



Sweet Land *of* LIBERTY



Worship For
A National Holiday

LEADER'S GUIDE

LA1

**Creative
Communications
Sample**

Sweet Land *of* LIBERTY

Worship For
A National Holiday

Leader's Guide

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Notes

Sweet Land of Liberty is a complete order of service on CD for any or all of the national holidays of the summer and fall—Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day and Veterans Day. This service draws our attention to the liberty we have in our nation and, above all, the liberty that we have in Christ Jesus. Hymns include “Praise the Almighty, My Soul Adore Him,” “Glory Be to God the Father” and “Before You, Lord, We Bow.” The kit includes a single worship service as well as different sermons, children’s messages and prayers for each of the four national holidays.

The CD includes text of an order of service, prayers, sermons, and children’s sermons in .rtf (rich text format), as well as music, a .pdf of the entire kit and PowerPoint documents of all four services with text (with a copyright release) for use on screens.

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Complete Script For Memorial Day

- The **Theme Verse** is spoken by the pastor or read silently by the congregation:

They desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Hebrews 11:16

- The **Opening Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Lobe Den Herren, O Meine Seele 10 8 10 8 88 8:

Praise the Almighty, my soul, adore him!
Yes, I will laud him until death;
With songs and anthems I come before him
As long as he allows me breath.
From him my life and all things came;
Bless, O my soul, his holy name.
Alleluia, alleluia!

Trust not in rulers; they are but mortal;
Earthborn they are and soon decay.
Vain are their counsels at life's last portal,
When the dark grave engulfs its prey.
Since mortals can no help afford,
Place all your trust in Christ, our Lord.
Alleluia, alleluia!

Blessed, oh, blessed are they forever
Whose help is from the Lord Most High,
Whom from salvation can nothing sever,
And who in hope to Christ draw nigh.
To all who trust in him, our Lord
Will aid and counsel now afford.
Alleluia, alleluia!

- The **Responsive Reading** (from Psalm 146) is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

P Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul!

C I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

P Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.

C When his breath departs, he returns to the earth; on that very day his plans perish.

P Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them,

C Who keeps faith forever; who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry.

P The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind.

C The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous.

P The Lord watches over the sojourners; he upholds the widow and the fatherless, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

C The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise the Lord!

- The **Confession and Absolution** is read responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

P Let us confess our sins to God and ask his forgiveness.

C Almighty God, we often turn from you and put our trust in people or things that cannot help or save us. We follow the temptations of our sinful desires and of the world around us. We do not help those in need and we keep the good news of freedom in Christ to ourselves. Have mercy on us and forgive our sins.

☐ In mercy God sent his Son to be our Savior. Jesus suffered the penalty of death for our sins and was raised on the third day. We have forgiveness, life and liberty through faith in his name. I announce to you that your sins are forgiven, in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

☑ **The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down! The Lord sets the prisoners free! Praise the Lord!**

- The **Prayer of the Day** is read by the pastor:

☐ Heavenly Father, we are blessed to live in a nation that celebrates and defends liberty for its citizens. Still, like the saints of old, we “desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one.” Through the death and resurrection of Jesus our Savior, you have set us free from sin and death. Fill us with your Spirit so that we might live now as faithful servants of Jesus our King until we enjoy the eternal liberty of that better country where we will live forever in your presence. Hear our prayer for the sake of Jesus our Lord. Amen.

- The **Hymn of Praise** is sung by the congregation to the tune *Lobe Den Herren, O Meine Seele* 10 8 10 8 88 8:

Praise, all you people, the name so holy
Of him who does such wondrous things!
All that has being, to praise him solely,
With happy heart its amen sings.
Children of God, with angel host
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost!
Alleluia, alleluia!

- The **Children’s Message** is delivered by the pastor or other worship leader:

Needed: A globe or world map

☐ Today we are celebrating Memorial Day. This is a day to remember the men and women who died fighting for our country. Those brave people were in our country’s armed forces—the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines, National Guard and Coast Guard. They fought and died in wars and battles to help keep our nation free and to help people in other countries.

Those members of our armed forces protected our country and fought in many places around the world. (*Show some of the nations on the globe/map.*) Some of them died here in our own country, but other members of our armed forces died in wars fought in other parts of the world—in Europe, on Pacific islands, in Korea or Vietnam, and in countries like Iraq and Afghanistan. Those brave people died to keep our country free and to make our nation a better country.

There is someone else we remember today. Today, every Sunday and every day, we remember Jesus our Savior, who died to make us free. Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead to set us free from sin, death and the devil. Jesus died for all the people of the world (*show the globe/map*). We want to share the good news, because we want everyone to know that Jesus died to win for us a “better country,” our heavenly home, where we will live with him forever. Let’s give thanks to God for sending our Savior and ask him to protect all the members of our armed forces:

Heavenly Father, thank you for sending Jesus to save us. Thank you for the brave people who died fighting for our country. Protect the people who serve now in our armed forces. Amen.

- The **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Worcester 87 87 47:

Glory be to God the Father, glory be to God the Son,
Glory be to God the Spirit: Great Jehovah, Three in One!
Glory, glory while eternal ages run!

Glory be to him who loved us, washed us from each spot and stain;
Glory be to him who bought us, made us kings with him to reign!
Glory, glory to the Lamb that once was slain!

Glory, blessing, praise eternal! Thus the choir of angels sings;
Honor, riches, pow’r, dominion! Thus its praise creation brings.
Glory, glory, glory to the King of kings!

- The **Old Testament Lesson** from Isaiah 61:1-3, 7 is read by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to grant to those who mourn in Zion—to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified ... Instead of your shame there shall be a double portion; instead of dishonor they shall rejoice in their lot; therefore in their land they shall possess a double portion; they shall have everlasting joy.

- The **Epistle Lesson** from Hebrews 11:13-16 is read by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land

from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

- The **Gospel Lesson** from Luke 4:16-21 is read by the pastor or other worship leader:

☐ And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

- The **Sermon Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune National Anthem 664 6664:

My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, Of thee I sing,
Land where my fathers died! Land of the pilgrim's pride!
From every mountain side, let freedom ring!

Our fathers' God to thee, Author of liberty, to thee we sing,
Long may our land be bright with freedom's holy light;
Protect us by thy might, great God, our King!

- A **Sermon** for Memorial Day, “Desiring a Better Country,” based on Hebrews 11:13-16, is delivered by the pastor:

☐ Today we celebrate Memorial Day with parades and fireworks and barbeques. Ceremonies are held across the country to honor those who gave their lives to preserve our freedom. Memorial Day was first celebrated as Decoration Day, soon after the Civil War, as people from both sides of that conflict decorated the graves of their fallen soldiers. Now Memorial Day is the day to remember and honor all of the men and women who died serving in the armed forces of our nation, from the Revolutionary War to conflicts still raging in our world today. Many of these brave people died without ever seeing the final victory, without seeing even the outcome of the particular battle in which they were fighting. They died to save their comrades, to stop tyranny, to preserve freedom and to make this nation a better country.

We remember and honor their sacrifice with this special day, Memorial Day. We remember them with memorials carved in stone or cast in bronze. Statues honor those who fought and died. Some memorials list the battles fought and the names of those who lost their lives. You know many of those

memorials, and even the smallest towns around the country very likely have bronze plaques or stone monuments to honor those who served and died. Perhaps you have visited some of the well-known memorials, such as the Vietnam War memorial with the names of those who lost their lives engraved on its black marble walls. There are memorials to the Korean War and to World War II. There is the Marine Corps memorial with its famous statue of the flag being raised on Iwo Jima, and the memorial over the battleship Arizona in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Unnamed and unknown heroes are honored at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery.

We might call the eleventh chapter of the book of Hebrews a memorial, although it is not a memorial in stone, but in print, on paper. It is a memorial to people of faith, a catalog of Old Testament saints, from Abel to Abraham—including Enoch, Noah, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Gideon, Samson, David and others. In this chapter they are memorialized for their faith, but at times in Scripture many of these same saints are also memorialized for their sin and doubt. Abraham and Sarah laughed at the idea that God would give them a child in their old age. Jacob swindled his brother, cheating him out of his birthright. Samson broke his Nazarite vows. David committed murder and adultery. These are hardly the sorts of things for which they, or any of us, would want to be remembered.

Yet these are people, Scripture says, “of whom the world was not worthy.” These saints are held in honor, not because of what they did or achieved, but because of what God did through them, and what God gave to them. These saints fulfilled the purposes of God in their lives. They “fought the good fight” of faith, the faith given to them by God. They trusted in God’s promise, even though they did not live to see its fulfillment in history during their lifetimes on this earth. God told Abraham that his descendants would be as countless as the stars, even though at that time Abraham had no children, not even one child. Yet even with no children in sight, Abraham trusted God. The God of Abraham was a God who keeps his promises, and Abraham knew it. Scripture tells us that Abraham “believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness” (Genesis 15:6).

What was God’s promise to Abraham? What was promised to all of these other saints, and to us? God promised a Savior and an eternal home—a place to dwell in safety, a place to live forever in the presence of God. The saints knew they were exiles on earth. They knew that a permanent home awaited them, a home that no one could take from them, a place that no enemy could ever capture or destroy. They saw and greeted “from afar” the fulfillment of God’s promises. The saints looked into a distant future, an unknown future, with trust in the Word of God, the Word of the God who keeps his promises. They desired a better country, a heavenly one, and by faith they knew that the better country awaited them.

Like the saints before us, we want to be remembered for our faith. Yet like them, we too could be memorialized for our sins, sins of greed, gossip, hate, lies, envy—an endless catalog of disobedience and rebellion for which we would not want to be remembered. But we do remember. We bear the burden of guilt and shame. No matter how we try to ignore our sins or explain and excuse them, the memorial of our sin follows us. It is an impossible burden, as if we carried heavy, engraved tablets of stone on our backs and in our hearts.

Tune.....Darwall's 148th 66 66 88

Musical notation for measures 1-5. The piece is in common time (C). The first system consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. Measure 1 starts with a whole rest in both staves. Measures 2-5 contain chords and single notes. A large watermark 'Creative Communications' is overlaid diagonally across the page.

Musical notation for measures 6-10. The second system continues with two staves. Measure 6 begins with a treble clef staff containing a half note chord and a bass clef staff with a half note chord. Measures 7-10 continue with similar chordal textures. A large watermark 'Creative Communications' is overlaid diagonally across the page.

Musical notation for measures 11-15. The third system continues with two staves. Measure 11 starts with a treble clef staff containing a half note chord and a bass clef staff with a half note chord. Measures 12-15 continue with similar chordal textures. A large watermark 'Creative Communications' is overlaid diagonally across the page.

- The **Closing Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Darwall's 148th 66 66 88:

(Francis Scott Key, who wrote our national anthem, wrote the words to this hymn.)

Before you, Lord, we bow, our God who reigns above
And rules the world below, boundless in pow'r and love.
Our thanks we bring in joy and praise,
Our hearts we raise to you, our King!

The nation you have blest may well your love declare,
From foes and fears at rest, protected by your care.
For this bright day, for this fair land—
Gifts of your hand—our thanks we pay.

Earth, hear your Maker's voice; your great Redeemer own;
Believe, obey, rejoice, and worship him alone.
Cast down your pride, your sin deplore,
And bow before the Crucified.

And when in pow'r he comes, oh, may our native land
From all its rending tombs send forth a glorious band,
A countless throng, with joy to sing
To heav'n's high King salvation's song!