



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

**SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE
Sunday 14th November 2021 at 10.30am**

"WE WILL REMEMBER THEM"



**Officiating Chaplain: The Venerable Dr Paul Wright,
Archdeacon of Bromley & Bexley**

Organist: Mr David Thorne BA, FRCO

Soloist: Miss Claire Jones

Trumpeter: Mr Nigel Garrard

The Venerable Dr Paul Wright

Paul Wright has been ordained for over 40 years and has been Archdeacon of Bromley & Bexley since 2003. He studied Theology at Kings College in London, going on to Oxford for a post-graduate year.

At heart Paul is a parish priest, even though in his current role he has had to take on responsibility for being part of the Bishop's Leadership Team in the Diocese of Rochester.

As Archdeacon he has responsibility for 60 parishes. This includes the oversight of the clergy licensed to those parishes, but he also takes some direct responsibility for the maintenance of the fabric and deals with applications to re-order both the buildings and the interior under the Church's Faculty Jurisdiction process. He works with five Area Deans to ensure the local church is supported in the best possible way.

He has worked with a number of charitable trusts over the years, including the Biggin Hill Memorial Museum Trust, and is always keen to ensure his ministry is engaged in such a way as to 'make a difference'.

Poppies and Flowers

A cascade of handmade poppies flows from the newly renovated wooden cross outside the Chapel. Poppies displayed in many places, inside and outside the Chapel were donated from the UK and abroad in 2020, in response to a request by Katie Edwards, Museum Director. Over 8000 poppies were received. They have been arranged by Margaret Wilmot, Chapel Verger, and Barbara Hodges arranged the flowers.

The collection will be shared between the Royal British Legion and the Chapel

Collectors will be at the exits. Please have your donation ready and leave promptly afterwards, for the laying of wreaths ceremony outside.

Services are held every Sunday at 9.30 am. Everyone is welcome.

Please wear masks during this service and for singing.

*Please stand for the procession and for the presentation of the
2427 Squadron (Biggin Hill) Air Training Corps Banner by
Cadet Corporal Oliver Compton.*

HYMN

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.

Chaplain: We are gathered together to worship Almighty God and to remember with gratitude and affection those who sacrificed their lives while serving in the Armed Forces in the two World Wars, and in all subsequent conflicts. We look back in sorrow for all those who suffered injury and loss; we recall those who are suffering in conflicts in our world today, and we look forward to that day when the kingdoms of this world will be ordered by God's peaceable reign.

In our prayers today, we re-affirm our commitment and dedication to the gospel of justice, peace and reconciliation, and we look to Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who by his death has destroyed death and having won the victory, now reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

All: Amen.

Please sit or kneel.

Chaplain: Let us pray. Almighty God, whose power the heavens, the earth and the sea proclaim, whose love toward us is wondrously revealed in Jesus Christ, and whose Spirit produces everything that is good; we acknowledge your infinite majesty, and with heart and voice we glorify your name.

All: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Chaplain: Let us confess to Almighty God the sins and shortcomings of the world; pride, selfishness, and greed; evil divisions and hatreds. Let us confess our share in what is wrong, and our failure to further that peace which God wills for his children.

Short silence

All: Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed. We have not loved you with our whole heart. We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves. In your mercy forgive us what we have been, amend what we are, and direct what we shall be; that we may act with justice, love with mercy, and walk with humility before you. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Chaplain: Almighty God have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in life eternal through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Please sit

1st Reading 23rd Psalm
read by
Cadet Corporal Oliver Compton
of 2427 (Biggin Hill) Squadron, Air Training Corps

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff — they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

Miss Claire Jones
sings
Psalm 121 - to a chant by Henry Walford-Davies

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help. My help cometh even from the Lord, who hath made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved and he that keepeth thee will not sleep. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord himself is thy keeper. The Lord is thy defence up on thy right hand, so that the sun shall not burn thee by day, neither the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil. Yea, it is even he that shall keep thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in from this time forth for evermore.

2nd Reading Romans 8:31-39
read by
Councillor Julian Benington

God's Love in Christ Jesus

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

SERMON

The Venerable Paul Wright

Please stand for the Act of Remembrance.

ACT OF REMEMBRANCE

Air Commodore John Bell OBE

Let us remember before God and commend to His sure keeping those who have given their lives for freedom and justice in two World Wars, in many times of conflict through the years and in times still recent in locations throughout the world, particularly those whom we have known and whose memory we treasure.

They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old;
age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning;
we will remember them.

All: We will remember them.

LAST POST

2 minutes silence

REVEILLE

Please sit.

THOUGHTS ON REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY BY VETERANS

Alec Borrie: It is time to stand shoulder to shoulder and remember those who didn't return. In Flanders Field and far beyond, we will remember them.

Ann Galley: It is a time for reflection to honour all the sacrifices of those in conflict then and now. I stand with a heavy heart and gratitude for all those who gave so much.

Harry Winter: We stand united together and we will remember them. We will keep their memories alive, for those of us who grow old we will honour those who did not return to grow old.

Peter Lemon: I know the angels were always present when I needed them in the Second World War.

Gareth Welsh: Remembrance is a day for me to reflect on the difference myself and my comrades made, while serving in Northern Island and Iraq, and also the guys who were lost in conflict from the team.

Miss Claire Jones
‘Do not stand at my grave and weep’
by Robert Prizeman who died 8th September 2021

Do not stand at my grave and weep
I am not there, I do not sleep
I am a thousand winds that blow
I am the diamond glint on snow
I am the sunlight on ripened grain
I am the gentle, gentle autumn rain

Do not stand at my grave and weep
I am not there, I do not sleep
When you awake in the morning hush
I am the swift uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circling flight
I am the soft, soft starlight, starlight at night

Do not stand at my grave and weep
I am not there, I do not sleep

ACT OF COMMITMENT

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

All: Lord God our Father, we commit ourselves to work in penitence and faith for reconciliation between nations, that all people may, together, live in freedom, justice and peace. We pray for all who in bereavement, disability and pain continue to suffer the consequences of fighting and terror. We remember with thanksgiving and sorrow those whose lives, in world wars and conflicts, past and present, have been given and taken away. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Paul Grant: Let us pray for all who suffer as a result of conflict, and ask that God may give us peace; for the service men and women, who have died in the violence of war, each one remembered by and known to God;

All sing the response: O Lord hear my prayer. O Lord hear my prayer
When I call, answer me. O Lord hear my prayer. O Lord hear my
prayer hear the prayer. Come and listen to me.

For those who love them in death as in life, offering the distress of our grief and the sadness of our loss;

All sing the response.

For all members of the armed forces who are in danger this day, remembering family, friends and all who pray for their safe return;

All sing the response.

For civilian women, children and men whose lives are disfigured by war or terror, calling to mind in penitence the anger and hatreds of humanity;

All sing the response.

For peace-makers and peace-keepers, who seek to keep this world secure and free;

All sing the response.

For all who bear the burden and privilege of leadership, political, military and religious; asking for gifts of wisdom and resolve in the search for reconciliation and peace;

All sing the response.

For all who have lost someone dear to them, in a time gone by or in recent months;

All sing the response.

Margaret Wilmot: God of truth and justice, we hold before you those whose memory we cherish, and those whose names we will never know. 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.

Let us pray for God's continued blessing upon this Chapel of St George. Eternal God, we recall the devotion of those who, over the years, have come from many lands to make a pilgrimage to this place. We rejoice that this is a living Church and give thanks for all those who have served you faithfully here.

We pray for your blessing to rest upon the people who continue to gather here week by week in worship and Holy Sacrament. Peace be to this Church and all who worship here. Peace be to those who come and go through its doors. Peace be to those who love this place and the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. May God give peace.

All sing: O Lord hear my prayer. O Lord hear my prayer. When I call, answer me. O Lord hear my prayer. O Lord hear my prayer. Come and listen to me.

Miss Claire Jones

‘We will remember them’ - an anthem by John Madden

We will remember them. At the going down of the sun
and in the morning, we will remember them.

They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old,
age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning,
we will remember them. We will remember them.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

All: 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 stand

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 in 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
Serene yet 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.

The Banner Bearer approaches the altar.

NATIONAL ANTHEM AND ROYAL SALUTE

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.

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

THE BLESSING

God the Father has brought hope to a divided world in raising Christ from the dead. Now may he strengthen you to walk in his ways and to witness to the love that banishes all fear and overcomes all hostility: And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, remain with you and all those you love, living and departed, now and forever more. Amen

**Collectors will be at the exits, for your donations,
which will be divided between
the Royal British Legion and the Chapel**

*Please gather outside quickly and spread out
so that all can see the laying of wreaths
near the Gate Guardians.*

‘In Flanders Fields’ Major John McCrae, May 1915

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

‘We shall keep the faith’ Moina Michael, 9th November 1918.

Oh! you who sleep in Flanders Fields,
Sleep sweet - to rise anew!
We caught the torch you threw
And holding high, we keep the Faith
With All who died.

We cherish, too, the Poppy red
That grows on fields where valour led;
It seems to signal to the skies
That blood of heroes never dies,
But lends a lustre to the red
Of the flowers that bloom above the dead
In Flanders Fields.

And now the Torch and Poppy Red
We wear in honor of our dead.
Fear not that ye have died for naught;
We'll teach the lesson that ye wrought
In Flanders Fields.



Miss Moina Belle Michael, an American poet, was inspired by John McCrea's poem and conceived the idea of the red poppy, which continued to grow in the churned up fields of Flanders, as the emblem of remembrance of those who died. The poppy became the symbol of Remembrance for many countries, a reminder of the blood that was shed by those whose lives were taken from them. The French flower of remembrance is the "Bluet de France" the blue Cornflower which also grew on the devastated land of the Western Front.

The Remembrance Red Poppy is a symbol in America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and other Commonwealth countries. The blue 'Forget Me Not' is a flower of general Remembrance in Germany. Other flowers, daisy, chrysanthemum, purple poppy, black poppy and white poppy are symbols of remembrance generally, but the one flower that is recognised almost everywhere is the Red Poppy.

The Red Poppy will continue to be a symbol of deaths in future conflicts because Remembrance of war dead in countries throughout the world has not stopped wars or genocide.



ST GEORGE'S RAF CHAPEL OF REMEMBRANCE

Royal Air Force Biggin Hill is no doubt the most famous fighter station in the world. The station crest shows a sword encircled by a chain, Biggin Hill was a link in the chain of RAF stations protecting London in the Second World War. The airfield was heavily bombed but the station did not give up. The Station Commander, Group Captain Grice, blew up the last remaining hangar standing, in the hope that the Luftwaffe would see everything had been destroyed and would stop attacking the airfield.

This Chapel was built in 1951, replacing an earlier station church which was destroyed by fire in 1946. Its simple style and size are similar to the original church.

Winston Churchill, the Prime Minister, who often visited Biggin Hill on his journey to Chartwell, led a public appeal for funds, to build a permanent memorial chapel. He said "for as a nation we have short memories" (How prophetic those words have proved to be) "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 public responded keenly, and with some government funding St George's RAF Chapel of Remembrance was built 70 years ago. The foundation stone was laid by Air Chief Marshal Lord Dowding in 1951 and the Chapel was dedicated by the Bishop of Rochester in the November.

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 in gold lettering on the reredos, which is the actual memorial. 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". A beautifully decorated Remembrance Book was created and a page was turned daily, a practice which has continued with Museum staff.

Over time, the plain windows in the Chapel were replaced with twelve beautiful stained-glass windows by Hugh Easton, the 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 Spitfire and Hurricane. Some were donated by companies and some by individuals with emotional inscriptions on the window.

The Aircrew Association Memorial Window shows the ACA badge of a three-bladed propellor surmounting the RAF roundel with the inscription - "Dedicated to British, Commonwealth and Allied Aircrews". -

In St George's Room, (now part of the Museum), is 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 from July to October 1940 and of the army, a reminder of its invaluable support. Four other 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. You might notice something strange about the descending parachutist!

In the war only six Military Medals were awarded to the Women's Auxiliary Air Force. Three of these Military Medals were awarded to WAAFs serving at Biggin Hill in the Battle of Britain. These three medals are depicted in the Ground Control window. Roads in the Married Quarters were named after these WAAFs - Flight Officer Elspeth Henderson, Sergeant Joan Mortimer and Sergeant Helen Turner.

RAF Biggin Hill had and still has two Gate Guardians, a Spitfire and a Hurricane. Their presence shows how important Biggin Hill was considered to be, because a station normally only has one Gate Guardian. In the 1960s, they were real aircraft which had flown into the airfield. When their true value was realised as antique aircraft, they were replaced by two replicas from a film set, which were certainly not made to withstand the UK weather. Following extensive repairs which did not last, the Chapel Council decided to replace them but it took years and many letters to receive permission from the RAF to do so. At one time the engine numbers were requested by an RAF Unit!

A public appeal was launched by the Friends of St George's Chapel and again the public helped enthusiastically with donations. Purpose perfect built replicas of a 92 Sqn Spitfire piloted by Geoffrey Wellum and a 32 Sqn Hurricane piloted by Peter Brothers, both flown from Biggin Hill airfield in the Battle of Britain, were installed in 2010 and continue their duty of guarding this Royal Air Force Chapel of Remembrance today.

The Chapel and Museum are open
Tuesday to Sunday 10am to 5pm. 01959 422414
www.rafchapelbigginhill.com
www.bhmm.org.uk

