

THE BRITISH EMPIRE 1887–1953

Special acts of worship in England and Wales or Britain which were also observed in overseas colonies, dominions and the Indian empire, as given in *National Prayers*, volume 3, supplemented by further colonial observances identified by Joseph Hardwick.

From the 1880s, telegraphic and later radio communication made it possible for the colonies and dominions to observe special acts of worship on the same day as in Britain. The list assumes the same date of observance throughout Britain, the colonies and dominions, unless a different date for particular territories is specified.

* indicates occasions ordered or encouraged from London for observance in the overseas colonies and dominions. *NB: orders or notices were evidently sent to governors in India up to 1945, but few of these have been located.*

Other occasions were observed on the initiative of authorities within the colonies, dominions or India, after official or unofficial notification or news agency reports of the event that had prompted its appointment in Britain, or on news of the British act of worship. For comments on how the occasions were arranged in the overseas territories (e.g. by governments or the initiative of churches), see commentaries in *National Prayers*, volume 3.

Aside from evidence of orders or notices from London, the sources for the list are online newspapers and government gazettes. Further research on less readily available sources may reveal further details.

code	description	occasion	UK + imperial date	comments	places + variations in date/type of observance
1887–1 *	thanksgiving services or days (and public holidays)	jubilee of Queen Victoria	Tu 21 June	colonial office sent English council order and form of prayer to governors 27 May (celebrations earlier in India and later in Hong King, to avoid summer heat and rains)	all territories, except: India: Wed 16 Feb + 21 June Queensland: Sun 19 June Malaya: Sat 27 + Sun 28 June Hong Kong: Sat 19 + Sun 20 Nov
1897–1 *	thanksgiving services or days (and public holidays)	diamond jubilee of Queen Victoria	Sun 20 June/ Tu 22 June	colonial office notice to governors 25 Feb English council order and form of prayer sent 12 Apr	all territories
1900–E1	prayers and days of intercession	South African war	Sun 11 Feb	Anglican churches used English form of prayer (churches in southern Africa had earlier prayers independently)	churches in Canada, Australia New Zealand
1901–1 *	day of mourning	funeral of Queen Victoria (died 22 Jan)	Sat 2 Feb	colonial office sent English proclamation and council order for form of prayer to governors	all territories, except: New Zealand: Th 24 Jan

				(memorial services in many territories on Sun 27 Jan)	
1902-1	thanksgiving services	peace treaty of Vereeniging	Sun 8 June		churches in Australia, New Zealand, India, Hong Kong, some African colonies Cape colony: thanksgiving day
1902-2 *	services (and public holidays)	coronation of Edward VII and Queen Alexandra	Sat 9 Aug	form of prayer for Church of England churches 'throughout the empire' (coronation postponed from Th 26 June)	all territories
1910-1 *	day of mourning	funeral of Edward VII	Fr 20 May	colonial office sent English proclamation and council order for form of prayer to governors (Australian + New Zealand governors initially appointed dates preceding British date)	all territories
1911-1 *	services (and public holidays)	coronation of George V and Queen Mary	Th 22 June	English form of prayer available for use in the empire	all territories
1915-1 *	day of intercession	First World War	Sun 3 Jan	king's call for church services published 5 Nov, and archbishops' for observance in empire	all or most territories
1916-1	day of intercession	First World War	Sun 2 Jan	king's approval of appointment by British church leaders 2 Nov, followed in the empire	all or most territories
1916-2	day of prayer	2nd anniversary of outbreak of war	Fr 4 Aug	appointment by British church leaders, followed by churches in empire	many territories
1916-3	day of prayer	First World War	Sun 31 Dec	king's approval of appointment by British church leaders, followed elsewhere	some territories
1917-1	services	3rd anniversary of outbreak of war	Sat 4 Aug + Sun 5 Aug	appointment by British church leaders, followed by churches in empire	many territories
1918-1 *	day of prayer and thanksgiving	First World War	Sun 6 Jan	king's appeal to churches in Britain and the empire 7 Nov, sent by colonial and India offices to governors	all territories
1918-2 *	national day of prayer	4th anniversary of outbreak of war	Sun 4 Aug	British government notice 3 July of king's 'desire' for observance in Britain, followed in the empire	all or most territories
1919-1 *	thanksgiving day	peace treaty of Versailles	Sun 6 July	royal proclamation for Britain and the empire 1 July	all territories

1929–1 *	thanksgiving services	recovery of George V from illness	Sun 7 July	public notices 22 Apr, 24 May, 21 June of king's desire for British and imperial services colonial, dominions and India offices sent English form of prayer to governors	all territories
1935–2 *	thanksgiving services (and public holidays)	silver jubilee of George V	Mon 6 May	various government notices sent by colonial, dominion and India offices colonial office sent English form of prayer to governors 28 Mar	all territories Canada: thanksgiving day
1936–1 *	memorial services	funeral of George V (died 20 Jan)	Tu 28 Jan	various government notices sent by colonial, dominion and India offices	all territories, except: South Africa: day of mourning Wed 22 Jan
1937–1 *	services (and public holidays)	coronation of George VI and Queen Elizabeth	Sun 9 May + Wed 12 May	various government notices sent by colonial, dominion and India offices	all territories, except: Canada: thanksgiving day on 12th
1938–1	national day of prayer	Czechoslovakian crisis and threat of war	Sun 18 Sept		Sun 11 Sept in Australia and New Zealand (+ probably other territories)
1938–2	day of thanksgiving	Munich settlement	Sun 2 Oct		Sun 9 Oct in Australia (+ probably other territories)
1939–4	national day of prayer	outbreak of Second World War	Sun 1 Oct	news reports colonial office sent English forms of prayer to governors 29 Sept	many territories Canada: Sun 8 Oct
1940–2 *	national day of prayer	Second World War	Sun 26 May	king's announcement sent by: palace to dominion governors general 21 May colonial office to governors 22 May	all territories
1940–5 *	national day of prayer	anniversary of outbreak of war	Sun 8 Sept	king's announcement sent by: palace to dominion governors general 14 Aug colonial office to governors 21 Aug	all territories
1941–1 *	national day of prayer	Second World War	Sun 23 Mar	king's announcement sent by: palace to dominion governors general 7 Mar colonial office to governors 10 Mar	all territories
1941–2 *	national day of prayer	2nd anniversary of outbreak of war	Sun 7 Sept	king's announcement sent by: palace to dominion governors general 13 Aug India office to viceroy 13 Aug colonial office to governors 16 Aug	all territories
1942–1 *	prayers	association with day of prayer in the USA	Th 1 Jan	archbishop's announcement sent by: palace to dominion governors general 29 Dec	all territories Canada: day of intercession

				colonial office to governors 30 Dec	
1942-2 *	national day of prayer	Second World War	Sun 29 Mar	king's announcement sent by: palace to dominion governors general 18 Mar colonial office to governors 18 Mar India office to viceroy ?18 Mar	all territories
1942-5 *	national day of prayer	3rd anniversary of outbreak of war	Th 3 Sept	king's announcement sent by: palace to dominion governors general 5 Aug colonial office to governors 5 Aug India office to viceroy ?5 Aug	all territories, except on Sun 6 Sept in Canada, India and South Africa
1942-7	thanksgiving prayers	victory at El Alamein	Sun 15 Nov		Australia New Zealand (+ probably other territories) India: thanksgiving day Sun 22nd
1943-2	thanksgiving prayers	victory in North Africa	Sun 16 May		Australia New Zealand (probably other territories) India: Fr 21 May or Sun 23 May
1943-3 *	national day of prayer	4th anniversary of outbreak of war	Fr 3 Sept	king's announcement sent by: palace to dominion governors general 12 Aug colonial office to governors 12 Aug India office to viceroy: ? Aug	all territories, except on Sun 5 Sept in Canada, India and South Africa
1943-4	thanksgiving prayers	surrender of Italy	Sun 12 Sept		Australia and New Zealand (+ probably elsewhere)
1944-E2	day of prayer	preparation for allied invasion in northern Europe	Sun 24 Apr		Australia and New Zealand (+ perhaps elsewhere)
1944-1 *	prayers	allied invasion of northern Europe (D-day)	Tu 6 June onwards	king's broadcast on British and empire channels	probably many territories
1944-3 *	national day of prayer	5th anniversary of outbreak of war	Sun 3 Sept	king's announcement sent by: palace to dominion governors general 14 Aug colonial office to governors 15 Aug India office to viceroy ? Aug	all territories
1945-1 *	thanksgiving day	victory in Europe	Sun 13 May	various government notices sent by colonial, dominion and India offices	all territories

1945-2 *	thanksgiving day	victory over Japan	Sun 19 Aug	various government notices sent by colonial, dominion and India offices	all territories
1947-1 *	national day of prayer	(British) economic and other difficulties	Sun 6 July	king's announcement sent by: colonial office to governors 13 May (but not to dominions or India)	churches in Australia, Canada, Hong Kong and other territories
1952-1 *	memorial services	funeral of George VI (died 6 Feb)	Fr 15 Feb	notices from commonwealth relations office to dominion governors general and colonial office to governors, 6-12 Feb	all territories days of mourning in Canada, Malaya and South Africa, and Sun 17 Feb in Australia
1953-1 *	services (and public holidays)	coronation of Elizabeth II	Sun 31 May + Tu 2 June	various government notices sent by colonial office and commonwealth relations office	all territories