



Leicester **Cathedral**
A beating heart for City and County

A REFLECTIVE SERVICE

on the eve of the 80th anniversary
of VJ Day



5.30pm
Thursday 14 August 2025



Visitors are requested to note that the use of all audio and visual equipment is not permitted during worship. Your cooperation is appreciated.



There is a hearing loop system built into the sound system of the Cathedral. Please ask the warden if you require any assistance.

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When prompted to stand, please only do so if you feel able and comfortable.

The music at this service is sung by members of the Cathedral Choir and the Cathedral Chamber Choir. The conductor and organist is Rosie Vinter, Assistant Director of Music.



SAFEGUARDING

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A local context

On the 8th May 1945 there was great rejoicing in the streets on hearing the voice of Winston Churchill declare that a war that had been raging across Europe was finally over. After five turbulent years of uncertainty, there was at last hope in Britain that we could look forward to peace and the return of their loved ones who had been fighting a hard war in far off lands.

For many families in Leicestershire and Rutland it was a very different story. War in Europe may well have been over, but fighting was to continue in the Far East. From the attack on the US Fleet in Pearl Harbour in December 1941 until the atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6th and 9th August 1945, the Far East campaign turned out to be one of the longest fought by the British during the second World War.

Three battalions of the Leicestershire Regiment and 115 Regiment Royal Artillery, together with elements of the Australian and Indian Army all saw extensive fighting throughout the campaign. Remote from the experience of most people back home and with little news filtering its way back to England the Fourteenth Army earned the nick name “The Forgotten Army”.

The 1st Battalion of The Leicestershire Regiment saw extensive fighting both in Malaya and Singapore. On the fall of Singapore, they became prisoners of war under the Japanese Imperial Army. Of these, many died during their time in captivity. Some were transported to Burma to work on the infamous Burma Railway whilst others were loaded aboard “Hell Ships” and sent to Japan.

In the meantime, The Leicestershire Regiment was the only British regiment to provide two battalions of the newly formed Chindits under Major General Orde Wingate. The Chindits fought deep penetration behind enemy lines operating a highly successful guerrilla war in the hostile jungle environment against the Japanese. The 2nd Battalion made an epic march over the Naga hills to the River Chindwin entirely supplied by air (a totally new concept) for 5 months. The 7th Battalion was the only Territorial Army Chindit battalion.

In the latter years of the campaign 155 Field Regiment, of which one of its batteries was made up of soldiers from Leicestershire, fought tirelessly in the hostile terrain in support of 19th Indian Division to expel the enemy from Burma. On liberation, out of the 936 men from the 1st Battalion, Leicestershire Regiment at the start of the campaign, 197 were killed in action, 157 died in captivity whilst 537 returned home, some weighing less than 4 stone. On December 1946, in recognition of its outstanding contribution in every theatre of war, His Majesty King George VI graciously conferred the title “Royal” on the Regiment.

Order of Service

All stand as the Choir and Ministers enter. The Organist plays the following Voluntary

Andante in C, S.S Wesley (1810–1876)

INTRODUCTION & WELCOME

Please be seated for

The Introit

**My soul, there is a country
Far beyond the stars,
Where stands a winged sentry
All skilful in the wars:**

**There, above noise and danger
Sweet Peace sits crowned with smiles
And One, born in a manger
Commands the beauteous files.**

**He is thy gracious friend
And, O my soul, awake!
Did in pure love descend
To die here for thy sake.**

**If thou canst get but thither,
There grows the flow'r of Peace,
The Rose that cannot wither,
Thy fortress and thy ease.**

**Leave then thy foolish ranges,
For none can thee secure
But One who never changes,
Thy God, thy life, thy cure.**

Hubert Parry (1848–1918)

Henry Vaughan (1622–1695)

Please remain seated. The Revd Canon Alison Adams, Canon Pastor, gives words of welcome.

The Lord Lieutenant, Mr. Mike Kapur OBE, CStJ, reads extracts from King George VI's speech on VJ day in 1945:

I ask you again at this solemn hour to remember all who have laid down their lives, and all who have endured the loss of those they love. Remember, too, the sufferings of those who fell into the hands of the enemy, whether as prisoners of war or because their homes had been overrun. There is not one of us who has experienced this terrible war who does not realise that we shall feel its inevitable consequences long after we have all forgotten our rejoicings of today.

Relief from past dangers must not blind us to the demands of the future. Great is our responsibility to make sure that the peace gained amid measureless trials and suffering shall not be cast away. Then, indeed, the curse of war may be lifted from the world, and States and peoples, great and small, may dwell together in brighter and better days than we ourselves have known.

The Rt Revd Saju Muthulaly, Bishop of Loughborough continues

Here is acknowledgement of the very great human cost that was borne in the fight for peace, and of the many millions of lives that would be changed for ever because of this conflict. Many of those who served in the Far East Campaigns, including a significant number from this County of Leicestershire, knew extreme privations and suffering as prisoners of war. They have come to be known as 'the forgotten army.' Today we do not forget them; today we shall remember in silence, and we shall pray. And towards the end of the service, we shall be invited, as King George VI asked of that generation 80 years ago, to recommit ourselves to the building of peace in this world.

Canon Alison Adams leads the prayer

Eternal light, shine into our hearts,
eternal goodness, deliver us from evil,
eternal power, be our support,
eternal wisdom, scatter the darkness of our ignorance,
eternal pity, have mercy upon us;
that with all our heart and mind and soul and strength
we may seek your face and be brought by your infinite mercy
to your holy presence;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Alcuin of York (804)

The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray with confidence in the language closest to our hearts,
as our Saviour has taught us.

**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,
forever and ever.
Amen.**

**Notre Père...
Baba wa...
我們在天上的父...
Nna Anyi...
Ojcie Nasz...
Vater unser...
Ein Tad...
Wo tye...
Baba mu...
...أبانا
Padre nuestro...
Πάτερ ἡμῶν...
Отче наш...
Pater noster...**

All stand to sing

The Hymn

**God is Love: let heav'n adore him;
God is Love: let earth rejoice;
let creation sing before him,
and exalt him with one voice.
He who laid the earth's foundation,
he who spread the heav'ns above,
he who breathes through all creation,
he is Love, eternal Love.**

**God is Love: and he enfoldeth
all the world in one embrace;
with unfailing grasp he holdeth
every child of every race.
And when human hearts are breaking
under sorrow's iron rod,
then they find that selfsame aching
deep within the heart of God.**

**God is Love: and though with blindness
sin afflicts the souls of all,
God's eternal loving-kindness
holds and guides us when we fall.
Sin and death and hell shall never
o'er us final triumph gain;
God is Love, so Love for ever
o'er the universe must reign.**

BLAENWERN (AM72 I ii)
William Penfro Rowlands (1860–1937)

Timothy Rees (1874 -1939)



The Atomic Bomb Dome, Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park – photo Emma Davies

GOD'S WORLD TODAY

All sit while Canon Alison reads

Our world has rarely been free of war and certainly since World War 2. Global conflict today appears at its highest level since 1945. While Ukraine and Gaza are constantly in the news and on our hearts, there are actually today some 59 active conflicts currently raging in more than 35 countries. Most of which never hit our newsfeeds.

Since 1945 there has been a proliferation of nuclear weaponry, despite the non-proliferation treaty of 1970. Currently nine countries are thought to have nuclear weapons.

Global migration is on the rise, with over 120 million currently displaced from their homes forcibly through conflict.

The number of countries experiencing terrorism is on the rise, as are deaths linked to terrorist acts.

Aiming to maintain international peace and security, promote human rights and foster global cooperation, the United Nations came into being in 1945 merely months after Japan had surrendered. Collective care for the future of our globe and its inhabitants has never been more vital than today.

A short period of silence is held for reflection.

The Bible Reading

Revelation 21.1–4

*Read by Councillor Teresa Aldred,
The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor of Leicester*

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away."

A short period of silence is held for reflection.

PRAYERS OF PENITENCE

All remain seated while Bishop Saju leads

For humanity's blindness towards the folly and cost of war,

All: Lord have mercy

For hatred which divides and enables othering to flourish,

All: Lord have mercy

For exploitation which turns humans into collateral and statistics,

All: Lord have mercy

For greed which is indifferent to the needs of so many,

All: Lord have mercy

For a lack of sharing in a world of plenty,

All: Lord have mercy

For the collective inability to seek lasting and just solutions to conflict,

All: Lord have mercy

For apathy towards the dispossessed and other victims of war,

All: Lord have mercy

For the pride which prevents us from recognising our shortcomings,

All: Lord have mercy

The choir sings

Kyrie Eleison

Kyrie eleison. Christe eleison. Kyrie eleison.

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

*from Missa O Quam Gloriosum
Tomás Luis de Victoria (c.1548–c.1611)*

THE LAYING OF A WREATH

Please stand and turn towards St George's Chapel

*Colonel (Ret'd) Anthony Swallow OBE lays a wreath in memory of those who suffered
and died in the Far East Campaign*

Vice Lord-Lieutenant Colonel Richard Hurwood DL reads the Kohima Epitaph

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

All remain standing for

The Hymn

The final line of each verse is repeated.

**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 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.**

**O Sabbath rest by Galilee!
O calm of hills above,
where Jesus knelt to share with thee
the silence of eternity,
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.**

**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.**

REPTON (AM621i)

*Charles Hubert Hastings Parry (1848–1918)
from the oratorio Judith*

John Greenleaf Whittier (1807–1892)

Please be seated for

The Poem

Reconciliation

Read by Sir Peter Soulsby, City Mayor

WORD over all, beautiful as the sky!
Beautiful that war, and all its deeds of carnage,
must in time be utterly lost;
That the hands of the sisters Death and Night,
incessantly softly wash again, and ever again, this soil'd world:
...For my enemy is dead—a man divine as myself is dead;
I look where he lies, white-faced and still,
in the coffin — I draw near;
I bend down and touch lightly with my lips the white face in the coffin.

Walt Whitman (1819–1892)

PRAYERS OF PETITION & INTERCESSION

All remain seated for bidding prayers led by Canon Alison.

To the phrase 'Lord, hear us' please respond 'Lord, graciously hear us'.

We offer our prayers at the throne of the God of mercy and justice.
And so we pray...

For wisdom among the leaders of nations.....

For the work of the United Nations....

For peacekeepers and peacemakers.....

For those whose lives have been upturned and scarred by war....

For those whom war has displaced...

For those who are building new lives.....

For those who work to alleviate suffering in war-torn zones....

For those who provide sanctuary and welcome...

For those who bind up the broken-hearted and provide solace to the weary...

For resolve for peace among those who hold influence...

For an end to violence among those for whom it is a way of life.....

For a recognition that aggression cannot be a lasting solution.....

For a just and lasting peace.....

Lord, we hand all these situations into your wise and loving care, knowing that you are alongside us and that you breathe your Spirit into even the most intractable of situations. Help us to trust you, and lean into your wisdom.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord,

Amen.

The choir sings the following anthems.

While they are singing you are invited to light a candle at one of the prayer stations.

Please be guided by Cathedral staff.

A Hymne to Christ

In what torne ship soever I embarke
That ship shall be my embleme of thy Arke;
What sea soever swallow mee, that flood
Shall be to mee an embleme of thy blood;
Though thou with clouds of anger do disguise
Thy face; yet through that maske I know those eyes
Which, though they turne away sometimes
They never will despise

I sacrifice this lland unto thee
And all whom I lov'd there, and who lov'd mee;
When I have put our seas twixt them and mee
Put thou thy sea betwixt my sinnes and thee
As the trees sap doth seeke the root below
In winter, in my winter now I goe
Where none but thee, th'Eternall root
Of true Love I may know.

Imogen Holst (1907–1984)

Words: John Donne (1572–1631)

Lord, for thy tender mercy's sake

Lord, for thy tender mercy's sake, lay not our sins to our charge,
but forgive that is past, and give us grace to amend our sinful lives.
To decline from sin and incline to virtue,
that we may walk with an upright heart before thee,
now and evermore. Amen.

Richard Farrant (c.1525–1580)

from Lidley's Prayers (1566)

Please remain seated while Canon Alison reads

The Poem

For the New Year, 1981

I have a small grain of hope—
one small crystal that gleams
clear colors out of transparency.
I need more.
I break off a fragment
to send you.
Please take
this grain of a grain of hope
so that mine won't shrink.
Please share your fragment
so that yours will grow.
Only so, by division,
will hope increase,
like a clump of irises, which will cease to flower
unless you distribute
the clustered roots, unlikely source—
clumsy and earth-covered—
of grace.

Priscilla Denise Levertov (1923–1997)
Text as published in 'Making Peace',
anti-war poems by Denise Levertov, edited by Peggy Rosenthal
(New Directions Publishing, 2006).

ACT OF COMMITMENT

Please stand as peace lilies are laid on the altar by the Lord-Lieutenants' Cadets

Bishop Saju leads

Bishop: We dream of a world made new,
All: **Where together we shout for justice,
And as one we fight against oppression.**
We dream of a world made new,
**Where together we seek God's righteousness
And as one we sing God's praise.**
We dream of a world made new,
**Where together we climb God's mountain,
And as one we enter the promised land.**
We dream of a world made new,
**Where together we proclaim the good news of God's kingdom,
And as one we enjoy its peace, and abundance and love.**

(after Martin Luther King)

Canon Alison leads

May Almighty God, who has given us the imagination to dream all these things grant us the will both to undertake them and the strength to perform them.

Amen.

All remain standing for

The Hymn

**Praise, 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 for 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.**

**Frail as summer's flower we flourish;
blows the wind and it is gone;
but, while mortals rise and perish,
God endures unchanging on:
Alleluia, alleluia,
praise the high eternal One.**

**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.**

*PRAISE MY SOUL (AM766)
John Goss (1800–1880)*

*Henry Francis Lyte (1793–1847)
based on Psalm 103*

BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

All remain standing for

The Blessing

Bishop Saju leads

May God the Father,
who made from one every nation that occupies the earth,
bless you.

Amen.

May God the Son,
who bought us for God from every tribe and language
and people and nation,
bless you.

Amen.

May God the Holy Spirit,
who brings us together in unity,
bless you.

Amen.

And may the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
come down upon you and give you peace
now and always.

Amen.

All remain standing. The choir sings

Peace I leave with you

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you:
not as the world giveth, give I unto you.
Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.
Peace I leave with you.

Amy Beach (1867–1944)

John 14.27

A reflection written by Canon Emma Davies after visiting Japan a few months ago:

Friday 15th August marks the 80th Anniversary of Victory over Japan Day – VJ Day – which also marks the end of World War II. While this anniversary prompts us to understand the relief and joy that was felt at the ending of war and calls us to find gratitude for those who fought and died for the peace in which we now live, it also demands us to reflect on the costs of war, to lament the bloodshed of the past and to commit ourselves in this ever more dangerous age to peaceful means of engagement with others.

The call to serious reflection is there at least in part because of the events that brought the war to an end: on 6 and 9 August, atomic bombs were exploded above the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing over 200000 people in the immediate days afterwards and many more in the years that followed from radiation-related illnesses.

I visited the Peace Memorial Museum in Hiroshima last October. The story of what happened on that site 80 years ago is presented carefully and painstakingly through pictures, artifacts and testimony. As expected, it is at times harrowing and difficult to take in. Yet, as hundreds of us moved slowly through the rooms in complete silence it became also a deeply moving, shared experience. The facts about the events and decisions that led up to the end of the war and of the nuclear proliferation since are also plainly presented. I remember these two facts above all: There are 9 countries in the world which are thought to have nuclear weapons. The UK is one of them.

Outside, in the serenity of the Peace Memorial Park, many monuments sit on grassed areas and among trees. The Atomic Bomb Dome – one of the only buildings to survive, albeit only as a roofless shell - is preserved still with rubble around its walls. In the middle of the park a Flame of Peace burns constantly, sitting on an enormous plinth designed to imitate hands with palms upturned to the sky. This both alludes to those who pleaded in vain for water to take away their thirst following the blast; and also to an attitude of hope that nuclear warfare will be consigned to history. The flame burns continually while there are still nuclear weapons in the world. The great hope is that one day it can be extinguished.

Sadako Sasaki was 2 years old when she survived the bombing on August 6th 1945, only to die 10 years later from leukaemia caused by the dose of radiation she received. In her last months she set herself the goal of folding 1000 origami cranes. Now the paper crane – *orizuru* in Japanese – has become a symbol of peace. Thousands of folded cranes flank the Children's Peace Monument, bringing a riot of colour to this most poignant of memorials. And, overlooking the Peace Memorial Park is the recently added Orizuru Tower with murals from local artists imagining a bright future and a huge glass tank stretching from ground to roof into which visitors are invited to drop their own folded cranes with a thought or a prayer for peace.

Hiroshima as a city is vibrant, young, beautiful, held in a ring of high hills. It bears the story of 6 August 1945 and what transpired in the world thereafter lightly but seriously. I had a strong impression as a visitor of being invited to become part of that story-telling, that holding. At the top of the Orizuru Tower, as I let go of my origami crane with a prayer, and watched it fly in spinning motion down to join the million or more already collected, I had a profound sense of standing in hope alongside countless others of all nations. As we mark this anniversary of VJ Day, may we all take a part together to hold the story of the past carefully and commit ourselves to the cause of peace for the sake of the generations that are to come.



The Children's Peace Monument, Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park – photo Emma Davies

frieden
 မုသဝသမ္မာ
 sur paqen
 udō kapayapaan
 शान्ति peace 平和 pokój
 fred mir sülh mierz mieu
 paix kedamaian امن میانی
 pace 和平 සාමය мир
 perdamaian 和 평화 shanti
 rahu 和 평화 shanti
 heddwch rangimarie
 thanh 𑜋𑜰𑜫𑜄𑜫
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