



A Service of  
Thanksgiving and Rededication  
on  
Battle of Britain Sunday



**Sunday 21<sup>ST</sup> September 2025, 10.30 am**

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

**W**ELCOME to the City Church of St Michael at the North Gate. During this service of Sung Matins, 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.

**B**ATTLE 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

**G** *Organ Prelude.*

**G** *All stand. The Processional Hymn is sung.*

## PROCESSIONAL HYMN

**P**RAISE my soul, the King of heaven,  
to his feet thy tribute bring;  
ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven  
who like me his praise should sing?  
Alleluia, Alleluia,  
praise the everlasting King.

Praise him for his grace and favour  
to our fathers in distress;  
praise him still the same as ever,  
slow to chide, and swift to bless:  
Alleluia, Alleluia,  
glorious in his faithfulness.

Father-like, he tends and spares us,  
well our feeble frame he knows;  
in his hands he gently bears us,  
rescues us from all our foes:  
Alleluia, Alleluia,  
widely as his mercy flows.

Angels, help us to adore him;  
ye behold him face to face;  
sun and moon, bow down before him,  
dwellers all in time and space:  
Alleluia, Alleluia,  
praise with us the God of grace.

*H. F. Lyte (1793-1847)  
Psalm 103*

*¶ All standing, the Priest shall read an opening sentence of Scripture and the following invitation to Confession.*

**D**EARLY 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:

*¶ All sit or kneel to pray the general Confession.*

**A**LMIGHTY 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.

*¶ The Absolution or Remission of sins is pronounced by the Priest.*

**A**LMIGHTY 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.

*¶ Then shall all say together the Lord's Prayer.*

**O**UR 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 Priest and People shall sing in turn these Preces and Responses.*



*Priest:* O Lord, open thou our lips.

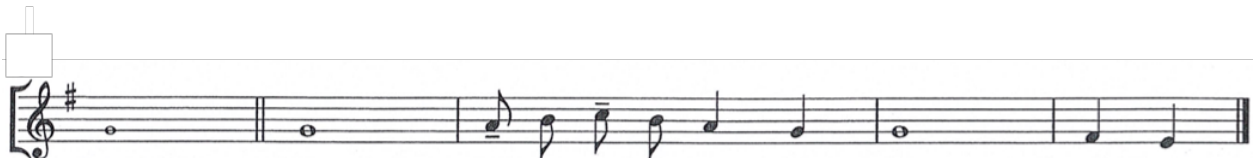
*Answer:* **And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.**



*Priest:* O God, make *speed* to save us.

*Answer:* **O Lórd, make háste to help us.**

*¶ All stand.*



*Priest:* Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;

*Answer:* **As it was in the beginning, is | now and ev - er shall be | world without end. | A - men.**



*Priest:* Praise ye the Lord.

*Answer:* **The Lord's Náme be praís - ed.**

*¶ All remain standing to sing the Venite, Exultemus Domino.*

VENITE, EXULTEMUS DOMINO  
Psalm 95.

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

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

3. For the Lord is a | great - - | God : and a great | King above | all - - |  
gods.

4. In his hand are all the | corners of the | earth : and the strength of the  
| hills is | his - - | also.

5. The sea is his and | he - - | made it : and his hands pre - | pared the |  
dry - - | land.

6. O come let us worship and | fall - - | down : and kneel be - | fore the  
| Lord our | Maker.

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

8. 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;

9. When your | fathers | tempted me : proved | me and | saw my |  
works.

10. 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.

11. 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. - - | A - - | men.

¶ *All sit for the first 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.

¶ *All stand to sing this version of Psalm 46.*

THE HYMN  
(Psalm 46)

**G**OD is our strength and refuge,  
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!

*Richard Bewes (b. 1934)  
Eric Coates (1886-1958), Dambusters' March*

¶ *All sit for the second lesson.*

### Galatians 5.16-24

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

¶ *All remain seated as the Choir sings the Te Deum Laudamus.*

### TE DEUM LAUDAMUS

**W**E 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.

*Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)*

*¶ All remain seated as the third lesson is read.*

St. Luke 17.11-19

Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!" When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed. One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan. Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."

*¶ All stand as the choir sings the Jubilate Deo.*

JUBILATE DEO

**O**BE 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.

*William Walton (1902-1983)*

*¶ All remain standing to say the Apostles' Creed.*

**I** BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:  
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.

*¶ All remain standing for the Salutation and Response.*



*Priest:* The Lord be with you.

*Answer:* **And with thý spí-rit.**

*Priest:* Let us pray.

*¶ All sit or kneel to pray.*



*Priest:* Lord, have mercy up - on us.

*Answer:* **Christ, have mer - cy up - ón us.**

*Priest:* Lord, *have* mercy upon us.

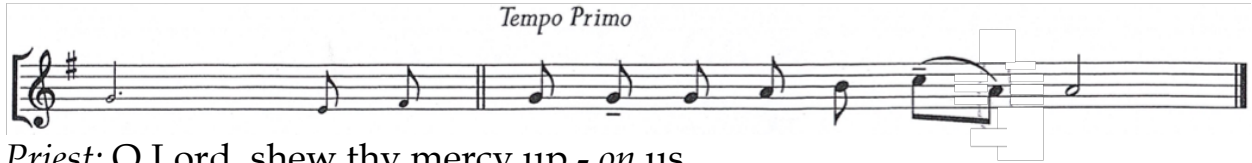
*¶ All sing the Lord's Prayer.*



**O**UR 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 temp - | ta - tion; But deliver us from evil. | A - men.

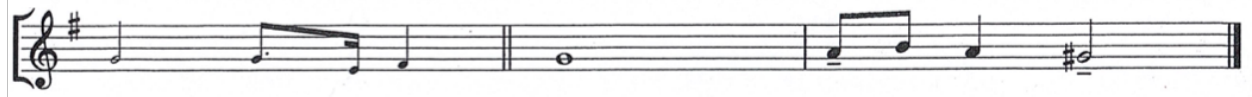
*¶ The Minister and People shall sing in turn the Suffrages.*

*Tempo Primo*



*Priest:* O Lord, shew thy mercy up - on us.

*Answer:* **And grant us thy sal - vá - tion.**



*Priest:* O Lord, save *the* King.

*Answer:* **And mercifully hear us when we | call up - on thee.**



*Priest:* Endue thy ministers with *right* - eous - ness.

*Answer:* **And make thy cho - sen peo - ple jóy - ful.**



*Priest:* O Lord, save thy *peo* - ple.

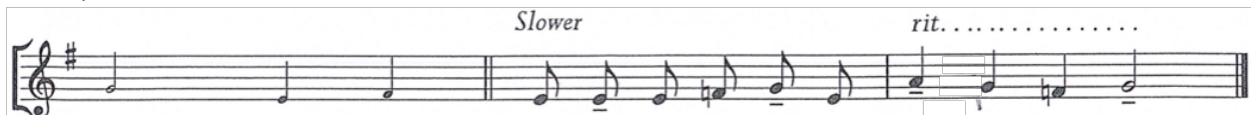
*Answer:* **And bléss thine inher - i - tance.**



*Priest:* Give peace in our time, O Lord.

*Answer:* **Because there is none other that | fight - eth for us, | but on - ly thoú, O God.**

*Slower* *rit. ....*



*Priest:* O God, make clean our hearts with - *in* us.

*Answer:* **And take not thy Ho - ly | Spi - rit from us.**

*¶ Then shall be said the Collect of the Day (The Fourteenth Sunday After Trinity).*

**A**LMIGHTY and everlasting God, give unto us the increase of faith, hope, and charity; and, that we may obtain that which thou dost promise, make us to love that which thou dost command; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

¶ *The Collect for Peace.*

**O** GOD, who art 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.**

¶ *And all shall say together 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.**

¶ *All sit as the Choir sings the Anthem.*

**S**o they gave their bodies to the commonwealth, and received praise that will never die, and a home in the minds of men. Their story lives on without visible symbol, woven into the stuff of other men's lives.

*From Pericles' Funeral Oration, Athens, 431BC  
Peter Aston (1938-2013)*

¶ *All remain seated for the Sermon.*

¶ *All sit or kneel for the Prayers.*

**A**LMIGHTY 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.**

**W**E 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.**

**A**Lmighty 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. We remember especially those serving on detachment. 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.**

**F**ATHER, 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 their 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.**

*¶ All stand for the Dedication and Act of Remembrance.*

**I**N 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.

**W**E 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.

**T**HEY 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.**

*¶ A two-minute silence is kept.*

¶ *The Kohima Declaration is read, followed by the Act of Commitment.*

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

**L**ET 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 is sung.*

**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

¶ *All remain standing for the Blessing, pronounced by the Priest.*

**T**HE 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.**

¶ *All remain standing as the Choir and Clergy depart.*

¶ *Please be seated until the Organ Voluntary has concluded.*

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