

# **SUGGESTIONS FOR CHURCHES TO CONDUCT ARMISTICE DAY SERVICES**

## **I. INTRODUCTION -**

November 11th, 2018 is the 100th Anniversary of Armistice Day. Veterans For Peace has started an effort to reclaim Armistice Day Holiday and it's message and vision of peace.

## **II. BELL RINGING**

It is traditional on Armistice Day around the world to ring bells at 11am (of the 11th month, of the 11th day) to commemorate Armistice Day. If you have church bells that can be rung, that is optimal. However, if your church does not have bells, you can use hand bells just as well.

Usually, the bell ringing starts the ceremony at 11am, but if that time does not work for your particular service, do it when you start your service. The important thing is to set the tone with the ringing of the bells 11 times.

## **III. THE HISTORY OF ARMISTICE DAY**

On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, 1918, the guns finally fell silent on the Western Front, ending the slaughter that took the lives of 20 million people. In November 1919 US President Wilson signed a proclamation commemorating the end of the war which stated "...the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride for those who died in the country's service..."

In 1926 the US Congress passed a resolution stating "it is fitting that the recurring anniversary of this date should be commemorated with thanksgiving and prayer and exercises designed to perpetuate peace through good will and mutual understanding between nations..."

On May 13, 1938 Congress made November 11th a legal holiday, celebrated as Armistice Day and dedicated to the cause of world peace and honoring veterans. In 1954, the 1938 act was amended striking out "Armistice" and substituting "Veterans" making Veterans Day a day to honor veterans. . Honoring the warrior

quickly morphed into honoring the military and glorifying war. As veterans we know that a day that celebrates peace, not war, is the best way to honor the sacrifices of veterans. This Armistice Day, on the hundredth year anniversary of the "War to end all Wars", Veterans For Peace calls on the U.S. public to say no to more war and to demand justice and peace, at home and abroad.

On this day we can honor the cause of peace by reading scripture appropriate to peace, songs, hymns and poetry that celebrate peace, speeches by veterans who have witnessed war, and readings from Martin Luther King who said "a nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death."

In St James Cathedral, at the funeral of Archbishop Hunthausen on his simple pine casket of were the words "Blessed are the Peacemakers". Seattle and indeed the world is blessed by the example of Archbishop Hunthausen who put his faith into action in support for nuclear disarmament, gay rights and an expanded role for women in the Catholic Church. We can actively endorse peace by urging congress to support the United Nations proclamation on banning nuclear weapons, the International Land Mine Ban proposal, and by drastically reducing the US \$620 Billion defense budget which represents half of US discretionary spending.

#### **IV. POETRY**

"Prayer on the Threshold of Tomorrow", Vahan Tekeyan (pp.60-61)

"Stanzas Against Forgetting", Guillaume Apollinaire (pp. 70-71);

"Anthem for Doomed Youth", Wilfred Owen (82-83);

"Constellation of Dead Brothers", Victor Serge (pp. 117-119).

("Dulce et Decorum est" and "Anthem for Doomed Youth", Wilfred Owen

#### **IV. SONGS**

Music can capture the solemnity of this ceremony and the rejoicing in the breaking out of peace. Here are some suggested songs for musicians, your choir, or recordings. Some of the folk songs can be used to have the whole congregation join in.

Blowing in the Wind

Fortunate Son  
Give Me Love, Give Me Peace on Earth  
Give Peace a Chance  
Imagine  
I Ain't Marching Anymore  
Last Night I Had The Strangest Dream  
Peace Will Come  
Universal Solider  
Where Have All The Flowers Gone  
I Didn't Raise My Boy To Be A Soldier  
Ain't Gonna Study War No More  
Peace Like A River  
Peace, Salaam, Shalom  
Let There Be Peace On Earth  
Peace, Perfect Peace  
Peace In The Valley

**V. BIBLICAL READINGS** - Here are biblical references appropriate for the occasion.

**Hebrew Scriptures**

\*Psalms: 72:1-7

\*Isaiah: 11:06

\*Psalms: 85:8-13

\*Isaiah: 58:06-12

\*Isaiah: 02:2-4

**Christian Scriptures**

\*Matthew:5:1-11;38-48

\*Romans: 12:9-21

\*Luke: 4:14-21

\*2 Corinthians: 5:18-21

\*Luke: 10: 25-37

\*Revelation: 21:1-4

\*Ephesian: 2:13-22

**VI. TWO MINUTES OF SILENCE** - For remembrance and reflection

**VII. VETERAN STORY** - Have a veteran or spouse of veteran talk about what Armistice Day means to them.

**VIII. DISCUSSION** on what individuals and congregations can do to live the spirit of Armistice Day work for peace in our community, and reduce militarism.

## **XI. Peace Service:**

White poppies and white dove, symbol of peace and the Holy

The White Poppy movement, started over eighty years ago in Britain by the Peace Pledge Union, on Remembrance (Armistice) Day recalls all victims of war, which are mostly civilians.

Red Poppies only honor European WW1 dead.

The best way to respect the victims of war is to work to prevent war in the present and future. We need to tackle the underlying causes of warfare, such as poverty, inequality and militarism.

Veterans For Peace Chapter 9 Seattle will supply white poppies after services

Veterans For Peace Chapter 92 Seattle Vfp92.org

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