

Liturgical Resources for Memorial Day

Memorial Day can be observed through two different lenses. On the civil calendar, it is a day for remembering and honoring those who have died in battle. Originally, the day was known as Decoration Day for the custom of placing flags on the graves of the patriotic dead. This is different from Veterans Day, a time set aside to remember those who are serving or have served our country who are living. On the religious calendar, Memorial Day passes without mention in most churches. There is no liturgical observance of the day. From a pastoral perspective, this is an opportunity for the healing of and connecting with the rawness of loss. Liturgical observance offers Christians the opportunity to be present with others as we come to terms with war, loss and devastation.

Here are some resources to aid you in your liturgical observance of Memorial Day.

Collect – The Thanksgiving for Heroic Service (BCP, p. 839)

Readings Wisdom 3: 1-5, 9
Ephesians 6:10-20
Revelation 7:9-17
John 15:9-13
John 5:24-27

Psalms 23; 31:1-5; 46; 90; 121

Proper Preface All Saints

Other Prayers For Peace (BCP, p. 815)
For Peace among the Nations (BCP, p. 816)
For our Enemies (BCP, p. 816)

Suggested Hymns

Ephesians 6:10-20	1982 Hymnal - # 548; # 561; # 579; # 608; # 617
Revelations 7:9-17	WLP - #777
John 15:9-13	1982 Hymnal - #518

Psalm 23	1982 Hymnal - # 645; #646; #663; #664 LEVAS #279 9setting in simplified Anglican chant w/refrain #104
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Psalm 46	1982 Hymnal - #688
Psalm 121	1982 Hymnal - #668

Also WLP # 775; #776; #777; #791. 1982 Hymnal # 382; #579; #608; # 716 - #720

Additional prayers:

God the King of Glory, in whose hands are the living and the dead: We give you thanks for [*N. and*] all those who have laid down their lives in the service of our country. Grant them your mercy and the light of your presence; give us a sense of your will and purpose, that we may understand that the work you have begun in them will be perfected through Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, in whom all strife is resolved. Amen.

From Enriching our Worship 3 – For one who has died in military or public safety service

Spirit of Life,

We enter into this season of Memorial Day surrounded by such a cloud of witnesses.

We remember, first of all, the women and men who are currently serving in the armed forces and we pray for their safe return.

We also acknowledge that there are women and men who will not return, as we grieve their passing in the daily prayer.

We pause to honor their service and their sacrifice.

Silence for a time

We also pause this hour to give thanks for all the women and men who have served in the nation's armed services.

Those who have not served cannot fully imagine the experience of war, but we do know war's aftermath and the toll that it can take on the human heart.

This day remembers and acknowledges loss and so do we remember those whom we have loved and lost. We hold their names and their faces in our mind's eye. We recall the gifts they gave to us through the strength of their being, the depth of their love, the courage of their dying, and the fullness of their living.

In the Holy Quiet of this hour, their names surround us and they live with us in blessed memory. May we remain together in silence, as a tribute to all that they have meant to us.

Silence for a time

Amen.

By Wayne Arnason

From ***Refuge and Strength- Prayers for the Military and their Families***,
Theodore W, Edwards, Jr. Church Publishing, 2008

As we pause to lift our hearts and minds in prayer, let us be mindful of those who have laid down their lives in the service of their country. O God, we ask your strength, that we might dedicate ourselves to perfecting your kingdom of peace and justice among nations. Let us give thanks for the many blessings of freedom which we possess, purchased at the cost of many lives and sacrifices. Fill us with courage to fulfill our tasks and in no way break faith with the fallen. We commend these fallen to your mercy and ask that you give them eternal rest. This we ask and pray in your name. Amen.

Memorial Day Prayer and Meditation

Let's meditate and remember

Many gave their lives for our freedom ...

Each year we give this tribute
Out of thankfulness and love
For your loyalty and courage
Virtues that set you above.

We'll never forget you gave your all
That others can be free
You paid the ultimate earthly price
Immortal you will ever be.

We walk the byways, streets of towns
Country lanes, through parks
At ease, at peace, possible because
Of missions upon which you embarked.

When there is no setting sun
And tides stretch out o'er all the land
No birds to fly, no songs to sing
Then we'll come and take your hand.

For now we won't forget
An emptiness your parting left
You gave your life in freedom's call
In God's eyes you're ever blessed.

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Prayer by Susan Helene Kramer  
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