



**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 14 September 2025**



The Strongest Link

**Officiating Chaplain, Licensed Lay Minister: Dr David Jefferys
Licensed Lay Minister: Ann-Marie Jefferys
Organist: Mr Eric Johnstone
Bugler: Miss Vicky Mace**

Standards and Banners being paraded are:

St George's RAF Chapel Standard of England
Royal Air Force Regiment Association
Royal British Legion
2427 (Biggin Hill) Squadron Air Training Corps
173 (Orpington) Squadron Air Training Corps

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 0930 Church of England Sunday Service is open to everyone.
No RAF connection is needed - just come!

Remembrance Sunday Service at 1030 am.

Remembrance Day 11 Nov 24 - a short service around the flagpole at 1050 am.



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



*Please stand for the arrival of the
Mayor of London Borough of Bromley Councillor Jonathan Andrews and
Mayoress Mrs Theresa Andrews.*

.....

Please stand. *For the procession of the Chaplain,
followed by the Flag Bearers.*

Please sit. Chaplain's Welcome

Please stand.

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.

Chaplain: Seeing we are compassed about 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 perfecter 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. And because it is required that no one come 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.

Chaplain: 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:

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.

The 46th Psalm

read by

The Mayor of Bromley, Councillor Jonathan Andrews

God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.
Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging.
There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy place where the Most High dwells.
God is within her, she will not fall;
God will help her at break of day.
Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.
The Lord Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.
Come and see what the Lord has done,
the desolations he has brought on the earth.
He makes wars cease
to the ends of the earth.
He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.

He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth."
The Lord Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

O Bread of Heaven
Sung by Tom Claxton

Reading John 5, vv 12 – 17
read by a cadet from 2427(Biggin Hill) Sqn ATC

So they asked him, "Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?" The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there. Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you." The man went away and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had made him well. So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began to persecute him. In his defence Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working."

Sermon

'Amazing Grace'
Sung by Tom Claxton

Battle of Britain by C Day Lewis
read by Margaret Wilmot

What did we earth-bound make of it? A tangle
Of vapour trails, a vertiginously high
Swarming of midges, at most a fiery angel
Hurled out of heaven, was all we could descry.

How could we know the agony and pride
That scrawled those fading signatures up there,
And the cool expertise of those who died
Or lived through that delirium of the air?

Grounded in history now, we re-enact
Such lives, such deaths. Time, laughing out of court
The newspaper heroics and the faked
Statistics, leaves us only to record.

What was, what might have been; fighter and bomber,
The tilting sky, tense moves and counterings;
Those who outlived that legendary summer;
Those who went down, its sunlight on their wings.

And you, unborn then, what will you make of it –
This shadow – play of battles long ago
Be sure of this; they pushed to the uttermost limit
Their luck, skill, nerve. And they were young like you.

Please stand.

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

Under the shadow of thy throne
thy saints have dwelt secure;
sufficient is thine arm alone,
and our defence is sure.

Before the hills in order stood,
or earth received her frame,
from everlasting thou art God,
to endless years the same.

A thousand ages in thy sight
are like an evening gone;
short as the watch that ends the night
before the rising sun.

Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
bears all its sons away;
they fly forgotten, as a dream
dies at the opening day.

O God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
be thou our guide while troubles last,
and our eternal home.

Sir Winston Churchill's words

As spoken by Air Commodore John A 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."

After a brief pause, the Bugler will sound

LAST POST

A period of silence

REVEILLE

Please sit.

Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata

played by Eric Johnstone

Anne-Marie Jefferys: 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 Navy, Army and 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 stand. During the next 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 her 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

Chaplain: 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.

Flag Bearers receive the flags for the Royal Salute.

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.

Chaplain: 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. *All:* Amen.

Please remain standing.

The Flag Bearers depart to the RAF March Past
followed by the Chaplain,
the Mayor and Mayoress
and Veterans.

Please do take this Order of Service home with you.

Friends of St George's Chapel www.rafchapelbigginhill.com
Leaflets are at the back of Chapel - do join us.

The Museum - 01959 422414 www.bigginhillmuseum.com
The Chapel, Museum and Cafe are open
Tuesday to Sunday 10am to 4pm

The Battle of Britain

The Battle of Britain began on 10 July 1940 and ended in late October that year. Over the course of the attacks by the German Airforce, 1,542 aircrew from Fighter, Bomber, and Coastal Commands lost their lives.

A fighter pilot's life expectancy was just four weeks, and the average age was only 20. Hurricane pilots destroyed an estimated 656 German aircraft, while Spitfire pilots claimed around 529. Combined with Britain's ground defences, more than 2,000 German aircraft were brought down. Many of the pilots were volunteers from Commonwealth nations and from territories under German occupation, - Poland, Czechoslovakia, and France.

American volunteers also came to England to help, despite the USA's official neutrality. Some joined RAF squadrons discreetly, concealing their nationality. Eventually, No. 71 Squadron — the first Eagle Squadron — was formed and became operational in early 1941.

On 15 September 1940, the Royal Air Force repelled a major German assault, preventing the Luftwaffe from gaining control of the skies over Britain. In the aftermath, Hitler postponed his planned invasion. German strategy then shifted from targeting airfields to bombing cities and industrial centres. This campaign became known as the Blitz and resulted in the deaths of more than 45,000 civilians.

The Memorial Reredos records the names of 453 aircrew who flew and were killed flying from the Biggin Hill Sector in the war. The Remembrance Book includes a name added some years ago and now shows 454. Another Remembrance Book, given to the Chapel by the Friends of the Chapel, is being compiled and will include names omitted from the Reredos, most likely missed because records were destroyed or lost in the chaos of wartime.