LITURGICAL RESOURCES: THE ARMED FORCES

Readings

Psalm 46 and 91

Old Testament: Ecclesiastes 3.1-11; Isaiah 11.1-10; Isaiah 40.21-31; Micah 4.1-5

Apocrypha: Ecclesiasticus 44.1-15

New Testament: Matthew 5.1-12; Mark 10.35-45; Luke 19.41-48; John 15.9-17James 3.13-18

Scriptural Responses

Minister Hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good.
All **Let us outdo one another in showing honour.**

Minister Repay no one evil for evil;
All **Let us hold fast to what is good.** (*Romans 12.9,17*)

Minister For freedom Christ has set us free.
All **Let us stand firm and promote all that is good.** (*Galatians 5.1*)

Hymn for Armed Forces Services

Eternal Father, strong to save,
Whose arm hath bound the restless wave,
Who bid'st the mighty ocean deep
Its own appointed limits keep;
O hear us when we cry to thee,
for those in peril on the sea.

O Christ, the Universal Lord,
who suffered death by nails and sword,
from all assault of deadly foe
sustain thy soldiers where they go;
and evermore hold in thy hand
all those in peril on the land.

O Holy Spirit, Lord of grace
Who fills with strength the human race;
Inspire mankind to know the right,
Guide all who dare the eagle's flight;
And underneath thy wings of care
Guard all from peril in the air.

O Trinity of love and power!
Our brethren shield in danger's hour;

From rock and tempest, fire and foe,
Protect them wheresoe'er they go;
Thus evermore shall rise to Thee,
Praise from the air, the land and sea.

Words: After William Whiting 1825–78
Tune: Melita, John Bacchus Dykes 1823–76

Collect

Heavenly Father, we commend to your gracious care and keeping all who serve in our Armed Forces at home and abroad. Defend them day by day with your heavenly grace, strengthen them in their trials and temptations, give them courage to face the perils that beset them, and help us all to know that nothing can separate them from your love; in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Prayer for Leadership

The Psalmist prayed (Ps 67): '*God be merciful unto us and bless us: that your ways may be known upon earth, your saving health among all nations*.' We pray, Father, for those who exercise civic, political and military leadership across the world. Grant them humility and harmony as they address the most pressing issues of our time: from climate change to trafficking, from control of disease to resolution of disputes. Give health and prosperity to His Majesty the King and endue his parliaments with wisdom and foresight. May all who exercise authority in public life have the imagination to work for your kingdom and be bearers of your saving health; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Prayer for Armed Forces community within the Diocese

'*Nothing in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord'*. We thank you, Father, that we are more than conquerors through you who love us. We pray for the families of the Armed Services community, for the ministry of their chaplains, for the flourishing of the schools where their children learn, for all who support the welfare of veterans. We pray particularly for those who find it hard to make the transition from military to civilian life, or who struggle to cope with their experiences. Bless the relationship of our parish churches with local military units, that we may be communities of care in the love of our neighbour and in the name of Christ. Amen

Prayer for Anniversary Service

Lord of the nations,
we honour the bravery and sacrifice of those who served in….
Grant us similar courage to recognise and restrain evil in our own day,
and may those who lead the nations of the world
work together to defend human liberty,
that we may live peaceably one with another.
This we ask in the name of the Prince of Peace,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

For the Armed Forces of the Crown

Isaiah prophesied: '*I will not forget you; see, I have inscribed you on the palm of my hands'.*
Father, you know the names of all who serve in the Armed Forces of the Crown. We ask your guidance for those in operational theatres, for all in training and support, for those who develop concepts, doctrine and policy, for all who serve in this diocese. May they be wisely led in the defence of our nation and as a force for good in your world. Give them skill and courage in the exercise of their duties, that the power of service may overcome all evil intent: through Jesus Christ the Prince of Peace. Amen

Heavenly Father,
we commend to your gracious care and keeping
all the men and women in our Armed Forces at home and abroad.
Defend them day by day with your heavenly grace;
strengthen them in their trials and temptations;
and give them courage to face the perils that beset them;
and help them to know that nothing can separate them from your love;
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

O Lord God of Hosts,
stretch forth, we pray, your almighty arm
to strengthen and protect our service men and women.
Support them in times of conflict,
and in their rest and training keep them safe from all evil;
endue them with courage and loyalty;
and grant that in all things they may serve without reproach;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

For Those Deployed on Active Service

Almighty God,
stretch forth your mighty arm
to strengthen and protect the armed forces:
grant that meeting danger with courage
and all occasions with discipline and loyalty,
they may truly serve the cause of justice and peace;
to the honour of your holy name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Lord our God,
our sure stronghold,
hear the voice of our pleading
and deliver us from evil.
Strengthen us as we strive for the poor and oppressed,
and establish your justice in all the earth. Ame

A Litany for the Armed Forces

Holy God, the protector of all who trust in you:
Grant to the Armed Forces of the Crown,
and all who seek you,
the assurance of your presence,
the knowledge of your love,
and the guidance of your spirit
Lord, hear us.
Lord, graciously hear us.

Bring healing and wholeness to people and nations:
let your mercy rule all that we do.
Lord, hear us.
Lord, graciously hear us.

Be with all who defend your truth and your peace,
that they may vanquish injustice and wrong.
Lord, hear us.
Lord, graciously hear us.

Give wisdom to leaders and commanders,
that they may be a force for good on the earth.
Lord, hear us.
Lord, graciously hear us.

In your wisdom embrace our enemies,
and those who wish us harm:
turn, the hearts of all to kindness and friendship.
Lord, hear us.
Lord, graciously hear us.

Be with all medics and chaplains,
and all who support the suffering:
give then wisdom and skill, sympathy and patience.
Lord, hear us.
Lord, graciously hear us.

Sustain the anxious and fearful,
and renew then with courage from on high.
Lord, hear us.
Lord, graciously hear us.

Comfort all worried families, whose loved ones are in danger:
surround them with your love, protect them from all harm.
Lord, hear us.
Lord, graciously hear us.

Be with the sick and wounded,

stand by all prisoners and captives:
let your mercy be shown to all, and your power to heal and save.
Lord, hear us.
Lord, graciously hear us.

Receive those fallen in battle, and all innocents who have died:
surround their loved ones with compassion,
and give them a patient faith.
Lord, hear us.
Lord, graciously hear us.

Confirm what is founded on truth,
and establish your love in our hearts:
that justice may abound on the Earth,
and all peoples rejoice in your peace.
Lord, hear us.
Lord, graciously hear us.

The litany may end with the Lord's Prayer. From the Book of Common Order of the Church of Scotland