

Dear parishioner,

Please find below a link to a short Service of the Word for Sunday May 10th.

<https://youtu.be/9CUM12HE-7o>

The words to the prayers are on screen in the video. Thanks to Gill and Gary for the music. The sermon in the linked service considers finance, though in a humorous manner. Please share this with others on social media etc.

As always all the services can be viewed from the Church website.

[www.wentvalleyparishes.co.uk](http://www.wentvalleyparishes.co.uk)

With best wishes, stay safe, God bless,  
Adrian

ps. For those who wish to think about VE Day in its historical and ideological context, I have included the text of a short talk below. It addresses the issue of 'Who is my neighbour?'

### **"Who is my neighbour?" A Short Historical Talk for the 75th Anniversary of VE Day.**

What does it mean to love our neighbour? Does it mean the person who lives next to us? Or across the street? What about people in the next village? What about people like us far away, or people different from us who are nearby? The parable of the Good Samaritan has a priest and a Levite walking by on the other side, only the foreigner, the Samaritan helped the injured Jew. But who is my neighbour and what has this to do with VE Day?

VE Day marked the end of an era - an end of the evils of fascism. The defeat of a eugenics which treated the mentally disabled as subhuman. The defeat of homophobia that sought to imprison and kill homosexuals. The defeat of racism that killed millions of Jews, Roma, and Sinti peoples. The end of an elitism which believed that one person was better than another by virtue of their race, or culture. VE Day marked the end of hatred and a belief in peace.

How could an ideology hold a whole nation, and more than half of Europe in its grip? What collective madness prevented people from seeing the truth?

VE Day was not the defeat of the German people, but the defeat of Fascism, genocide and hatred.

One Protestant German priest, Martin Niemöller, initially supported Adolf Hitler, having met him in 1932. But he spent 7 years in prison for his opposition to Hitler. and realised the truth He wrote a famous poem:

First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—  
Because I was not a socialist.

Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—  
Because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—  
Because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.

So that's Niemoller's poem. Fascism alienated and dehumanised people based on their political opinions, on their religion, on their intelligence and ability to organise and persuade. It dehumanised Eastern Europeans, and especially the Jews. It polarised society into those who believed they were supermen - in a land of Nietzsche and Wagner, and it made them believe that others were their racial inferiors and 'untermensch'. VE day marked the end of that ideology of fascism. The beginning of the human rights movement, or collective security in Europe through NATO, and a huge step forward in criminalisation of war crimes. We owe so much to VE day, and we celebrate that today, not just for communists or socialists or trade unionists, and not just for the Jews or Roma or Sinti, or the mentally or physically disabled, but we celebrate it today for everyone. Otherwise, without that victory, one day they would have come for us as they came for Niemoller, but there would have been no one left to speak for us.

When we love our neighbour we speak up for them, regardless of anything that makes them seem different to us. It is not proximity that makes someone a neighbour, but membership of the human race that makes them a neighbour and someone to love, just as they are created by and loved by God.