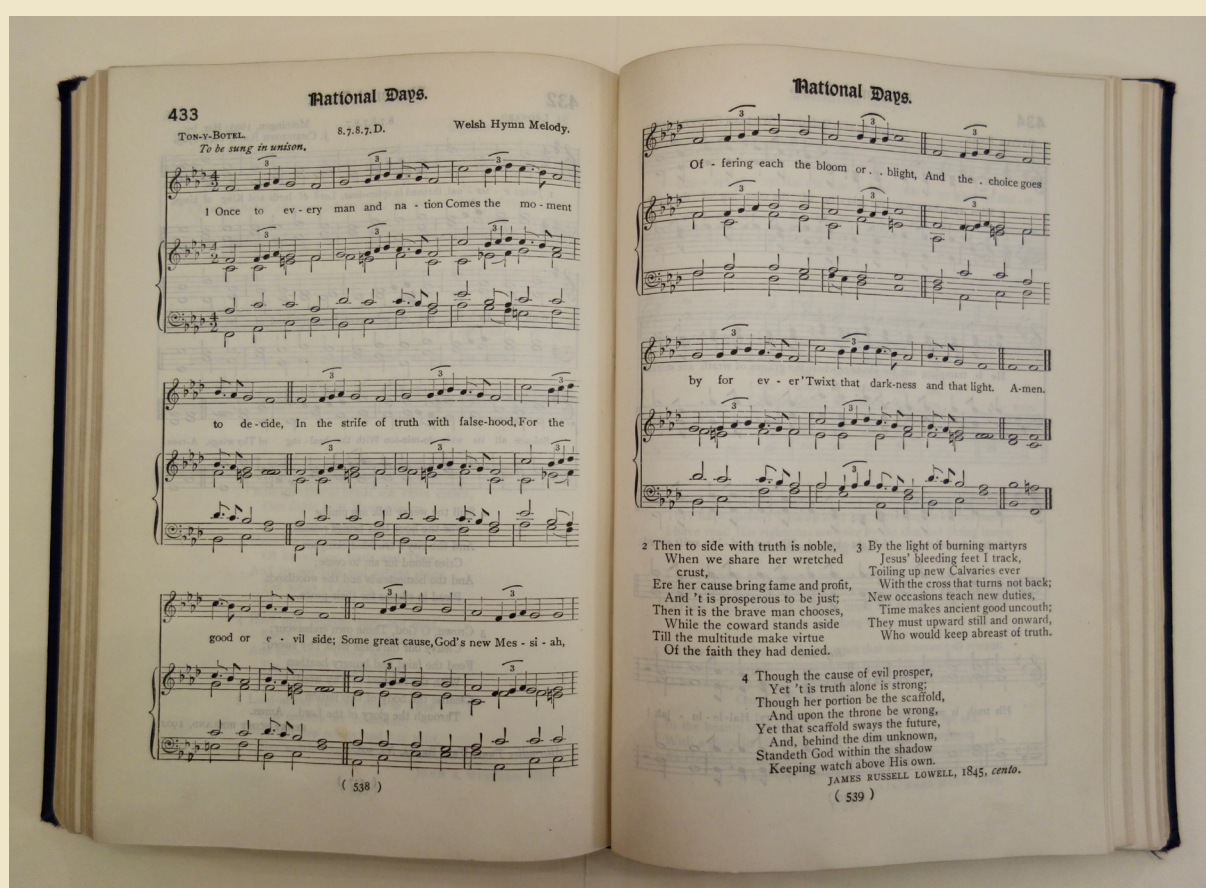
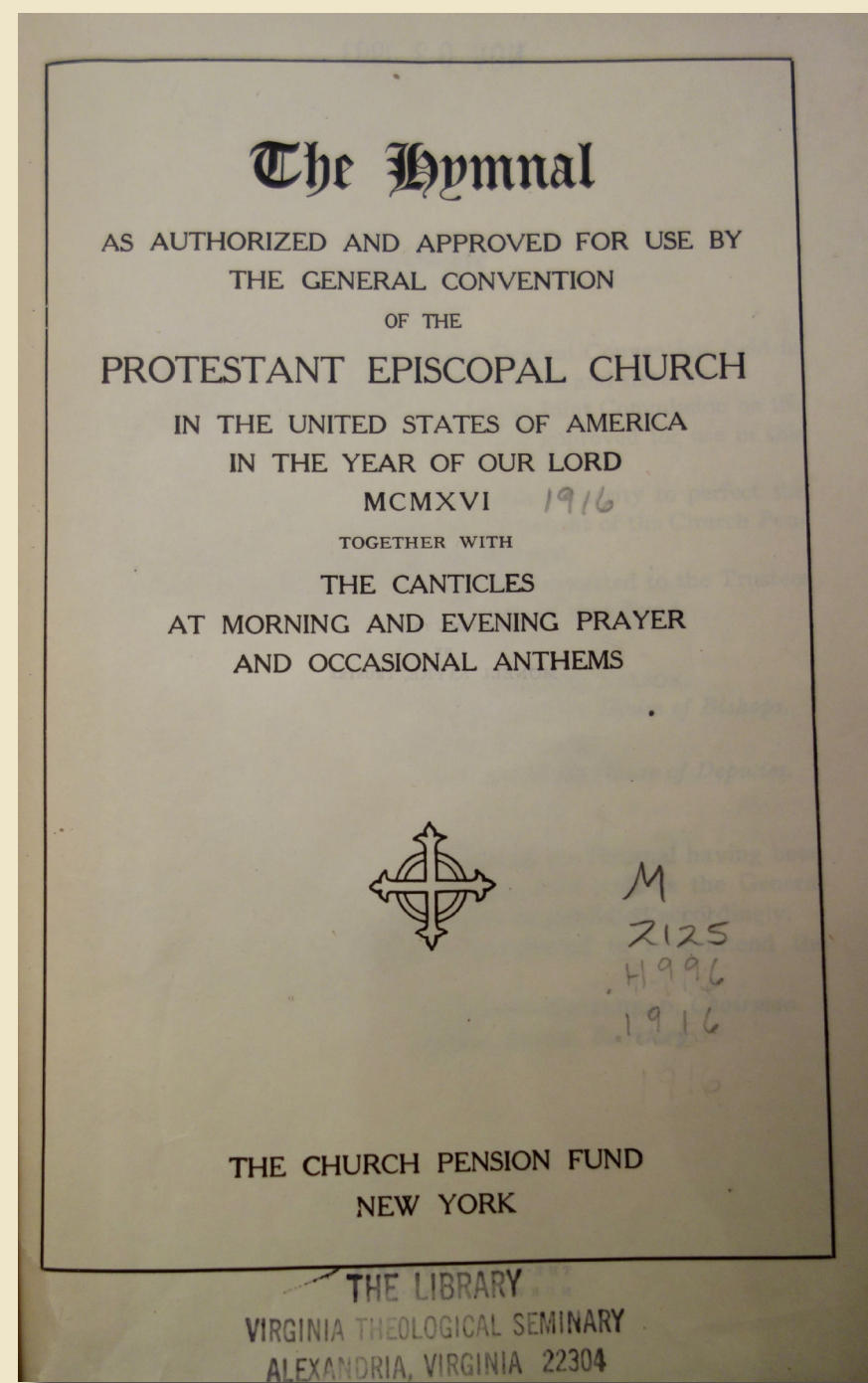


The Great War and Its Aftermath

World War I—The Great War, The War to End All Wars, The War to Make the World Safe for Democracy—both touched and took lives around the world. Today you can examine how the world war touched the parish of Christ Church and its members. At war's end, a new preface to the Episcopal Church 1918 Hymnal that had originally been printed in 1916 attempted to put the war years in perspective.

"These are hymns intended to voice our yearning for larger social service, for deeper patriotism, for a more eager obligation to the winning of a free world, for a higher enthusiasm towards the unity and extension of Christianity. This hymnal cannot escape the marks of the Great War—its tragedy, its sympathy, its loving sacrifice, its gratitude because God has given us the victory for the right and true."

(Source: Episcopal Church 1918 Hymnal)

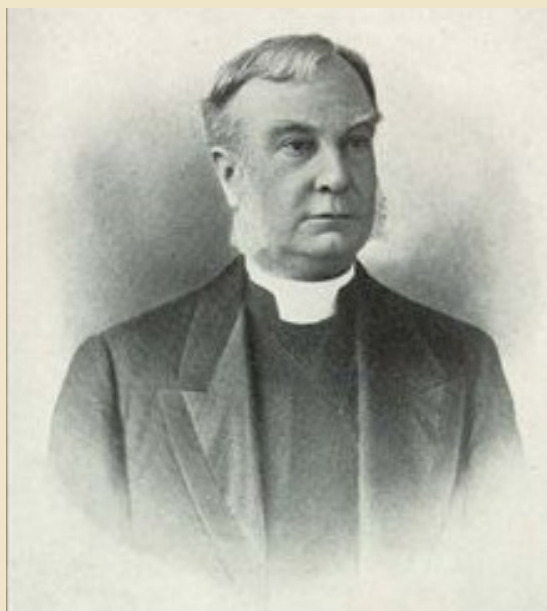


1917

America is on Edge

By 1917 the nations of Europe had been at war for more than two years. In broad terms, it was Britain, France, and Russia facing off against Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, and Bulgaria. President Woodrow Wilson had gained reelection in 1916 with the slogan “He Kept Us Out of War.” But times were changing and that could not last.

That was demonstrated in this area by a sermon given by former Christ Church rector Randolph McKim titled “America Summoned to a Holy War.”



The Rev. Dr. Randolph McKim, Christ Church Rector 1867–1875

McKim had been Christ Church rector from 1867 to 1875 after serving as a Confederate Civil War chaplain. By 1917, McKim was rector at the Church of the Epiphany in Washington DC.

This was not the first time he spoke on this topic, having preached against American

isolationism in both 1915 and 1916, but it was the most timely. This sermon was given on Palm Sunday, April 1, 1917, just one day before Wilson asked Congress to enter The Great War. Congress subsequently declared war on April 6. A few weeks later McKim spoke to an audience of 65 at Christ Church on the topic of “Faith and Patriotism.”



Woodrow Wilson addresses a joint session of Congress, 1918

America Summoned to a Holy War



A Sermon
Delivered in the Church of the Epiphany
Washington, D. C.



Palm Sunday evening, April 1, 1917
on the eve of the Assembling of Congress



By the Rector
The Rev. Randolph H. McKim, D.D., LL.D.

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Let me say then, as plainly and as strongly as I can, speaking as a minister of Christ, speaking as a messenger of God, speaking with a solemn sense of the obligations of my sacred office ... that it is the high and sacred duty of the American people to take up the gage of battle which Germany has thrown down to us and to prosecute the way against her with all our energy and with every resource at our command” (Source: “America Summoned to a Holy War” by Randolph McKim)



The United States Capitol, 1918

Christ Church Supports the Troops

The Parish Aid Society stayed busy during the war. These women were the literal gatekeepers to the churchyard, collecting a dime from each visitor—with the exception of uniformed servicemen who were admitted free from 1917 to 1923. During the war years, gate revenue was generally between \$100 and \$150 dollars per month, reflecting as many as 1,500 visitors.

In today's dollars, those 1,500 visitors would have generated approximately \$2,500. The Parish Aid Society also generated revenue from souvenir and post card sales to the visitors. As was traditional for the society, a portion of what they raised was reserved for general church upkeep. But during these years, there are also regular expenses noted in their account books for the entertainment of soldiers, which often included wounded servicemen from Walter Reed Hospital as well as many stationed at nearby forts. Early in March 1918, the society also turned its attention to the comfort of soldiers, knitting mittens for them.



The historic church was opened free to the uniform every day throughout the entire war period and on Sunday afternoon from two to six o'clock was opened solely for their benefit; no civilians being admitted. They grew to love the church... The church yard was a delight to them; there they would sit and read or talk; they loved to tell of their own life at home, and every Sunday they arrived from the surrounding camps and forts... in a steady stream they came and always left refreshed and charged. The Parish Hall was also open to them, magazines and writing materials furnished them and souvenir postcards; sometimes fruit punch and cakes and always ice water on hand—a real luxury to a soldier."

(Source: Helen Norris Cummings, in a report to the Parish Aid Society, November 1919)



Background: A page from meeting minutes of the Parish Aid Society, 1919

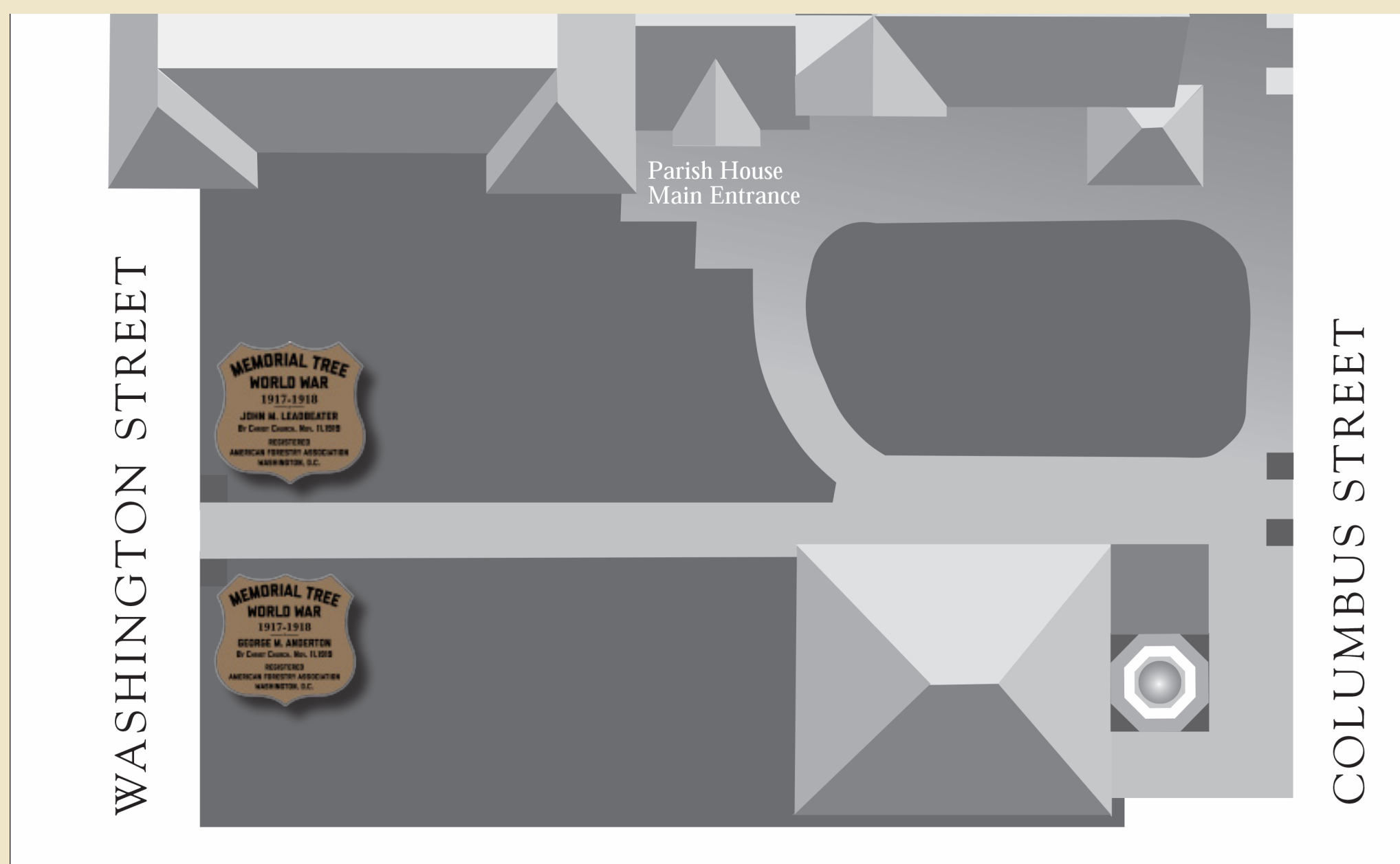
Honoring the Fallen

Sixty-one members of Christ Church served in the military during World War I—twenty commissioned officers and 41 non-commissioned officers and privates. Of those, two men were lost.

Lieutenant George Moncrief Anderton,
501st Engineers, died December 9, 1917

Sergeant-Major John M. Leadbeater,
56th Pioneer Regiment, died May 10, 1918

On November 23, 1919 Rev. William Jackson Morton presided over a ceremony in the Churchyard to honor these two men. Two Nordmann firs, donated by the American Forestry Association and part of a nationwide effort to honor fallen heroes, were planted in the east end of the yard. Bronze plaques were affixed to the trees. Fifty additional heroes also attended the ceremony—wounded soldiers who were recuperating at Walter Reed Hospital. The names of all the parishioners who served were read, followed by hymns from the choir and the playing of “Taps.”



This map displays the approximate position in the churchyard of two trees planted in honor of Christ Church's fallen servicemen. The trees are represented by replicas of the plaques presented in their memory by the American Forestry Association.

Spanish Flu By Way of Kansas

A pandemic that became known as the Spanish Flu struck a world still at war. The viral strain received its name because it was thought to have originated in Spain. Later investigation indicated a likely origin in Kansas. Whatever its origins, its results were devastating. By October 12, 1918, the Alexandria Gazette reported that the pandemic had overwhelmed medical facilities in Alexandria. Christ Church was already providing care for victims in its Parish Hall (now the Meade Room) and other churches were also offering overflow space. In that same Saturday paper, it was announced that all Alexandria churches would be closed for Sunday services the next day. In Alexandria county and city combined, 258 people succumbed to flu or pneumonia in 1918 alone—just short of half of all deaths recorded that year.

From the Alexandria Gazette Oct. 1918:

“Spanish influenza is increasing in this city at an alarming rate. There are few houses in the city where there is not a case of the disease. The death rate is increasing daily despite those who would have the public take a more optimistic view of the situation... This is not written to scare anyone. These are the cold facts and cannot be disputed.”

Source: The Alexandria Gazette, October 12, 1918



Deaths from
Spanish Flu:
50 million



Deaths from
WWI
Combat
Casualties:
16 million

At war's end, more than four million Americans, like Second Lieutenant Andrews, would soon be trading their military ID cards for civilian ID



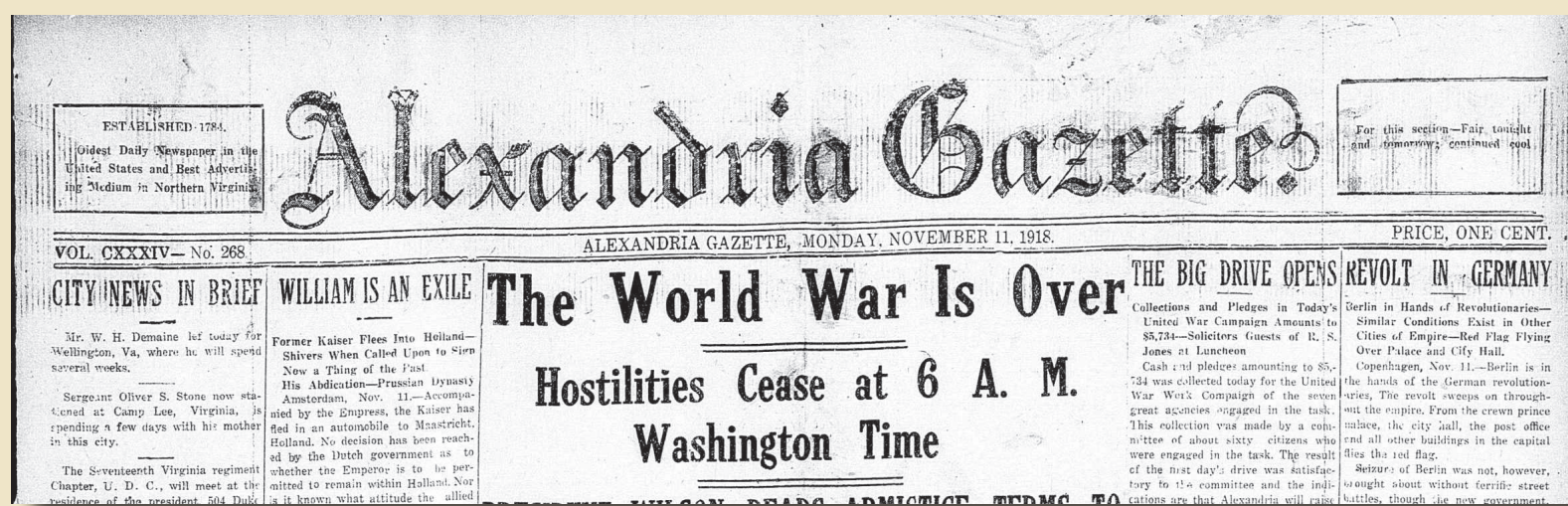
Armistice! A Grateful World Gives Thanks

Celebrations and commemorations were held long after the Armistice of November 11, 1918. Alexandria celebrated Welcome Home Week in June of 1919 with a parade that passed by Christ Church. Rev. Morton conducted a special service on June 8, 1919 in Christ Church.

A week later as Welcome Home week wrapped up, wounded veterans convalescing at Walter Reed Hospital were once again invited to Christ Church. After prayers and hymns, supper was provided in the churchyard. One soldier commented that it was the first time he had been asked to go to church since he had joined the army.



World War I
Victory Medal
presented to participants in 1919.
The reverse side features a laurel wreath surrounding the words
"The Great War
for Civilisation."



The Alexandria Gazette,
November 11,
1918

"As the heroes marched through the court of honor erected on Washington Street between King and Prince about 1,000 public school children strew flowers in their paths ... The boys made an excellent showing and were given a rousing ovation as they marched by. Thousands of people lined King Street and cheered the passing pageant ... The soldiers participating were marched with a firm step and were the synacure of all eyes... The fire apparatus was bedecked with flags, pennants, bunting and flowers and showed conclusively that the fire ladies had spared no pain in preparing for the event . . . Hundreds of soldiers, civilians, their sweethearts and others enjoyed the block dance which was later staged in the court of honor."
(Source: The Alexandria Gazette. June 11, 1919)

A PRAYER FOR REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

O Lord, our maker and our strength, from whose love in Christ we can never be parted either by death or defeat: May our remembrance this day deepen our sorrow for the loss and wastes of war, make us more grateful to those who courageously gave their lives to defend this land and commonwealth; and may all who bear the scars and memories of conflicts, past and present, know your healing love for the sake of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace.

Amen.

(Source: Church of England)