



**ST GEORGE'S  
ROYAL AIR FORCE CHAPEL OF REMEMBRANCE  
BIGGIN HILL**

**A SERVICE OF COMMEMORATION AND THANKSGIVING  
FOR THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN 1940**

**BATTLE OF BRITAIN DAY  
SUNDAY 15 September 2024**



**The Strongest Link**

**Officiating Minister: Reverend Alison Newman BD Hons  
Preacher: Reader Mr Mark Newman  
Organist: Mr Eric Johnstone  
Bugler: Miss Vicky Mace**

Flags being paraded are:

The England flag of St George

Royal Air Forces Association

Canadian Old Comrade Standard

Royal British Legion

Merchant Navy Prince of Wales Sea Training School Veterans Association,  
2427 Squadron (Biggin Hill) Air Training Corps Banner

If you go to a Sunday service elsewhere,  
why not come here now and then?

If you don't go to a Sunday service elsewhere,  
why not come here now and then?

The 9.30 Sunday Service is open to everyone.

The collection, today, will be for the Royal Air Forces Wings Appeal and  
Friends of St George's Chapel, towards future services.



*Please stand on the arrival of the  
Mayor and Mayoress of London Borough of Bromley  
Councillor David Jefferys and Mrs Anne-Marie Jefferys.*

*Please stand for the procession of the Clergy,  
shortly followed by the Flag Bearers during the first hymn.*

O Ruler of the earth and sky  
Be with our airmen when they fly;  
And keep them in thy loving care  
Amid the perils of the air.  
O let our cry come unto Thee  
For those who fly o'er land and sea.

Strong son of Man, save those who fly  
Swift winged across th'uncharted sky;  
Each anxious hour and lonely flight  
Serenely challenged, day and night.  
O'er land and ocean safely bear  
All those in peril in the air.

O Holy Spirit, God's own power,  
Give peace in sudden danger's hour  
Bring calm of heart, and be Thou near  
To those who watch and those who fear.  
To Thee will rise the grateful prayer  
Of those who serve Thee in the air.

O Trinity of Love and Grace,  
True Guide of all who fly through space,  
In peace and war, 'mid friend and foe,  
Be with them wheresoe'er they go.  
So shall our praise with Heaven's blend  
And joyful hearts to thee ascend.

*Minister:* Seeing we are encompassed with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin, which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the author and perfector of our faith.

We are gathered here today to remember in the presence of God the victory given to us in the Battle of Britain, to offer our thanksgiving, and to pray that we may have such devotion to duty that neither the loving kindness of God nor the heroism of those who fought may have been in vain. Because it is required that no one comes into God's presence but with a full trust in his mercy and with a quiet conscience, let us make our humble confession to Almighty God.

*Please kneel or sit and join in saying:*

**God of mercy, we acknowledge that we are all sinners. We turn from wrong that we have thought, and said, and done, and are mindful of all that we have failed to do. For the sake of Jesus, who died for us, forgive us all that is past, and help us to live each day in the light of Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*Minister:* Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon us, pardon and deliver us from all our sins, confirm and strengthen us in all goodness, and keep us in life eternal, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**

*All say together.*

### THE LORD'S PRAYER

**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.**

*Please sit.*

First Reading Psalm 18: 1-6

I love you, Lord, my strength.  
The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;  
    my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge,  
    my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.  
I called to the Lord, who is worthy of praise,  
    and I have been saved from my enemies.  
The cords of death entangled me;  
    the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me.  
The cords of the grave coiled around me;  
    the snares of death confronted me.  
In my distress I called to the Lord;  
    I cried to my God for help.  
From his temple he heard my voice;  
    my cry came before him, into his ears.

*Please stand.*

**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 chariots of fire!  
I will not cease from mental fight,  
nor will my sword sleep in my hand  
till we have built Jerusalem  
in England's green and pleasant land.**

*Please sit.*

Second Reading Revelation 12: 7-12

read by

The Mayor of Bromley, Councillor David Jefferys.

Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say:

“Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God, day and night, has been hurled down. They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.”

*Please stand.*

Sir Winston Churchill’s words

repeated by Air Commodore John Bell OBE

"The gratitude of every home in our island, in our Empire, and indeed throughout the world, except in the abodes of the guilty, goes out to British airmen who, undaunted by odds, unwearied in their constant challenge and mortal danger, turned the tide of the world war, by their prowess and by their devotion. Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few".

We will remember them.

**All. We will remember them.**

After a brief pause, the Bugler will sound

LAST POST

A period of silence

REVEILLE

*Please sit.*

Eric Johnstone plays

'The Dambusters' and 'Those Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines'.  
*Please kneel or remain sitting.*

*Minister:*

Let us pledge ourselves anew to the service of God and our fellow men; that we may help, encourage, and comfort others and support those working for the relief of the needy and the peace and welfare of the nations.

**All: O Lord hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer, come and listen to me.**

O Lord our God, the refuge and strength of all who put their trust in you. We give you our humble and hearty thanks for the deliverance granted to our nation in the Battle of Britain, and for those who by their sacrifice won that deliverance for us. Teach us, we pray, as we honour their memory and call to mind your great mercy, to renew the dedication of our lives to your service, and always to use our freedom for your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All: O Lord hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer, come and listen to me.**

O God of truth and justice, we hold before you those whose memory we cherish, particularly those who gave their lives flying from here, to protect our freedom. Help us to lift our eyes above the torment of this broken world and grant us the grace to pray for those who wish us harm. As we honour the past, may we put our faith in your future; for you are the source of life and hope, now and forever.

**All: O Lord hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer, come and listen to me.**

We pray for the British Commonwealth of Nations. Bless your servant Charles our King his royal house and all in authority under him. Defend the Royal Navy, the Army and the Royal Air Force in all times of danger.

Most gracious God and Father, in whose will is our peace; turn our hearts and the hearts of all men and women to thyself, that by the power of thy Spirit the peace which is founded on righteousness and justice may be established throughout the whole world; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**

*Please sit.*

ECHOS OF 1940 by P. C. (Kip) Kippax, (deceased 1990s). read by Margaret Wilmot.

Now, full fifty years have passed  
since Goering's Air Armada massed,  
to help the Germans to invade  
by smashing the Force Lord Dowding made.  
That proved abortive - as history shows -  
as Dowding's fighters held grimly on,  
battered and mauled, till their task was done,  
and thus a close-run battle won.

The world's long known them as 'The Few'  
those men who'd worn air forces' Blue,  
who'd fought - and died - that summer through,  
defending Britain for me and you.  
They came from town and countryside,  
some from distant foreign shores;  
some already bloodied in other war-torn skies,  
some did not live to be combat-wise.

They flew the Hurricanes and 'Splts',  
Blenheims and Defiants, too,  
oft out-numbered, oft hard-pressed,  
the Nazi onslaught to arrest.  
Tangled vapour-trails on high  
the metallised minnows' paths did show;  
bursts of fire, then smoke and flame  
so oft discerned by those below.

'Kills' and losses made the news  
with headlines like a Test Match score,  
but Top-Secret words of warning told  
that of Reserves there were few more.  
Just in time, some say, the Battle ended -  
thanks to Hurricanes and 'Spits' -  
and Goerlmg switched to night-time raids,  
to seek submission through a fearsome Blitz.

Many others, on the ground,  
had backed The Few that Summer through;  
they'd toiled - some died - right to the end,  
beleaguered Britain to defend.



## SERMON

Mr Mark Newman

*Please stand.*

*During the hymn, the offering will be taken.*

**I vow to thee my country, all earthly things above,  
Entire and whole and perfect, the service of my love:  
The love that asks no questions, the love that stands the test,  
That lays upon the altar the dearest and the best;  
The love that never falters, the love that pays the price,  
The love that makes undaunted the final sacrifice.**

**And there's another country, I've heard of long ago,  
Most dear to them that love her, most great to them that know:  
We may not count her armies, we may not see her King;  
Her fortress is a faithful heart, her pride is suffering;  
And soul by soul and silently her shining bounds increase,  
And her ways are ways of gentleness and all her paths are peace.**

The offering is presented at the altar.

## THE DEDICATION

*Minister:* In dedicating ourselves to the service of God and our fellow men and women, let us pray and say together:

**All: Almighty God, we offer you our souls and bodies, to be a living sacrifice, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Send us out into the world in the power of your Spirit, to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen.**

*Please sit.*

Flag Bearers receive the flags for the Royal Salute.

*Please stand.*

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

God save our gracious King,  
Long live our noble King  
God save the King,  
Send him victorious,  
Happy and glorious,  
Long to reign over us,  
God save the King.

Thy choicest gifts in store  
On him be pleased to pour,  
Long may he reign.  
May he defend our laws  
And ever give us cause  
To sing with heart and voice,  
God save the King.

THE BLESSING

*Minister:* Go forth into the world in peace, be of good courage, hold fast that which is good; render to no one, evil for evil; strengthen the faint-hearted, support the weak; help the afflicted, honour all, love and serve the Lord; rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be upon you, upon all whom you love both in this world and the next, and all whom this Chapel commemorates, now and forever.

*All: Amen .*

*Please remain standing.*

The Flag Bearers depart to the Royal Air Force March Past  
followed by the Ministers,  
the Mayor and Mayoress  
and the Veterans.

**Church of England Services are held here every Sunday at 9.30am.  
You do not need an RAF connection to attend. Everyone is welcome.**

**DO NOT FORGET**

**Remembrance Sunday Service 10 Nov 24** at 1030 am.

**Remembrance Day 11 Nov 24**

a short service around the flagpole at 1050 am.



Friends of St George's Chapel. [www.rafchapelbigginhill.com](http://www.rafchapelbigginhill.com)  
(Leaflets are at the back of Chapel -do join us.)

Museum. [www.bhmm.org.uk](http://www.bhmm.org.uk)

The Museum, Chapel and Cafe are open  
Tuesday to Sunday 10am to 4 pm

01959 422414

## ST GEORGE'S RAF CHAPEL OF REMEMBRANCE

This Chapel was built in 1951, replacing an earlier station church commemorating the Battle of Britain, which was destroyed by fire in 1946. Its simple style follows that of the original church.

Sir Winston Churchill said "My personal association with Biggin Hill during the Battle of Britain lives in my mind. As a nation we have short memories, and it is well that Memorials such as this should bring to our remembrance the cost of our victory in the days when one of our fighter pilots had to be worth ten. They died without seeing the reward of their efforts; we live to hold their reward inviolate and unfading".

The names of 453 aircrew of the 52 squadrons of the Biggin Hill Sector who made the supreme sacrifice during the Second World War are inscribed on the reredos. Flags of the Commonwealth and Allied countries, whose pilots served in the Biggin Hill Sector are each side of the altar. The altar frontal is embroidered (as it was in 1943) with emblems of the British Isles and Allied countries and bears the quotation from Psalm 63 -"In the Shadow of Thy Wings Will I Rejoice".

The body of the Chapel has 12 stained glass windows by Hugh Easton, designer of the RAF Memorial Window in Westminster Abbey. The theme is a cloud of witnesses - and each depicts the winged spirit of a young pilot embracing a badge in his arms. The badges are of the 7 squadrons operating from Biggin Hill during the Battle of Britain, Fighter Command, No 11 Group, the Station crest with its motto "The Strongest Link" and portraits of the famous Spitfire and Hurricane.

St George's Room has the Battle of Britain Memorial window illustrating the symbolic victory of St George, our patron saint, over the forces of evil. At the top are the badges of the squadrons at Biggin Hill during July to October 1940 and of the army, a reminder of its invaluable support. Four smaller stained-glass windows depict ground support activities, so vital for the air victory. The scenes are aircraft servicing, parachute packing, rescue services and ground control. Only six Military Medals were awarded in the war to ladies of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF). Three were given WAAFs serving at Biggin Hill in the Battle of Britain and are shown on the Ground Control window.

Above the main entrance is the stained-glass Aircrew Association Memorial Window showing the ACA badge of a three-bladed propellor surmounting the RAF roundel with the inscription: "Dedicated to British, Commonwealth and Allied Aircrews".

