

WORSHIP RESOURCES

**A Retreat Gathering
for
Australian Defence Force
Veterans and Spouses**

**"Put on the whole
armour of God"**

Ephesians 6:11

Organised by Veterans Faith and Wellbeing Support
Creative Ministries Network
An agency of the Uniting Church in Australia

Evening prayer

May be sung to the tune 'Amazing Grace'.

'Mid all the traffic of the ways,
Turmoils without, within,
Make in my heart a quiet place,
And come and dwell therein.

A little shrine of quietness,
All sacred to thyself,
Where thou shalt all my soul possess,
And I may find myself.

A little place of mystic grace,
Of self and sin swept bare,
Where I may look into thy face,
And talk with thee in prayer.

Come, occupy my silent place,
And make thy dwelling there!
More grace is wrought in quietness
Than any is aware.

John Oxenham (1852-1941)

Morning prayer

Leader

Compassionate and loving God, You are a God who transcends time and space and yet you promise that through your Son you offer the opportunity of a personal relationship for those of us who were obliged to serve the nation at the behest of the government.

Voice 1

We are grateful you put on us the uniform of truth and righteousness, and you fit us with the armour of peace and faith to keep us in the way of salvation. God who never sleeps, be with us always.

We thank you, Jesus, that by your victory for us through your precious blood we can stand firm in the power of your might.

Voice 2

Yet we feel unworthy to be spoken to by you, O God. In our spiritual journey there are circumstances that bring us to a time of great stress. We are weakened and under attack. We often need help to come through. We ask your forgiveness of the weaknesses or shortcomings we share with all humans, for forgiveness of our own failings, and for our acts that have harmed others and you.

Leader

Put on the whole armour of God.

Live in the strength of God.

Receive God's gift of forgiveness and courage.

Voice 1

Let us now commit ourselves to be agents of service to our colleagues and community.

Voice 2

Lord, give us strength to be your agents of peace and service.

P: Hear our prayer for world peace, respect for all, and for the needy in this world to not want.

Voice 2

Equip us with the ability to quench the flaming arrows related in military terms to the thrusts of the "enemy". Help each of us with our questions related to the "enemy".

P: Grant us the courage to continue to work against the evil that exists in this world.

Help us serve our neighbours and ex-servicemen and women, to be a good citizen and to be tolerant of others and accept them.

P: Grant us the courage to reach out to all those who have been wounded by war, regardless of whom they were associated with or fought for.

Leader

O God, place your armour on all veterans of Australia. Give each one the security to be found in wearing God's armour, so that it may help guide them along their journey. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A prayer of Australian veterans based upon Ephesians 6: 10-17.

Worship

Call to worship

Leader: Creator God, Lover of the Universe, we come here at the close of this retreat to worship you.

All: We come as pilgrims seeking companionship along the way and comfort during the lonely hours.

Leader: We come as mourners to remember and to grieve.

All: We come as soldiers trained for war, returned servicemen wounded by war, and as people who have caused harm to others. We come seeking peace for and with our enemies, healing and forgiveness for ourselves, and justice and reconciliation for all harmed by war and violence.

Leader: We come as Christ's disciples to receive his gospel to proclaim.

All: Come, holy spirit, be present with us.

Song: 'Wounded'

Fay White

Confession

Drop a stone in the water, letting go of any hardness of heart from your military training or service, or from the impact military training and service have had on your life.

Prayer for forgiveness

Leader: All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

All: O God, forgive.

Leader: When our love of our nation blinds us to the fears and desires of other nations

All: O God, forgive.

Leader: Our fear and ignorance of other people and nations that has justified our violence

All: O God, forgive.

Leader: Our trust in power and might, which exploits the

vulnerability of other human beings and lays waste to the earth

All: O God, forgive.

Leader: Our indifference to the plight of the homeless and the refugee

All: O God, forgive.

Leader: Our self righteousness, which leads us to trust in ourselves and not in You

All: O God, forgive us for falling short of your peaceable kingdom. May the mighty God grant us forgiveness for all our sins, and grant us the grace and comfort of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader: But now, thus says the Lord who created you, O Jacob, who formed you, O Israel.

All: 'Do not fear, for I redeem you. I have called you by name and you are mine.'

Leader: 'When you pass through the waters, I will be with you, and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned and the flames will not consume you.'

All: 'For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your saviour.'

Leader: This is the Good News which Christ makes known to us: God is with us! We are loved unconditionally. We are forgiven!

All: Because we are forgiven, we have peace to share.

Leader: Because we are loved enough, we have love to give.

All: Because we are touched by God's mercy, we have grace to share; thanks be to God!

Song: 'Whatever we've done'

Fay White

Whatever we've done - whatever's been done to us

On either end of a gun – whatever's been done

Where-ever we've been – whatever the hell we have seen

Still we can come, still we can come

There's a vast forgiving love at the heart of the Holy One
whose grace falls soft on our shoulders - Whatever we've done

Whatever we feel – whatever we do not feel
In the nightmare or for real – whatever we feel
Whether there's anguish – or whether we're numb
Still we can come, still we can come

There's a place of quiet rest - at the heart of the Holy One
Whose grace falls soft on our shoulders - Whatever we've done

Scripture: Ephesians 4: 1 – 7, 11 - 16

Testimonies

Song: 'Travelling soldier' *Words: Shona Traill, music: Fay White*

Shared reflection: what this retreat means for me and this
community of Christ's.

A prayer for healing (*stand together*)

L: O God, we cry to you in our despair and guilt that people hurt
and war against each other.

P: Be with us and heal us, O God.

L: We feel the fear and pain of our loss and grief, the shame and
humiliation of our failure and self-centredness.

P: Be with us and heal us, O God. (*silence*)

Song: 'Eli, Eli' *Words: Miriam Kestler, music: Fay White*

L: We carry with us the things that have been done to us which
hurt and destroy.

P: Be with us and heal us, O God.

L: We carry with us the things that we have done in secret that
wound our spirits and destroy our souls.

P: Be with us and heal us, O God. (silence)

L: They stand before us and weigh us down. They stop us living with joy and hope.

P: Be with us and heal us, O God.

L: Lift us up on the wings of your Spirit.

P: Set us free with your peace and your power.

L: For you are stronger than all the forces that stand against us.

P: Set us free, heal our wounds. O God who never leaves us nor forsakes us. Amen.

(The oil of anointing for healing is passed around the circle, with the sign of the cross being made on the person's palm, and the words, 'Be strong in the Lord'.)

Song: 'Peaceable kingdom'

Fay White

I will set my feet on the path of Peace - *the path to the Peaceable Kingdom*

Let the strife be gone and the conflict cease - *on the path to the Peaceable Kingdom*

I will turn away from sor-row

And I will not wait until to-morrow

I will walk today (I will walk today) - - I will walk to the Peaceable Kingdom.

I will o-pen my heart on the path of Peace - *the path to the Peaceable Kingdom*

Let the pain depart and the anger cease - *on the path to the Peaceable Kingdom*

I will make my heart a welcome place

For the God-given gift of healing Grace

I will walk today (I will walk today) - - I will walk to the Peaceable Kingdom

I will not walk alone on the path to Peace - *the path to the Peaceable Kingdom*

Let the loneliness from this day cease - *on the path to the Peaceable Kingdom*

There are friends and fam'ly on this road
Who will help to shoulder any load

We will walk today (we will walk today) - - we will walk to the Peaceable Kingdom

There are songs to be sung on the path to Peace - *the path to the Peaceable Kingdom*

And the song of hope will never cease - *on the path to the Peaceable Kingdom*

For when voices join then all are strong
And the heart finds courage in the song

We will walk today (we will walk today) - - we will walk to the Peaceable Kingdom

The peace *Congregation members offer a blessing of peace to each other.*

Blessing

Circle us O God
Keep peace within
Keep turmoil out.

Circle us O God
Keep calm within
Keep storms without.

Circle us O God
Keep strength within
Keep weakness out.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Notes

The call to worship and the prayer for forgiveness are adapted from a prayer of the International Conference of War Veteran Ministers.

The prayer for healing is adapted from Dorothy McRae-McMahon, 1993, Echoes of our Journey: liturgies of the people, p.83

The blessing is from David Adams, 1987, The Cry of the Deer: meditations on the hymn of St. Patrick, pp. 12-13