

2024 09 29 Prayers for World Peace

Hymn # 621 God of every nation

Welcome and introduction:

Welcome to our service this evening.

With the world in the state it is in at the moment, I felt called to focus this month's Evening Prayer on peace – prayers for peace in our world.

I made the mistake of googling 'current armed conflicts' around the world, the other day.

From The Geneva Academy, I found this list:

- More than 45 armed conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa
- More than 35 armed conflicts in Africa
- 21 armed conflicts in Asia
- 7 armed conflicts in Europe
- 6 armed conflicts in Latin America, mainly in Mexico and Colombia.

The International Conflict Group reports that war has been on the rise since about 2012. They go on to list a horrific list of conflicts which have spread and deepened touching nearly every corner of the world.

The current conflicts reveal deep-seated issues of power, identity, and resources, often exacerbated by historical grievances and geopolitical interests. From the ongoing struggles in Ukraine and the Middle East (which seem to be almost the only ones we hear about), to tensions in the Asia-Pacific region, each situation reflects the complex interplay of national interests, ethnic divisions, and the quest for autonomy.

These conflicts remind us of the human cost of warfare—displacement, suffering, and loss of life. They challenge the global community to seek diplomatic solutions and foster dialogue, emphasizing the need for empathy and understanding across cultural divides. The rise of misinformation and polarized narratives further complicates the resolution of these issues, making it imperative for individuals and leaders alike to promote peace and reconciliation.

As we navigate these turbulent times, it's crucial to recognize our shared humanity and the interconnectedness of our world. Collective action and a commitment to justice can pave the way toward a more peaceful future.

And so, I believe, the importance of coming together to pray.

Thank you for taking a pause on your day, to stop and pray for peace.

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O God, who called all life into being,

**The Earth, sea and sky are yours.**

Your presence is all around us,

**Every atom is full of your energy.**

Your Spirit enlivens all who walk the earth,

**With her we yearn for justice to be done.**

For Creation to be freed from bondage,

**For the hungry to be fed.**

For captives to be released,

**For your Kingdom of Peace to come on earth.<sup>1</sup>**

Almighty God,

from whom all thoughts of truth and peace proceed:

kindle, we pray, in the hearts of all, the true love of peace

and guide with your pure and peaceable wisdom

those who take counsel for the nations of the earth

that in tranquillity your kingdom may go forward,

till the earth is filled with the knowledge of your love;

through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord,

who is alive and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever. **Amen.<sup>2</sup>**

Reading: Isaiah 2: 2-4.

*A time of reflection*

We pray for peace in the world, peace among people of faith, peace in our homes, schools and workplaces, peace in our neighbourhood and our community.

We pray particularly for all who grieve the loss of loved ones,

for the innocent lives which have been lost,

for those who have lost homes and livelihoods,

for those who have become refugees.

We pray for people who live with fear and uncertainty,

who face violence and injustice.

Creator God,

bring forgiveness and peace to everyone who needs it.

Help us all to trust in your love,

receive that peace which passes all understanding

and be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.<sup>3</sup>

Peace be with you.

**And also with you.**

The peace and hope of the world starts with each individual taking responsibility for their own actions, their own choices, their own attitudes.

Let us sing hymn # 607 Make me a channel of your peace.

Reading: Matthew 5: 1-16.

*A time of reflection.*

Dear God in community,  
we pray for the poor,  
for those who mourn,  
for those who hunger and thirst for justice.  
We pray for the peacemakers,  
the aid workers,  
for leaders of countries embroiled in violence,  
war, civil unrest.

Give real power to those who are negotiating for peace,  
to the United Nations, and to those with a true heart for justice and peace.  
Be merciful, God, that instruments of destruction may be turned into tools of growth and  
wholeness.  
Oh God in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

We pause to consider the many places suffering violence and distress  
and pray particularly for the innocent victims and refugees from these places of conflict.

*During this time, you may like to come and light a candle.*

Hymn # 668 Touch the earth lightly

I would like to share one case which has been brought to my attention by our Dean, the  
very Revd Darryl Cotton.

An Israeli military judge has denied an appeal for the release of Layan Nasir, a 23-year-old  
Palestinian Anglican woman held in administrative detention without charge by Israel since  
her arrest in April, according to an alert released by The Episcopal Church's Office of  
Government Relations.

"We are deeply concerned about the manner in which Layan Nasir was taken, her ongoing  
detention and the broader system that means many thousands of Palestinians are kept in  
administrative detention for months," the action alert said.

Back in April, Nasir's mother, Lulu Nasir, told Sky News that soldiers arrived at the family's  
home at 4 a.m. April 6 and threatened them with guns as they searched the house before  
taking her daughter into custody. Israel hasn't given any reason for Nasir's detention. She  
is being held at Damon Prison near Haifa.

Nasir is a member of St. Peter's Anglican Church in the occupied West Bank city of Birzeit.  
No timeline for charges, trial or release has been set in her case. Nasir's priest, the Rev.  
Fadi Diab, and her family have been barred from visiting her.

"We join Anglican partners in asking for Layan's release, and while her detention  
continues, we request that her priest and her family be able to visit her.

Israel has allegedly arrested more than 9,700 Palestinians from the West Bank since the  
Israel-Hamas war started in October 2023, according to a Palestinian nongovernmental  
organization based in Ramallah in the West Bank.<sup>5</sup>

*Pause*

A Prayer of confession:

O God, gladly we live and move and have our being in you.  
Yet always in the midst of this creation-glory  
we see sin's shadow and feel death's darkness:  
around us in the earth, sea and sky, the abuse of matter;  
beside us in the broken, the hungry and the poor,  
the betrayal of one another;  
and often, deep within us, a striving against your Spirit.  
O Trinity of love,  
forgive us that we may forgive one another,  
heal us that we may be people of healing,  
and renew us that we also may be makers of peace.<sup>1</sup>

Prayers of concern:

God of history,  
you share our joys and crushing sorrows,  
you hear the cries of the afflicted,  
you fill the hungry,  
and you set free the oppressed.  
We pray for the end to all injustice.  
Inspire us with the all-embracing love of God,  
challenge us with the sacrificial love of Jesus,  
empower us with the transforming love of the Spirit,  
that we and all God's children may live and be free! **Amen.**<sup>1</sup>

*A time for further prayer. Please feel free to share your intercessions or to pray in the silence of your heart.*

Watch, O Lord, with those who wake, or watch, or weep tonight,  
and give Your angels and saints charge over those who sleep.  
Tend Your sick ones, O Lord Christ.  
Rest Your weary ones.  
Bless Your dying ones.  
Soothe Your suffering ones.  
Pity Your afflicted ones.  
Shield Your joyous ones, and all for Your love's sake. **Amen.**<sup>4</sup>

Closing hymn #690 Beauty for brokenness.

Blessing:

May the God who shakes heaven and earth,  
whom death could not contain,  
who lives to disturb and heal us,  
bless you with the power to go forth,<sup>1</sup>  
and live in that peace which passes all understanding.

In the name of God, Source of all being, Eternal Word and Life-giving Spirit.  
**Amen.**

Compiled by Revd Sally Buckley tssf, September 29, 2024.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

1. Iona Abbey Worship Book: *Service of Prayer for Justice and Peace*.
2. A Liturgy received from the Dean of Bunbury Cathedral, the very Revd Darryl Cotton for the Day of Prayer for Peace, 18 October, 2023.
3. Prayers based on a liturgy written by Revd Dr Elizabeth Smith, February 2022.
4. Night prayer of St Augustine of Hippo.
5. Episcopal News Service, posted on Facebook on July 11, 2024.