Westminster Abbey

A Service of Thanksgiving for Dame Vera Lynn

CH

20th March 1917–18th June 2020

Monday 21st March 2022
Noon
The whole of the church is served by a hearing loop. Users should turn the hearing aid to the setting marked T.

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

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

The service is sung by the Westminster Abbey Special Service Choir, directed by James O’Donnell, Organist and Master of Choristers.

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

Music before the service:

Charles Maxtone-Smith, Organ Scholar, plays
A Song of Sunshine      Alfred Hollins (1865–1942)
Melody in G minor       York Bowen (1884–1961)
Andante tranquillo from Five Short Pieces  Percy Whitlock (1903–1946)

The Central Band of the Royal British Legion play
Second World War Medley   arr. Ray Woodfield (b.1931)
The River Kwai March      arr. David Cole (b.1948)
Popular Songs of World War II arr. David Cole

Charles Maxtone-Smith plays
Benedictus               William Lloyd Webber (1914–1982)

Peter Holder plays
Land of our birth         Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)
from A Song of Thanksgiving

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Lieutenant General James Swift OBE, representing the Chief of the Defence Staff, Rear Admiral Iain Lower, representing the 1st Sea Lord, Brigadier Christopher Davies OBE, representing the Chief of the General Staff, Air Commodore Richard Fogden, representing the Chief of the Air Staff, Major General Eldon Millar MBE, Defence Services Secretary, accompanied by Lieutenant Colonel Elisabeth Roberts and Lieutenant Thomas Palmer, are received by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster. Presentations are made and they are conducted to their seats.

The High Sheriff of Greater London, Mrs Lynn Cooper, and Mr Hugh Cooper, are received by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster. Presentations are made and they are conducted to their seats.

The Right Honourable Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP, Speaker of the House of Commons, and Lady Catherine Hoyle, are received by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster. Presentations are made and they are conducted to their seats.

The Right Honourable The Lord McFall of Alcluith, The Lord Speaker, accompanied by The Deputy Yeoman Usher, Ms Fiona Channon, are received by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster. Presentations are made and they are conducted to their seats.

The Right Worshipful The Lord Mayor of Westminster, Councillor Andrew Smith and the Lady Mayoress are received by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster. Presentations are made. All stand as they are conducted to their seats and then sit.

The Representative of Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, Lady Carew Pole DCVO, is received by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster. Presentations are made.

The Representative of Their Royal Highnesses The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall, the Earl of Rosslyn CVO QPM is received by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster. Presentations are made.

The Lord Chamberlain, The Lord Parker of Minsmere, GCVO, KCB representing Her Majesty The Queen, is received by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster. Presentations are made.
All stand to sing

THE HYMN

O praise ye the Lord!
praise him in the height;
rejoice in his word,
ye angels of light;
ye heavens adore him
by whom ye were made,
and worship before him,
in brightness arrayed.

O praise ye the Lord!
praise him upon earth,
in tuneful accord,
ye sons of new birth;
praise him who has brought you
his grace from above,
praise him who has taught you
to sing of his love.

O praise ye the Lord!
all things that give sound;
each jubilant chord,
re-echo around;
loud organs, his glory
forth tell in deep tone,
and, sweet harp, the story
of what he has done.

O praise ye the Lord!
thanksgiving and song
to him be outpoured
all ages along:
for love in creation,
for heaven restored,
for grace of salvation,
O praise ye the Lord!
Amen, amen.

Laudate Dominum 427 NEH
Hubert Parry (1848–1918)
from Hear my words, ye people

All remain standing.

Henry Baker (1821–77)
after Psalm 150
The Dean gives

THE BIDDING

In this house of prayer, in a place of memory, and in the company of friends we meet to give thanks for the life and work of Dame Vera Lynn. We remember a talent and charm that sustained a breathtakingly long career; the only centenarian to have an album in the top ten. More significantly still, we remember a woman of commitment, courage and resilience, who became the voice of constancy and hope for this nation in wartime. As the Forces’ Sweetheart, she was utterly faithful and loyal to those who looked to her in dark times. We remember her work as an ambassador for charities, and we remember her friendships and the encouragement she gave to others. We also recall a woman who loved, and was loved by, her family. Here we will recall the joy and delight she gave and the sorrow as her long life ended. Vera Lynn kept hope alive for others, now we meet in the hope of resurrection and confident in God’s grace.

All sit. Alan Titchmarsh MBE gives

A PERSONAL REMEMBRANCE

Katie Ashby & The D-Day Darlings sing

THE WHITE CLIFFS OF DOVER

Jonathan Dimbleby gives

A TRIBUTE

THE PROCESSION OF HONOURS

A recording of Travellin’ Home, sung by Dame Vera Lynn, is played.
All stand to sing

THE HYMN

O for a thousand tongues to sing
my dear Redeemer’s praise,
the glories of my God and King,
the triumphs of his grace!

Jesus—the name that charms our fears,
that bids our sorrows cease;
’tis music in the sinner’s ears,
’tis life, and health, and peace.

He speaks; and, listening to his voice,
new life the dead receive,
the mournful broken hearts rejoice,
the humble poor believe.

Hear him, ye deaf; his praise, ye dumb,
your loosened tongues employ;
ye blind, behold your Saviour come;
and leap, ye lame, for joy!

My gracious Master and my God,
assist me to proclaim
and spread through all the earth abroad
the honours of thy name.

Oxford New 415i NEH
Isaac Smith’s Psalmody 1770

Charles Wesley (1707–88)
All sit. Glenys Creese, Executive Manager of the Dame Vera Lynn Children’s Charity, reads

A LETTER OF THANKSGIVING

Anthony Andrews gives

A TRIBUTE

The choir sings

THE ANTHEM

How lovely are thy dwellings fair, O Lord of Hosts:
my soul ever longeth and fainteth sore
for the blest courts of the Lord;
my heart and flesh do cry to the living God.
O blest are they that in thy house are dwelling:
they ever praise thee, O Lord, for evermore.

Johannes Brahms (1833–97) from Ein Deutsches Requiem

Psalm 84: 1, 3

All sit. Sir Tim Rice reads

1 CORINTHIANS 12: 4-11

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.
The Dean gives

THE ADDRESS

The choir sings

THE ANTHEM

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

The Reverend Robert Latham, Sacrist, introduces

THE PRAYERS

Let us give thanks to God for the life and work of Dame Vera Lynn,
our beloved sister in Christ, and let us pray for the causes and
people that were close to her heart.

All kneel or sit, as Chaplain General Designate to Her Majesty’s Armed
Forces The Reverend Michael Parker QHC reads

We give thanks to God for Vera’s unwavering commitment
to the serving personnel and veterans of Her Majesty’s
Armed Forces. For the gifts she used to bring comfort, confidence
and hope to this nation in its darkest hours. For her courage to
serve in places of danger. For the friendship and blessed memory
of the ‘Forces’ Sweetheart’. We pray for all serving personnel and
veterans at home and abroad.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer
The Reverend David Wallis, Vicar of Ditchling, reads

We give thanks to God for Vera’s heart for people and community. For her interest in the life of the local and particular, whilst carrying national fame. For the voice that graced homes and halls, humble and grand. For her length of life, and her generous spirit. We pray for the communities she knew and loved, for this nation and all its people.

Lord in your mercy
Hear our prayer

Tom Jones, Trustee of the Dame Vera Lynn Children’s Charity, reads

We give thanks to God for the support and concern Vera gave to improving the lives of others. For her compassion and kindness. We pray for the work of the Royal British Legion; for Breast Cancer UK; for the Dame Vera Lynn Children’s Charity, for the children they serve, their families and carers; for the work of the Dame Vera Lynn Charitable Trust; for the many charities she supported and represented throughout her life.

Lord in your mercy
Hear our prayer

Virginia Lewis-Jones reads

We give thanks to God for Vera’s gifts as wife, mother and friend. For her strength of character, her creativity, and sense of fun. For gifts enjoyed and shared. For fond memories and a lasting legacy of hope, humour and love. We pray for her family and friends, and for all those whose lives she touched and blessed with her presence. For all who have gathered here today.

Lord in your mercy
Hear our prayer
The Sacrist says

As we lift our prayers of thanksgiving for the life and legacy of Dame Vera to Almighty God, let us pray with confidence the words 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, for ever and ever. Amen.

All stand to sing

THE HYMN

And did those feet in ancient time
walk upon England’s mountains green?
And was the holy Lamb of God
on England’s pleasant pastures seen?
And did the countenance divine
shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
among those dark satanic mills?

Bring me my bow of burning gold!
Bring me my arrows of desire!
Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold!
Bring me my chariot of fire!
I will not cease from mental fight,
nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
till we have built Jerusalem
in England’s green and pleasant land.

Jerusalem 488 NEH  
William Blake (1757–1827)
Hubert Parry (1848–1918)
GOODNIGHT SWEETHEART

They listened as one
They applauded as one
No voice was more welcome or dearer,
Fainthearted before
Their spirits would soar
At the sweet, gentle sound of young Vera.

Over cliffs painted white
No blue birds in flight
But she knew we would see them tomorrow,
And on that sunny day
When freedom held sway
Fun and laughter would banish all sorrow.

What pleasure, what joys
She brought to “her boys”
That would make them feel brighter and bolder,
On all terra firma
From Blighty to Burma
She stood with them, shoulder to shoulder.

A well chartered course
A sweetheart, tour de force
She would carry and take all before her,
Every stage and dance floor
Heard the girl from next door
Number one in the charts – they adored her.

A remarkable Dame
In the great Hall of Fame
Has now taken her fond final curtain,
A life full and free
To one hundred and three
And we will meet again, that’s for certain.

Michael Claughton
Katherine Jenkins OBE sings

WE’LL MEET AGAIN

All stand. The Dean pronounces

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 Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

All remain standing for

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.

All remain standing as the choir and clergy depart.

Music after the service:

Paean Percy Whitlock

The Central Band of the Royal British Legion play

The Cockleshell Heroes Sir F Vivian Dunn (1908–1995)
Dambusters March Eric Coates (1886–1957)
The bells of Westminster Abbey are rung

Members of the congregation are kindly requested to remain in their seats until directed to move by the Honorary Stewards

There will be a collection in aid of the Dame Vera Lynn Charitable Trust. Donations may also be made online at www.dameveralynntrust.org

Honours presented include Companion of Honour
Dame Commander of the British Empire
Burma Star and War Medal
Commander of the Order of Orange-Nassau
Officer of the Order of St John
Freedom of the City of London
Honorary Citizen Saint Sever Calvados
Royal British Legion Lifetime Member.

Other Honours awarded include Honorary Fellowship of Laws
Master of Music
Fellow of the Guild of Musicians and Singers
Brand Personality Award from the Asia Pacific Foundation
Brit Award – Lifetime Achievement Award
Variety Club International Humanitarian Award
Women of the Year Lifetime Achievement Award
Novello Award for Outstanding Services to British Music
Nordoff Robins Music Transforming Lives O2 Silver Clef Awards Icon Award
The Help the Aged Golden Award for Outstanding Service to the Community
Outstanding Contribution Award by Soldiering On Awards
The Variety Club The Children’s Charity Golden Heart Award
Spirit of the 20th Century Award