

Reaching Across the Miles



**Ministering to the
Military and Their Families**

*Resources for
Congregations*

Preparation for Liturgy for Those Leaving for Military Service

1. This liturgy is intended for use at the principal Sunday service. It may be used just prior to the peace or before the final blessing.

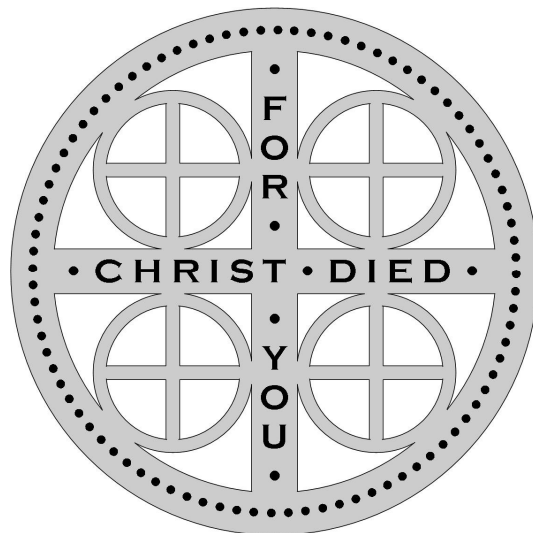
Several weeks prior to the liturgy, order the Episcopal Church Service Cross at www.episcochap.org then click on “Resources” for a link to EBaR.

2. The Parish may also wish to order *A Prayer Book for the Armed Services* and the Episcopal Church Service Cross lapel pin, which may be presented to the spouse during the liturgy.
3. Discuss the preparations for the liturgy with the service member and *his* family.

About the Episcopal Church Service Cross

The Episcopal Church Service Cross is a five-fold cross, symbolic of the five wounds of our Lord Jesus Christ at his crucifixion. The words embossed upon it, “Christ died for you,” are adapted from 2 Corinthians 5:15.

The five-fold cross, originally known as the Jerusalem Cross, was first issued as a Service Cross during World War I. It is a distinct mark of an Episcopalian in the Armed Services. It is suggested that service members wear it on their dog tags or carry it with them at all times.



A Liturgy for Those Leaving for Military Service

The farewell and blessing may be used prior to the peace or before the final blessing. Those leaving for military service and their families may come forward. The priest or a representative of the congregation may make brief comments about those who are about to leave.

THE PRESENTATION

Family members and/or friends

We present _____, who will leave soon for military duty in _____.

Celebrant

Dear People of God: the men and women of our armed forces serve our nation with honor and commitment. Today we pray for _____ as *he* begins a deployment away from us. Let *him* find comfort in knowing that the prayers of this community will surround *him* while *he* is away. [May *he* be consoled to know *his* family will be cared for in *his* absence.] Encircle *him* with your love, keep *him* from all harm, and grant *him* the companionship of your Son Jesus, and then return *him* to us in safety. *Amen.*

THE BLESSING OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH SERVICE CROSS

O God, who is our peace, bless *this cross* with your Holy Spirit, that *it* may be a reminder of your peace in all circumstances, a reminder of the prayers of this community, and a sign of the love that made us and will not let us go; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE BLESSING & PRESENTATION OF THE CROSS

The military person(s) will kneel. Their family/friends may lay hands on their shoulders. The celebrant lays hands on each of them and says,

_____, may Almighty God fill you with courage, wisdom, and strength. May Jesus Christ, your strong companion, defend you on every side. May the Holy Spirit guide you and comfort you. And may the blessing of God Almighty, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, rest upon you this day and for evermore.

The People respond AMEN.

The military person stands.

Take this cross and remember that you are a child of God. May Christ's life give you life. *Amen.*

Optional:

Accept this prayer book and carry it with you as you go. May it give you strength as you face the challenges before you.

To the spouse

Receive this service cross pin. As you wear, it may you be comforted to know that God is watching over you both.

The following prayers may be added.

For those in the Armed Forces of our Country

Almighty God, we commend to your gracious care and keeping all the men and women of our armed forces at home and abroad. Defend them day by day with your heavenly grace; strengthen them in their trials and temptations; give them courage to face the perils that beset them; and grant them a sense of your abiding presence wherever they may be; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For the Family

Loving God, watch over and protect _____'s family while *he* is away. Give them calm strength and patient wisdom as they face this time of separation. Keep them from all trouble and danger and fill their days with peace until the time when they can be together.

The celebrant continues with the peace or the final blessing.

*Across the Miles Series
Military Edition*



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