

Veterans' Day Service
Wednesday, November 11, 2020 @ 11am

11AM – THE RINGING OF 11 BELLS

A LITANY FOR VETERANS

On this day, we remember those who have served in our armed forces. (*Pause for silent reflection*) Prince of Peace, even as we pray for an end to war,

we give thanks for our soldiers' courage, for their love of country, and for their work to bring peace to our world.

Healer of All, bind up the wounds of all who have served

show us how to comfort those who are hurting.

Merciful God, all suffer the cost of war.

We remember widows and widowers, orphans, and all those separated from those they love.

We pray, Gracious God, that swords will be turned into plowshares and that peace will reign.

We give thanks for all who have served. Shield from danger those who bravely protect us. With them, may we glory not in war, but in your love and righteousness. Strengthen us to be your peacemakers in the world. Amen.¹

HISTORY

World War I ended on November 11, 1918, with the signing of the Armistice by the Allies and Germany. In the first Armistice Day proclamation in 1919, President Woodrow Wilson called for the nation to remember those who died in their country's service, and to make the day an opportunity for America to "show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nations." In 1927 Congress called for the display of the U.S. flag on government buildings, and in 1938 Congress called for observing Armistice Day in churches and schools — again dedicating the day to the cause of world peace.

Of course, within just three years, the United States became involved in the War "over there" in Europe and "way out there" in the Pacific. Since the end of World War II, observances of Armistice Day have been held all over the nation, but especially in our national cemeteries and monuments and at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Washington, D.C. The president and many state governors have issued proclamations. Countless communities, veterans' groups, and civic clubs and organizations have held local observances.

Armistice Day became Veterans' Day by an act of Congress in 1954, changing its purpose and scope. President Eisenhower called on the nation to remember the sacrifices of those who fought in all our nation's wars, to celebrate the contributions of

all veterans of military service, and to rededicate ourselves to the task of promoting an enduring peace. It is Eisenhower's call that remains the three-fold purpose of Veterans' Day: remembering those who fought and died, celebrating all veterans, and promoting an enduring peace.ⁱⁱ

SONG

O God of Every Nation

#713

**O God of ev'ry nation, of ev'ry race and land,
redeem your whole creation with your almighty hand;
where hate and fear divide us and bitter threats are hurled,
in love and mercy guide us and heal our strife-torn world.**

**From search for wealth and power and scorn of truth and right,
from trust in bombs that shower destruction through the night,
from pride of race and station and blindness to your way,
deliver ev'ry nation, eternal God, we pray.**

**Lord, strengthen all who labor that all may find release
from fear of rattling saber, from dread of war's increase;
when hope and courage falter, Lord, let your voice be heard;
with faith that none can alter, your servants undergird.**

**Keep bright in us the vision of days when war shall cease,
when hatred and division give way to love and peace,
till dawns the morning glorious when truth and love shall reign,
and Christ shall rule victoriously'er all the world's domain.**

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SCRIPTURE READING

Micah 4: 1-5

¹In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised up above the hills. Peoples shall stream to it, ²and many nations shall come and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. ³He shall judge between many peoples, and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; ⁴but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken. ⁵For all the peoples walk, each in the name of its god, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever.

PRAYERS

Almighty and ever-living God, we give you thanks for the men and women who have served and defended our country and the values of freedom and justice we hold so dear. Help us be mindful of the sacrifices they made and the hardship endured by their families and friends, so that we never take for granted the privileges they have secured for us. Hear us, we pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, whose providence guides your people in diligent service, bless the officers and enlisted women and men of the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, and Coast Guard as they perform the duties of their calling. Give them not only true love of country but also love of you and an understanding of your love for all people; so that, relying upon your guidance, they may courageously defend our nation from every foe, promote justice, honor, and unity among our people, and be a means of fostering mutual respect and understanding among all peoples of the world; through Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord. **Amen.**

BLESSING

As we close this time together, I would like to think of those people in your life who have served, or are serving in our nation's military. Name them out loud now. Hold them in your thoughts as I speak these words: Now, may the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord's face shine upon you. May the Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace. In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

CLOSING SONG

God Bless America

**"While the storm clouds gather far across the sea
Let us swear allegiance to a land that's free
Let us all be grateful for a land so fair
As we raise our voices in a solemn prayer. "**

*** God bless America, land that I love
Stand beside her and guide her
Through the night with the light from above**

**From the mountains to the prairies
To the oceans white with foam
God bless America, my home sweet home. (Repeat from *)
God bless America, my home sweet home.**

ⁱ Adapted from "A Litany for Veterans," The Rev. Tom Williams Whitefish Bay, Wis. Used with permission and reproducible for one-time congregational use with proper attribution.

ⁱⁱ 1 www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/suggestions-for-observing-veterans-day-november-11-in-worship