

The banner features the text "Because we bear your name" in large blue font on the left. On the right, there is a circular logo for the Lutheran Church of Australia with the tagline "where love comes to life" and a portrait of Bishop Paul Smith. Below the portrait, his name "BISHOP PAUL SMITH" is written. At the bottom right, a blue curved area contains the text "Lord Jesus, we *belong* to you, you *live* in us, we live in you; we live and *work* for you – because we bear *your name*" with musical notes.

Anzac Day Message

Anzac Day is about remembering and giving thanks for members of the armed services who have served our country. We acknowledge with a mixture of gratitude and regret the extraordinary price paid by tens of thousands of Australian and New Zealand servicemen and women and their families for their involvement in wars to defend us and our allies.

Although the focus on Anzac Day is on military personnel, the toll of war on civilians is very great too. Statistics on casualties in major wars of the 20th and 21st centuries, show that in many wars military casualties were matched by or exceeded by civilian casualties.

Politicians and military leaders in our modern world often speak about 'surgical strikes', 'smart bombs' and 'minimising collateral damage', but the temptation to launch large-scale attacks on civilians is strong because it can weaken an enemy's resolve to continue fighting and to force them to accept peace terms they wouldn't otherwise accept.

At the same time, civilians are targeted and terrorised by resistance movements to punish them often for political reasons.

All too often, civilians in multiethnic countries like Australia and New Zealand are set against each other as they are pulled into overseas conflicts by war propaganda distributed online and in social media.

War isn't glorious. It is ugly and brutal. But we believe and teach that soldiers and weapons are used by government to preserve order, because of human sinfulness.

So, in our Anzac commemoration we firstly acknowledge that we have sinned against God. We seek God's mercy and God's grace so that we might live in peace with our neighbours as God has intended.

Before God, we also give thanks and express our gratitude to the military personnel who put their lives on the line for our sake.

In our praying, we call out to the Lord, for an end to wars around the world, and for solutions to the many awful, often complex and complicated situations that underlie them.

At this time we especially pray:

- for a ceasefire and release of hostages in Gaza and for good-faith negotiations to secure a long-term peace between Israel, Palestinians and Israel's neighbours;
- for a ceasefire and a fairly negotiated peace between Ukraine and Russia, and a cooling of tensions between Russia and NATO states; and
- for ends to conflict in other parts of the world, including Myanmar, Sudan and Haiti.

A prayer for Anzac Day Commemoration

Risen Lord and King, Jesus Christ, you laid down your life so that we might live. We remember those who died serving in the armed forces of our nation. Preserve our nation in peace, and in times of war give your people strength and courage to defend the cause of justice even if it may cost us our lives. For you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Other prayer points

- World leaders who have difficult decisions to make regarding national defence and the deployment of service men and women
- Peace in countries afflicted by war – both in places well-known and places often forgotten
- Members of the defence forces of New Zealand and of Australia
- Families of defence force women and men
- Comfort to those who mourn
- All who continue to suffer because of war
- People who provide medical and other health support for victims of war.

- Defence force chaplains and other pastoral care workers in the armed services
- Women and men to offer their gifts in service as defence force chaplains.
- Aid organisations which provide support for those suffering various kinds of loss on account of war
- Those who work to end disputes, to establish peace, and to guide processes of reparation and reconciliation
- The people of the church, to continue with prayerful service to the world, pursuing peace in the Lord's name

A reading for reflection: Micah 4:1ff

In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised up above the hills. Peoples shall stream to it, and many nations shall come and say: 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between many peoples, and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken.

In Christ,

Pastor Paul Smith
Churchwide Bishop
Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand
Easter 3
Adelaide, 19th April 2024

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197 Archer Street, North Adelaide SA 5006

P: +61 (0)8 8267 7300

E: bishop@lca.org.au

W: www.lca.org.au