



## Veterans Day 2016

I live in a small rural town in southeast Alabama named Enterprise. Its name is perfectly descriptive of the people who live here. The town has been nominated as the Most Patriotic City in America, and appropriately so since it is home to Fort Rucker – an adjacent military post. The American flag is displayed uniformly throughout the community, but the values that flag represents are also on uniform display among the citizens.

Yesterday, on the last day of school preceding Veterans Day, I was invited by one of my adopted grandsons, Chanwook Lee – a fourth grader – to attend a Veterans Day celebration at his school – Holly Hill Elementary. Arriving ten minutes early, I was amazed at the number of cars and the number of veterans already present there. I was met at the door by a friendly member of the staff and directed to a waiting area where the young people whose designated veteran had not yet reported were gathered.

Chanwook ran to greet me, and he escorted me to a much larger room (auditorium) filled with hundreds of other veterans – most with greying hair and patriotic attire. Here was prepared snacks and coffee for us. A local Boy Scout Troop (#150 I believe) very devotedly posted the Colors followed by a recitation, by all present, of the Pledge of Allegiance (with no words omitted). This was followed by the youth choir of the school singing a patriotic song of America.

Once the opening ceremonies were concluded, we (veterans) formed on the sidewalk outside the school entrance as the loudspeakers began to reverberate with the service marches of the Armed Services beginning with the Army theme song. This was

the signal for the parade of veterans to begin. Entering the school, the two columns of veterans were confronted by hundreds of students lined up on either side of the hallway shouting USA, USA! and waving the American Flag. Little hands reached out to offer a “Hi-Fi” to us as we proceeded down the hallway. I looked in the faces and eager eyes of every race known in America and realized this is what our great nation has always been about. And I saw other youthful members of my church lined up in the hallway (they are all my adopted grand kids) who were so excited, many of whom are here with their parents on work visa’s in the United States. I hope they all stay and become a part of this great land.

When I came to the fourth grade section, I saw Chanwook waiting for me holding a folded paper in his hands. As I approached and hugged him, he gave me the paper. I was deeply moved by its contents which read: *“Dear Grandpa: Thank you for serving for our country. Since you have been in the war, you are a war veteran. Thank you for helping to keep our freedom. You have a (his wording) all white hair – I can’t see a single black hair but still you served for our country. Sincerely, Chanwook”* I was impressed throughout by each young person who may be temporarily in this nation, yet they refer to America as “our country” and so it is since America is not demarcated by manmade lines, but rather a condition of the heart that burns for freedom.

There will be a more sophisticated Veterans Day Parade in Enterprise today, and around the country; but none can compare with the devotion, patriotic fervor, and precious effort which I witnessed among students and teachers at Holly Hill Elementary School yesterday.

I wish all veterans a wonderful day of commemoration and reflection on why they served; and I believe that purpose was beautiful demonstrated at Holly Hill yesterday.

God bless America and all those valiant men and women who served in her defense.

*Jerry L. Ogles*  
Presiding Bishop  
United States of America  
Anglican Orthodox Communion Worldwide

Let us pray,

*For the Armed Services.*

[BCP 41](#)

**O** LORD God of Hosts, stretch forth, we pray thee, thine almighty arm to strengthen and protect the soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, coastguardsmen and contractors of our country. Support them in the day of battle, and in the time of peace keep them safe from all evil; endue them with courage and loyalty; and grant that in all things they may serve without reproach; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

**A**LMIGHTY God, we give you thanks for those who answered our country’s call, who rode towards the sound of gunfire and did not cower. We give you thanks for those who are with us today and for those who are with you for ever more. Lord, we give you thanks for the sacrifice made on our behalf by them and their families. Lord we ask that you give us warriors who will follow your way on behalf of our country, all of which we ask in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*