



# Church in a Bag

## Sunday 25 April

Dubbo Uniting Church



### A Gathering

Today, we recall those who, in the tragedy of war gave their lives for Australia and those who died for the freedom of all people. We remember those who found rest on the ridges of Gallipoli; those who rest in the cemeteries of the great wars; those who rest in the haze of desert and jungle; those who rest in the depths of the seas. We remember those who have fallen in the defence of peace, on land, in the air and on the sea. We remember each man, woman and child who has died so that the light of freedom, justice and humanity may continue to shine. Today, as we remember, we ask God that our praise may be worthy of their sacrifice.



Readings: Psalm 51:14-19 and John 15: 9 – 17

## History of ANZAC Day

When war broke out in 1914, Australia had been a federal commonwealth for only 13 years. The new national government was eager to establish its reputation among the nations of the world. In 1915 Australian and New Zealand soldiers formed part of the allied expedition that set out to capture the Gallipoli peninsula in order to open the Dardanelles to the allied navies. The ultimate objective was to capture Constantinople (now Istanbul in Turkey), the capital of the Ottoman Empire, an ally of Germany.

The Australian and New Zealand forces landed on Gallipoli on 25 April, meeting fierce resistance from the Ottoman Turkish defenders. What had been planned as a bold stroke to knock Turkey out of the war quickly became a stalemate, and the campaign dragged on for eight months.

At the end of 1915 the allied forces were evacuated after both sides had suffered heavy casualties and endured great hardships. Over 8,000 Australian soldiers had been killed. News of the landing on Gallipoli had made a profound impact on Australians at home, and 25 April soon became the day on which Australians remembered the sacrifice of those who had died in the war.

The 25th of April was officially named Anzac Day in 1916. It was marked by a wide variety of ceremonies and services in Australia, a march through London, and a sports day in the Australian camp in Egypt. In London over 2,000 Australian and New Zealand troops marched through the streets. During the 1920s Anzac Day became established as a national day of commemoration for the 60,000 Australians who had died during the war.

In the years since WWII, the commemoration of ANZAC Day has included those who fought in all theatres of war throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Australians recognise 25 April as an occasion of national remembrance, which takes two forms.



Commemorative services are held at dawn – the time of the original landing – across the nation. Later in the day, ex-servicemen and women meet to take part in marches through the major cities and in many smaller centres. Commemorative ceremonies are more formal and are held at war memorials around the country. In these ways, Anzac Day is a time when Australians reflect on the many different meanings of war.

(Adapted From Australian War Memorial website [awm.gov.au/commemoration/Anzac](http://awm.gov.au/commemoration/Anzac))

For the church, it is an important opportunity to reflect on the notion of sacrifice, the ultimate example of which we have in Christ, and to pray for peace in our world. In commemorating ANZAC Day in the church, we do not seek to glorify war, but to give thanks for those who have laid down their lives for us, and to come alongside and pray for those who bear the costs of war, both physically and emotionally. And we hold those among us who have been to war with understanding, support, consideration and appreciation.

## Prayer

Loving God, we pray for all those who serve in the Australian Defence Forces, and especially for those serving overseas at this time. We pray for soldiers, sailors and airmen and women serving in the Middle East, for those who patrol Australia's maritime borders, those who monitor the peace in Lebanon and the Sinai those who contribute to the UN mission in South Sudan, those bringing humanitarian aid in Iraq, and those whose mission is to bring back our people from the Ukraine. Grant them meaning and purpose in their work, may they know the support and respect of our nation, and maintain their compassion, humanity and wellbeing when confronted with traumatic tasks. Watch over them we pray and bring them back safe to us. Keep their families and relationships strong in times of separation.

God grant grace to the living, rest to the departed. Peace, unity and concord be granted to the Church, the Queen, to Australia and to all people. To us and all of Jesus' disciples be granted life everlasting. And the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be with you all and remain with you always. Amen.

## The Ode

They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old  
age shall not weary them nor the years condemn  
at the going down of the sun and in the morning  
we shall remember them.

They mingle not with their laughing comrades again  
they sit no more at familiar tables of home  
as the stars shall be bright when we are dust  
moving in marches upon the heavenly plain  
as the stars that are starry in the time of our darkness  
to the end, to the end, they remain.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old  
age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn  
at the going down of the sun and in the morning  
we will remember them.

Silence

(with respect we will remember in silence for one minute)

## Closing Prayer

Send us out into this dark world to be instruments of peace.  
For whoever we meet and wherever we go  
may we be like a light house  
in the name of the Prince of Peace  
our Lord and Saviour  
Jesus Christ.

**Amen**

With thanks to Rev Mel for preparing today's reflection



Dubbo Uniting Church 64-66 Church Street Dubbo NSW 2830  
p: 68854200 e: [dubbouca@bigpond.com](mailto:dubbouca@bigpond.com) w: [dubbo.uca.org.au](http://dubbo.uca.org.au)