

This weekend is Memorial Day.

The last Monday in May, Memorial Day has taken on some interesting social significances.

For example, apparently Memorial Day marks the start of seersucker suits and white shoes.

The start of “summer break” for our kids and maybe “summer break” for some of us, too.

General society seems to celebrate Memorial Day with cook-outs: cold beer and grilled burgers.

But we know Memorial Day is not about any of that.

I suspect, more so than a lot of other communities, we at St. Philip’s especially know that Memorial Day is not about white shoes or grilled burgers.

Instead, Memorial Day is about all those men and women who gave their lives for us—for those of us still here. So that we may live our lives with freedom.

On the Sunday before Memorial Day, I always offer a prayer, remembering our fallen brothers and sisters.

I invite everyone who loved someone who lost their life in war to stand up—usually starting with spouses and then parents and then children and then siblings...

Eventually, everyone is standing.

A reminder that, no matter what we want to think about war (and its distant impact on “others”), it still impacts us. Sometimes in ways far greater than we even realize.

On Sunday, we will gather at the Memorial Garden and honor those who served in the Armed Forces and whose final resting places are in our garden. I hope you will all join us—if not at the Memorial Garden, then at least with a moment of prayer and gratitude for the sacrifices made for our freedoms.

And on Monday, in the midst of dusting off your white shoes and preparing the grill for burgers, pause and say another prayer—a prayer of gratitude and a prayer of hope. So that, maybe, we could make a day that honors those who died defending our freedoms an obsolete holiday—a holiday no longer needed because war would no longer exist.

As the prophet Isaiah proclaimed, “They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” (Isaiah 2:4b)

What a wonderful image! If only we could get there!

But before we do, it is necessary to say thank you—to all the men and women who gave their lives for our freedoms. And thank you to all those who, today, miss someone they loved because of war.

A blessed Memorial Day!