power to prove

Let thy bright beams disperse the gloom of sin:
Our nature all shall feel eternal day
In fellowship with thee, transforming ray
To souls, erewhile unclean, now pure within. Amen

(Sir Charles Wood)

THE SERMON

We sit or kneel for prayer

ALMIGHTY God, our heavenly Father, who promised through your
Son Jesus Christ to hear us when we pray in faith:

ALMIGHTY and loving Father, whose will is our freedom and peace.
We pray for our world and for those who suffer as a result of war and
terrorism, the lonely, disabled, mentally ill and bereaved. Bring to them
consolation and touch their hearts with your peace, and through that touch
bring healing into their memories and lives. We give thanks for all who
relieve suffering, especially we pray for the work of the Royal Air Force
Association and Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

WE pray for our Sovereign Lord King Charles, for your blessing upon him, and all those put in authority under him.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

ALmighty God we commend to your gracious care and keeping all the men and women and their families who serve our country today in the Royal Air Force. Defend them day by day with your heavenly grace, strengthen them in their trials and tribulations and grant them a sense of your abiding presence.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

FATHER, in you we trust for our refuge and strength, we thank you that our nation remained secure in the Battle of Britain. We thank you for those who gave their lives that we might be free. As we honour your memory, teach us to remember your love for all people, to dedicate our lives to your service and to treasure the freedom won for us by others.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

We stand

THE DEDICATION

IN friendship and in service one to another, we are pledged to keep alive the memory of those of all Nations who died in the Royal Air Force and in the Air Forces of the Commonwealth. In their name we give ourselves to this noble cause. Proudly and thankfully we will remember them.

THE ACT OF REMEMBRANCE

WE remember before God and commend to his sure keeping those who have died for their country in war; those whom we knew, and whose memory we treasure; those who have lived and died in the service of others. We remember in particular those in the RAF who gave their lives, and who died in the Battle of Britain.

THE EXHORTATION

THEY shall grow not 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.

We will remember them.

We hold two minutes of reflection and remembrance

THE KOHIMA DECLARATION

When you go home, tell them of us and say, 'For your tomorrow we gave our today.'

THE 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.

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

**GOD save our gracious King,
long live our noble King,
God save the King.
Send him victorious,
happy and glorious,
long to reign over us:
God save the King.**

**Thy choicest gifts in store
on him be pleased to pour,
long may he reign.
May he defend our laws,
and ever give us cause
to sing with heart and voice,
God save the King.**

National Anthem, *Thesaurus Musicus*, c. 1743

THE BLESSING

THE Peace of God, which passeth 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 Ghost, be amongst you, and remain with you always. *Amen.*

We remain standing as the Choir and Clergy depart.

And sit to hear the organ voluntary



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