

First World War Centenary 2018

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The centenary of the Armistice which ended the hostilities of the First World War is being marked across the nation.

Among the many physical reminders of the Great War are countless memorials inside and outside churches together with rolls of honour which record the names of men and women who gave their lives. Remembering the end of what was sometimes called 'the War to end all wars', the Church of England presents a series of resources for public worship and private prayer.

Church of England resources

These resources comprise:

- a **vigil service** to mark the centenary of the end of the Great War, for use on the evening of 10 or 11 November;
- a public **act of commitment to work for peace**, which could be used in conjunction with a civic Remembrance Day ceremony, or as part of public worship;
- a narrative called '**Steps towards Reconciliation**', which reflects the need to work together for peace;
- among others, prayers for peace, reconciliation, visiting a war grave.

Download the individual resources

- [A Vigil Service to mark the Centenary of the end of the Great War](#)
- [An Act of Commitment to work together for peace](#)
- ['Steps towards Reconciliation': a monologue interspersed with words and music](#)
- [Some Individual Prayers](#)

Download as a single document

- [First World War centenary resources](#)

Other resources will be made available to download for use online closer to the time.

Other resources to download

We have linked with [HOPE](#) and the [Bible Society](#) to help provide resources for churches and schools to mark the centenary of the end of the First World War. HOPE have set up a dedicated website for the centenary. [Visit remembrance100.co.uk](http://remembrance100.co.uk) for resources and information about events taking place around the country throughout 2018.

[View other resources available](#)

Hear My Cry booklet

An illustrated collection of psalms, poems, prayers and stories to aid reflection about World War One. Suitable for religious and civic remembrance ceremonies as well as for individual, personal use.

[Available to purchase from the Bible Society website.](#)

Silence booklet

A beautifully illustrated, 36-page, pocket-sized souvenir booklet is designed as a give-away for Remembrance events.

[Available to purchase from the HOPE website.](#)

Schools lesson plans

Stories, videos and notes covering a wide range of material about Christianity and the First World war.

[Available to download from the Bible Society website.](#)

A Prayer for the way of peace and reconciliation

Lord, strengthen our hearts, hands, and minds, to work together for peace;
to see you in one another,
and to seek your kingdom above all things; that your will may be done, and your Kingdom come,
through Jesus Christ, the Lord of lords and King of kings.
Amen.

Chaplains in The British Army

The rapid growth of The British Army from the pre-war total of around 150,000 men supported by the 250,000 reservists of the Territorial Force to a final strength, even after immense losses, of 4 million, demanded a similar expansion of the Church's chaplaincy provision.

[Read more about the role of Chaplains in The British Army](#)

On 11 November 1918, 878 Anglican chaplains were deployed on the [Western Front](#) alone, alongside a similar total from other denominations. They were "temporary chaplains", usually seconded from their home parish with their bishop's approval. Senior army staff saw the chaplains' role as bolstering morale and encouraging the troops. When well behind the lines, chaplains worked for the welfare of the men in their units alongside leading church parades. At the front, they ministered to the wounded and dying, often supporting medical staff as stretcher-bearers.

Holy Communion was offered to the living and the burial service was said over innumerable ad-hoc graves. A total of ninety-eight Anglican chaplains died as a consequence of the conflict, indicating a death rate of around a third of that for officers. The gallantry of those who served on the front-line was consistently recognised and rewarded, with over 120 receiving the [Military Cross](#) and two being awarded the [Victoria Cross](#).

Bell ringers in the First World War

Many bell ringers joined the war effort, and many lost their lives. Just after the war, the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers wrote to all bell towers to compile the Roll of Honour. In total 1,400 bell ringers lost their lives.

[Read more about bell ringing to mark the Centenary of the Armistice](#)

On 11 November 2018, 100 years since Armistice, bells will ring out in unison from churches and cathedrals in villages, towns and cities across the country. Big Ben will also strike at 11am to mark the centenary.

Find out more about the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers' plans to mark the Centenary by [reading this Government press release](#).

Chaplain

A chaplain is a minister, priest or a lay representative attached to a secular institution such as a hospital, prison, military unit, school, business, police department, fire department, university, or private chapel.

Parish

The smallest pastoral area within the Church of England. A parish usually has one main church building.

Bishop

A senior ordained person who has oversight of clergy and lay people in a diocese.

Communion

a) the sacramental sharing of bread and wine by the faithful, following the example given in the Last Supper of Christ with his disciples; b) a service in which Holy Communion is received.

Worship

Offering praise to God.

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