

# **LIBERATION DAY**

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## **The 81<sup>st</sup> annual service of Thanksgiving for Liberation**

Saturday 9 May 2026  
11.00 am

The Town Church  
St Peter Port

## **GUERNSEY'S FIRST LIBERATION DAY**

As dawn broke on Wednesday 9 May 1945, peace returned to Guernsey.

Off the coast of Guernsey lay two British destroyers, HMS Bulldog and HMS Beagle; they brought to an end five long years of German occupation of the Channel Islands. Soon after their arrival, on that memorable morning, a German armed trawler put out from St Peter Port. Aboard her were Major General O Heine, military adviser to Vice-Admiral F Hoffmeier, the German Commander-in-Chief, together with Kapt Lieutenant A Zimmermann who, rather earlier, had paid a preliminary visit to the Bulldog, aboard which was Brigadier A E Snow, in command of 'Operation Nest Egg', code name for the Liberation of these Islands. It was on board that ship that the German surrender of Guernsey took place.

Soon afterwards, an advance party of twenty-two British artillerymen, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel E D Stoneman, came ashore on two small Guernsey craft, each of which wore the White Ensign. In charge of one was a Guernseyman, Lieutenant R E Ferbrache RNVR, and one of the soldiers in the party was Sergeant H J Hamon, another islander. The British troops received a tremendous welcome as they landed at the White Rock, where they were officially greeted by Advocate J E L Martel (HM Procureur) and Police Inspector A Lamy.

Unofficially, they were hailed with exultation by a multitude of cheering islanders, some weeping for joy. Later in the day 200 more troops arrived and marched off the White Rock led by the band of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry which, before the war, had once formed our garrison. Many islanders came in from the country parishes in horse-drawn carts, on bicycles and on foot. Our liberators were overwhelmed at their reception. They gave away chocolate, sweets and cigarettes, receiving in return souvenir German money.

The Bailiff sent this message to King George VI: 'After nearly five years of German Occupation, the people of your Bailiwick of Guernsey respectfully beg Your Majesty to accept their humble duty and unshaken loyalty.' The King, in his reply, stated that our message had given him great pleasure and satisfaction. The Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, sent this telegram to the Bailiff: 'You should have heard the House of Commons cheer at the news of your Liberation.' The Bailiff replied: 'We are all deeply touched by, and grateful for your telegram conveying the enthusiasm of the House of Commons at our deliverance.'

*Several of the hymns sung in this service were sung at the Island Thanksgiving Service in the Candie Grounds on the first anniversary of Guernsey's liberation in 1946.*

*Before the service, Mr Stephen Le Prevost will play a selection of organ music.*

*Please stand for the arrival of His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, Lieutenant General Sir Richard Cripwell KBE CB, and Lady Cripwell, the Bailiff of Guernsey, Sir Richard McMahon, and the President of the Policy & Resources Committee, Deputy Lindsay de Sausmarez, who will be escorted to their places.*

*When the parade is ready to enter the church, all stand. The processional hymn is sung; the standards are brought forward.*

**All people that on earth do dwell,  
sing to the Lord with cheerful voice;  
him serve with fear, his praise forth tell,  
come ye before him, and rejoice.**

**The Lord, ye know, is God indeed;  
without our aid he did us make;  
we are his folk, he doth us feed,  
and for his sheep he doth us take.**

**O enter then his gates with praise,  
approach with joy his courts unto;  
praise, laud, and bless his name always,  
for it is seemly so to do.**

**For why? the Lord our God is good;  
his mercy is for ever sure;  
his truth at all times firmly stood,  
and shall from age to age endure.**

**To Father, Son and Holy Ghost,  
the God whom heaven and earth adore,  
from men and from the angel-host  
be praise and glory evermore.**

*Words: William Kethe (d 1594)  
Tune: Old Hundredth  
(Genevan Psalter, 1551)*

*All remain standing as the National Anthem is sung.*

**God save our gracious King,  
long live our noble King,  
God save the King.  
Send him victorious,  
happy and glorious,  
long to reign over us:  
God save the King.**

**Thy choicest gifts in store  
on him be pleased to pour,  
long may he reign.  
May he defend our laws,  
and ever give us cause  
to sing with heart and voice,  
God save the King.**

*Words: Author unknown; (c. 1745)*

*Tune: Thesaurus Musicus, c. 1743*

## **The Welcome**

*The congregation sits.*

*The Dean of Guernsey, the Very Reverend Tim Barker, says*

It is a privilege to welcome you to this service: those in the Town Church, as well as those who are joining this service, whether in Guernsey or beyond the shores of this island, through other media.

*The Reverend Howard Stringer, Superintendent Minister, the Bailiwick of Guernsey Circuit of the Methodist Church, and Deputy Chair of the Channel Islands District, says*

Today is a celebration of the Liberation of Guernsey on Wednesday 9 May 1945. We recall that remarkable and glorious day when British troops came ashore in St Peter Port, ending the five long years of occupation of Guernsey by German troops, and giving hope of ending the privations of the people of Guernsey, and of the return to the Island of those who spent the years of occupation in the United Kingdom, in Biberach, in Laufen or elsewhere.

Today is a day of thanksgiving for our continuing freedom and self-determination as a Crown Dependency.

But it is also a day of memories.

We remember the temporary exile of so many Guernsey people in the United Kingdom during the occupation of Guernsey and Alderney, and give thanks for those who welcomed and cared for them.

We remember the deportation of large numbers of local residents, including many of non-Guernsey origin, who had faced uncertain and dangerous times as prisoners in Germany, including the three Jewish women who were sent to Laval from where they were transported with others to Auschwitz Birkenau. We give thanks for those men and women who have forged links of reconciliation between former enemies. We celebrate the life springing from our years of reconciliation and our continuing and deepening friendship with the people of Biberach.

We remember those brought to these islands to work for the occupying forces, often in harsh and inhumane conditions.

For many people, today is a day for recalling painful and vivid memories of loss and separation, of hardship and deprivation, of fear and anxiety.

We know only too well that life and peace are both precious and fragile; and that too many people in our world do not know and enjoy the peace, security and prosperity in which we are privileged to live. We think particularly today about the people who live in places which are blighted by war and violence.

And so, conscious of the sins of humanity and our own sins and failings, we turn to God.

## **The Prayers of Penitence**

*The Reverend Justin Taylor, Minister of St Andrew in the Grange, Church of Scotland, says*

Let us confess to God the sins and shortcomings of the world;  
its pride, its selfishness, its greed;  
its evil distortions and hatreds.

Let us confess our share in what is wrong,  
and our failure to seek and establish that peace  
which God wills for all his people.

Lord Jesus, you wept over the sins of your city.  
On this Bailiwick of Guernsey: Lord, have mercy.

*All* **Lord, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you heal the wounds of sin and division,  
jealousy and bitterness.  
On us: Christ, have mercy.

*All* **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you bring pardon and peace to the sinner.  
Grant us peace: Lord have mercy.

*All* **Lord, have mercy.**

May almighty God have mercy upon us; pardon and deliver  
us from all our sins; confirm and strengthen us in all  
goodness and keep us in eternal life;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*All* **Amen.**

## The Collect

*The Dean says*

Almighty God,  
from whom all thoughts of truth and peace proceed:  
kindle, we pray, in the hearts of all, the true love of peace  
and guide with your pure and peaceable wisdom  
those who take counsel for the nations of the earth  
that in tranquillity your kingdom may go forward,  
till the earth is filled with the knowledge of your love;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

*All*     **Amen.**

## The First Reading

*The Bailiff of Guernsey, Sir Richard McMahon, reads*

Exodus chapter 13 verses 17-end

*All stand to sing the hymn.*

**I vow to thee, my country, all earthly things above,  
entire and whole and perfect, the service of my love:  
the love that asks no question, the love that stands the test,  
that lays upon the altar the dearest and the best;  
the love that never falters, the love that pays the price,  
the love that makes undaunted the final sacrifice.**

**And there's another country, I've heard of long ago,  
most dear to them that love her, most great to them that  
know;  
we may not count her armies, we may not see her King;  
her fortress is a faithful heart, her pride is suffering;  
and soul by soul and silently her shining bounds increase,  
and her ways are ways of gentleness and all her paths are  
peace.**

*Words: Cecil Arthur Spring-Rice (1859-1918)  
Tune: Thaxted; adapted from Jupiter (The Planets)  
by Gustav Holst (1874-1934)*

*All sit.*

## The Second Reading

*His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, Lieutenant General Sir Richard Cripwell KBE CB, reads*

St Paul's letter to the Romans chapter 8 verses 18-25 and 31-39

## The Sermon

The Very Reverend Tim Barker

*Dean of Guernsey*

## Anthem

Greater love

*Music by John Ireland (1879-1962)*

*Words from the Song of Solomon, St John's gospel, the first letter of St Peter, St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians and St Paul's letter to the Romans*

*The Town Church Choir is conducted by Mr Tom Lewis*

## Prayers of Thanksgiving

*Pastor John Ogier, Minister of Spurgeon Baptist Church, says*

*All* For the liberation of these Islands from enemy occupation;  
**Lord, we give you thanks and praise.**

*All* For the fortitude and resilience of those who remained here throughout the occupation;  
**Lord, we give you thanks and praise.**

*All* For those who were evacuated or deported from Guernsey, and safely returned to their families and homes;  
**Lord, we give you thanks and praise.**

*All* For those who fought long and hard, and who prepared to bring about the Liberation which we celebrate today;  
**Lord, we give you thanks and praise.**

*All* For the bonds of friendship which have been forged over the years, overcoming old hostilities;  
**Lord, we give you thanks and praise.**

*All* For the freedom in this Bailiwick to order our affairs, and to live in liberty and in peace;  
**Lord, we give you thanks and praise.**

For Their Majesties King Charles and Queen Camilla, The Prince and Princess of Wales, and the Royal Family;

*All* **Lord, we give you thanks and praise.**

Remembering all God's mercies, we say together:

*All* **Eternal God, the refuge and help of all your people,  
we give you thanks for all you have given us,  
for all that you have done for us, for all that you are to  
us.**

**In our weakness, you are strength.  
In our darkness, you are light.  
In our sorrow, you are comfort and peace.  
For all your goodness, we give you thanks.  
May we live in your presence,  
love the things that you love,  
and serve you in our daily lives.  
We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.  
Amen.**

*All stand to sing the 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 guard while life shall last,  
and our eternal home.**

*Words: Isaac Watts (1674-1748) based on Psalm 90  
Tune: St Anne (A Supplement to the New Version of the Psalms, by  
William Croft, 1678-1727)*

### **Prayers of Intercession**

*The Reverend Mark Leightley, deacon in the Catholic parish of Our Lady and the Saints of Guernsey, says*

God our Father, we pray for the Bailiwick of Guernsey; for our most gracious Sovereign Lord, King Charles; for the Lieutenant Governor, the Bailiff, the Royal Court, the States of Deliberation and for all in authority. Grant them wisdom in all their work so that we may be governed with integrity and prosper with honour.

Lord, hear us.

**All Lord, graciously hear us.**

We pray for people of goodwill the world over, who long for peace and justice. Inspire us all to work together for reconciliation, justice and peace, especially in troubled places of the world.

Lord, hear us.

**All Lord, graciously hear us.**

We pray for the forces of the Crown, especially those on active service in difficult and dangerous places; for all who bear arms on behalf of the nation, that they may have discipline and discernment, courage and compassion.

Lord, hear us.

**All Lord, graciously hear us.**

We pray for the communities which gave hospitality to evacuees from Guernsey. We pray for the President and the people of Germany, and especially for the Mayor, Council and people of Biberach. Strengthen and use the bonds of friendship established with them as an example to all of the fruits of reconciliation.

Lord, hear us.

*All* **Lord, graciously hear us.**

We pray for our enemies and those who wish us harm, that you will turn the hearts of all to kindness and friendship.

Lord, hear us.

*All* **Lord, graciously hear us.**

We pray for the wounded and the captive, the grieving and the homeless, for refugees, for all who suffer as the result of war, and especially for those from this Bailiwick of Guernsey who still bear the scars of war and separation, that in all their trials they may know your love and support.

Lord, hear us.

*All* **Lord, graciously hear us.**

We pray for those who died during the occupation, both in Guernsey and in the concentration and deportation camps to which they were sent. We pray for those who died fighting to hasten the liberation of these islands.

Lord, hear us.

*All* **Lord, graciously hear us.**

As we give thanks for the liberation of these islands, we pray for peace and the laying down of weapons in places where there is war and violence; for those with power over war or peace; and for all who live at risk or in fear in Ukraine, Sudan, South Sudan, the Middle East and other places in the world.

Lord, hear us.

*All* **Lord, graciously hear us.**

As our Saviour has taught us, so we pray together:

*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.**

*All stand to sing the hymn.*

**Guide me, O thou great Redeemer,  
pilgrim through this barren land;  
I am weak, but thou art mighty;  
hold me with thy powerful hand:  
Bread of heaven,  
feed me now and evermore.**

**Open now the crystal fountain  
whence the healing stream doth flow;  
let the fiery cloudy pillar  
lead me all my journey through:  
strong deliverer,  
be thou still my strength and shield.**

**When I treat the verge of Jordan,  
bid my anxious fears subside;  
death of death, and hell's destruction,**

**land me safe on Canaan's side:  
songs and praises  
I will ever give to thee.**

*Words: William Williams (1717-1791)*

*Tune: Cwm Rhondda (John Hughes, 1872-1914)*

## **Act of Commitment**

*All remain standing.*

*The Dean of Guernsey says*

We have given thanks for the Liberation of Guernsey eighty-one years ago in 1945.

Let us now make a commitment  
to be agents of peace and reconciliation in the world  
in whatever ways lie open to us.

*All* **Lord God our Father,  
we pledge ourselves to serve you and all humanity  
in the cause of peace, freedom and reconciliation;  
to relieve the plight of the poor;  
to care for the lonely and friendless;  
to model the highest standards of probity and integrity  
in all that we do;  
and to work for the furtherance of your kingdom  
on earth.  
Give us the courage and determination  
to work for the fulfilment of this pledge;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## **The Blessing**

God grant to the living, grace;  
to the departed, rest;  
to the Church, the King, the Commonwealth and all people,  
unity, peace and concord;

and to us and all God's servants, life everlasting;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always.

*All* **Amen.**

*All sing the hymn, during which the standards are returned.*

**God is our strength and refuge,  
our present help in trouble,  
and we therefore will not fear,  
though the earth should change!  
Though mountains shake and tremble,  
though swirling floods are raging,  
God the Lord of hosts is with us evermore!**

**There is a flowing river  
within God's holy city;  
God is in the midst of her -  
she shall not be moved!  
God's help is swiftly given,  
thrones vanish at his presence -  
God the Lord of hosts is with us evermore!**

**Come, see the works of our maker,  
learn of his deeds all-powerful:  
wars will cease across the world  
when he shatters the spear!  
Be still and know your creator,  
uplift him in the nations -  
God the Lord of hosts is with us evermore!**

*Words: Richard Bewes (1934-2019), based on Psalm 46*

*Tune: Dambusters' March*

*(Eric Coates, 1886-1958, arranged by John Barnard, b 1948)*

*As the organ voluntary begins, the choir and ministers depart.*

*The organist plays*

Postlude in D

*Sir Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924)*

*Please remain standing as His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor and Lady Cripwell, the Bailiff of Guernsey and the President of the Policy & Resources Committee are escorted to the north door of the church.*

*Please allow the uniformed services to leave the Church first so that the Parade can re-assemble in Church Square.*

*There will be a retiring collection.*

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*The Town Church Organist and Director of Music is Mr Stephen Le Prevost. The Assistant Director of Music is Mr Tom Lewis.*

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