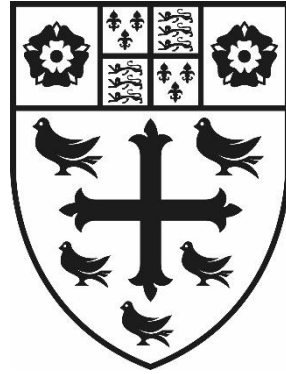


# Westminster Abbey



A Service  
to mark the centenary  
of the burial of the Unknown Warrior

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2020  
11.00 am



*'They buried him among the Kings  
because he had done good toward God and toward his house.'*

## HISTORICAL NOTE

In August 1920 The Reverend David Railton, who had served as an army chaplain in France during the First World War, wrote to the Dean of Westminster with a simple but unprecedented suggestion. Recalling a rough wooden cross in a French garden on which had been written 'An Unknown British Soldier', and reflecting on the anguish of bereaved families who would never know the final resting place of loved ones killed in action, he asked the Dean, Dr Herbert Ryle, to consider burying the body of one such 'unknown comrade' in Westminster Abbey.

King George V, to whom Dean Ryle presented the idea, was initially cautious lest such an act re-open bitter wounds. But he was soon persuaded of the merits of the idea by the Prime Minister Lloyd George, and it was agreed that the burial of an 'Unknown Warrior' would take place in Westminster Abbey on the approaching Armistice Day, immediately after the unveiling of the Cenotaph. Once announced, the idea quickly caught the imagination of both the public and the press.

In great secrecy several unidentifiable bodies were retrieved from battle sites in northern France and taken to army headquarters at Saint-Pol-sur-Ternoise, where they were placed in a chapel, each covered with a Union Flag. At midnight on 7<sup>th</sup> November, Brigadier General L.J. Wyatt, the General Officer commanding troops in France and Flanders, entered the chapel and chose a body at random. Though the details of these procedures were not revealed at the time, official statements stressed the care that had been taken to ensure that the identity of the Unknown Warrior would not be known. He might be a soldier, sailor, or airman, and might equally be from the forces of the United Kingdom, the Dominions, or one of the British colonial territories.

The selected body was placed in a specially-made coffin which had rested overnight in Westminster Abbey before being taken to France. From Saint-Pol-sur-Ternoise the cortege travelled with full military ceremonial to the quayside at Boulogne, where the coffin was transferred to HMS *Verdun* for the voyage home. From Dover a train took the coffin to London, where it arrived on the evening of 10<sup>th</sup> November at Victoria Station and rested overnight with a military guard.

On the morning of Armistice Day the coffin was transferred to a horse-drawn gun carriage which proceeded via the Mall and Admiralty Arch to

Whitehall, where the King placed a wreath of red roses and bay leaves on the coffin. After the Cenotaph had been unveiled the procession continued to the Abbey, entering by the north door, with the King following as chief mourner, together with the Prince of Wales, the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the House of Commons, and members of the Government.

The congregation of around a thousand consisted mostly of widows and mothers who had gained places by ballot. Both houses of Parliament had agreed to forgo their own attendance so that those perceived to have the greatest need of mourning might be present in large numbers. One hundred holders of the Victoria Cross lined the nave as the procession approached the grave, and as the Abbey Choir sang the hymn 'Lead, kindly light' the Warrior was lowered into the ground and the King sprinkled earth from a Flanders battlefield onto his coffin. Reveille was sounded in answer to the Last Post heard at the Cenotaph earlier.

The immense power of David Railton's simple idea became evident in the following days as thousands of mourners filed by the Grave. Stories abounded of the comfort derived from the possibility, often transformed into a personal conviction, that here were the remains of a much-mourned husband, father or son. One of the Abbey's own choristers at the service, Bill Wolferstan, later recalled how he had wondered if the Warrior might be his elder brother.

A week after the burial the grave was filled with earth brought from France and was covered by a simple inscribed gravestone, replaced the following year by the present black marble gravestone, with its longer inscription. Also on Armistice Day 1921 the Padre's Flag, David Railton's Union Flag which had served as both altar cloth and shroud at the Front, and which had covered the Warrior's coffin at the funeral, was presented to be hung close by the Grave. A few weeks earlier had come the award of the Congressional Medal of Honor of the United States of America, which hangs on a nearby pillar.

Many other nations have paid a similar honour to the fallen of their wars, often within architectural or landscaped settings designed especially for that purpose. Uniquely, it appears, the British Unknown Warrior was buried within an ancient place of prayer, in a church which lies at the heart of both national life and national memory.

*Members of the congregation are kindly requested to refrain from using private cameras, video, or sound recording equipment. Please ensure that mobile phones and other electronic devices are switched off.*

*Face coverings must be worn in the Abbey at all times, unless you have an exemption.*

*The whole of the church is served by a hearing loop. Users should turn their hearing aid to the setting marked T.*

*The service is conducted by The Very Reverend Dr David Hoyle, Dean of Westminster.*

*The service is sung by the Choir of Westminster Abbey, conducted by James O'Donnell, Organist and Master of the Choristers.*

*The organ is played by Peter Holder, Sub-Organist.*

*The Band of the Grenadier Guards is directed by Captain Ben Mason.*

*Music before the service:*

*The organist plays*

Rhapsody no 3 in C sharp minor *Herbert Howells (1892–1983)*

*The band plays*

Overture 'In Memoriam' *Arthur Sullivan (1842–1900)*

Equale for Trombones WoO 30 no 1 *Ludwig van Beethoven  
(1770–1827)*

Marche funèbre et chant séraphique Op 17 no 3 *Alexandre Guilmant  
(1837–1911)*

Rédemption Op 52 *César Franck (1822–90)*

Killed in action *Arthur Somervell (1863–1937)*  
*from Symphony in D minor 'Thalassa'*

*The organist plays*

Solemn Prelude 'In memoriam' *Edward Elgar (1857–1934)*  
*from For the fallen Op 80 no 3 arranged by Harvey Grace (1874–1944)*

*Before the service the tenor bell is tolled.*

*The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor of Westminster and Deputy High Steward, Councillor David Glanz, is received at the Great West Door by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster. Presentations are made. All stand as he is conducted to his seat, and then sit.*

*All stand. His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales and Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cornwall are received at the Great West Door by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster.*

## ORDER OF SERVICE

### THE TWO MINUTE SILENCE

### THE LAST POST

*His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales lays a wreath at the Grave of the Unknown Warrior.*

*The choir sings*

### THE INTROIT

Holy is the true light, and passing wonderful, lending radiance to them that endured in the heat of the conflict; from Christ they inherit a home of unfading splendour, wherein they rejoice with gladness evermore.  
Alleluia!

*William Harris (1883–1973)*

*Salisbury Diurnal*

*All remain standing. The Very Reverend Dr David Hoyle, Dean of Westminster, gives*

## THE BIDDING

We gather on this holy ground a hundred years after a man, unknown by name or rank, was laid to his final rest in this royal house. The Abbey was crowded that day and so were the surrounding streets. In the aftermath of a great and terrible war a nation gathered in silence, in shock and grief. Here, and on that day, all thoughts of sacrifice, of victory, and of nation gave way, at this graveside, as great crowds acknowledged a very human loss.

This grave, on which no foot falls, has since become a place of pilgrimage, a place of honour, and a place where first citizens and very ordinary citizens come to stand in silence, because here words fail us. Here we remember, here we dare to hope, and here we pledge ourselves to reconciliation.

On this day of armistice and on this centenary, we gladly recommit ourselves to the duty of remembrance. We will never forget. We pray for all victims of conflict and for those who grieve over them. We pray that we may know peace and be peacemakers. We pray for the coming of that kingdom where we will all be named and known, all forgiven, and all redeemed. We pray, confident that he and we are known unto God.



*All sit. Simon Armitage CBE, Poet Laureate, reads his own composition, 'The Bed'.*

*The Reverend Nicola Frail CF, Senior Chaplain, reads from the memoirs of The Reverend David Railton.*

*Cerys Matthews MBE reads from a letter written by a widow after attending the burial of the Unknown Warrior.*

*Ruby Turner, accompanied by Jools Holland OBE DL, pianist, sings*

Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;  
the darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide!  
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,  
help of the helpless, O abide with me.

I fear no foe with thee at hand to bless;  
ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.  
Where is death's sting? where, grave, thy victory?  
I triumph still, if thou abide with me.

Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes;  
shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies:  
heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;  
in life, in death, O Lord, abide with me!

*Eventide*  
*William Monk (1823–89)*

*Henry Lyte (1793–1847)*

*His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales reads*

## THE FIRST LESSON

Jesus said to his disciples: 'This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that ye love one another.'

*John 15: 12–17*

Thanks be to God.

## THE SERMON

*by*

The Most Reverend and Right Honourable Justin Welby  
*Lord Archbishop of Canterbury*  
*Primate of All England and Metropolitan*

*The choir sings*

## THE ANTHEM

*during which the Padre's Flag is carried through the church and laid on the altar by Guardsman Rhian Morgan of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Welsh Guards*

Lord, thou hast been our refuge : from one generation to another.  
Before the mountains were brought forth,  
or ever the earth and the world were made :  
thou art God from everlasting, and world without end.  
Thou turnest man to destruction :  
again thou sayest, Come again, ye children of men.  
For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday :  
seeing that is past as a watch in the night.

O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,  
our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home.

As soon as thou scatterest them they are even as a sleep :  
and fade away suddenly like the grass.

In the morning it is green, and groweth up :  
but in the evening it is cut down, dried up, and withered.

For we consume away in thy displeasure :  
and are afraid at thy wrathful indignation.

For when thou art angry all our days are gone :  
we bring our years to an end, as a tale that is told.

The years of our age are three score years and ten;  
and though men be so strong that they come to four score years :  
yet is their strength but labour and sorrow;  
so passeth it away, and we are gone.

Turn thee again, O Lord, at the last :  
be gracious unto thy servants.

O satisfy us with thy mercy, and that soon :  
so shall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our life.

Lord, thou hast been our refuge :  
from one generation to another.  
Before the mountains were brought forth,  
or ever the earth and the world were made :  
thou art God from everlasting, and world without end.

And the glorious majesty of the Lord be upon us :  
prosper thou the work of our hands,  
O prosper thou our handy-work.

*Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)*

*Psalm 90: 1–7, 9–10, 13–14, 17  
and from Man frail, and God eternal  
Isaac Watts (1674–1748)*

*The Reverend Mark Birch, Minor Canon and Precentor, introduces*

## THE INTERCESSIONS

Let us pray.

*All kneel or remain seated.*

For all whom the Unknown Warrior represents: for every life lost in conflict; for each individual grieved over; for every future cut short.

Lord, in your mercy

**hear our prayer.**

*Corporal Christopher Finney GC says*

For all who suffer in war; for those who are injured, or bereaved; for those living with disability or mental trauma; for all who offer physical and emotional support.

Lord, in your mercy

**hear our prayer.**

*Colour Sergeant Johnson Beharry VC COG says*

For all who place themselves at risk for the protection of others: for Her Majesty's Armed Forces; for the Emergency Services; for healthcare and all essential workers who are supporting us through the pandemic.

Lord, in your mercy

**hear our prayer.**

*Cadet Warrant Officer Nicholas Amakye says*

For co-operation between nations in the common challenges we face: in public health; the protection of the environment; the challenges of poverty and migration; the constant effort and search for peace.

Lord, in your mercy

**hear our prayer.**

*The Right Honourable The Lord Freyberg says*

For this nation: for its cohesion and solidarity; for all that strengthens and sustains our common life; for Her Majesty the Queen and the Royal Family; for our politicians and civic leaders; for those who quietly do good among their neighbours.

Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

*Linda Booth, Royal Navy & Royal Marines Widows' Association, says*

For those who bear the burden of loss; for those facing losses of opportunity or livelihood; for the bereaved; for those who couldn't say a proper farewell to their loved-ones.

Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

*The Venerable David Stanton, Canon in Residence, says*

For renewed hope in hard times; for grace to persevere; for a renewed commitment to one another; for strength and determination to build a better nation and a better world.

Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

Let us pray for the coming of God's kingdom in the words that Jesus 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, for ever and ever. Amen.**

*The choir sings*

## THE MOTET

Justorum animae in manu Dei sunt,  
et non tanget illos tormentum malitiae.  
Visi sunt oculis insipientium mori,  
illi autem sunt in pace.

*The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God,  
and no torment will ever touch them.  
In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died,  
but they are at peace.*

*Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924)*

*Wisdom 3: 1–2a, 3b*

*All stand.*

## REVEILLE

*The Canon in Residence reads*

## THE SECOND LESSON

IF in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

*1 Corinthians 15: 19–22*

Thanks be to God.

*The Right Honourable Boris Johnson MP, Prime Minister, reads an extract from the diary of a blind veteran who attended the burial of the Unknown Warrior.*

*The Dean says*

Let us pray.

Father, we give thee thanks for the miracle of thy love revealed in the death and resurrection of thy Son Jesus Christ. The place of defeat has become the place of victory; in the death of one man we find a glory offered to all; where life was lost we find eternal life; through him who now liveth and reigneth, world without end. **Amen.**

#### THE BLESSING

God grant to the living grace, to the departed rest, to the Church, The Queen, the Commonwealth, and all people, peace and concord, and to us sinners, life everlasting; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

*The choir alone sings*

#### THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

God save our gracious Queen,  
long live our noble Queen,  
God save The Queen.  
Send her victorious,  
happy and glorious,  
long to reign over us:  
God save The Queen.

*Music after the service:*

*The organist plays*

Fantasia and Toccata in D minor Op 57

*Charles Villiers Stanford  
(1852–1924)*

*The band plays*

Grand March 'Galatea'

*George Miller (1877–1960)*

*Please remember to maintain social distancing when leaving the church.*