



“And no one shall make them afraid” Micah 4: 4b

Peace Sunday Resources August 9, 2020

When so much is uncertain, praying together for peace can bring us together as a strong community prepared to do all we can to confront injustice and violence. In the Methodist/Presbyterian calendar Peace Sunday is the closest Sunday to 6 August, Hiroshima Day—this year 9 August. Anglicans recognise a Special Intention ‘For the Peace of the World’. These worship resources are based on the designated readings for these Sundays. Please join us and adapt them for your people.

On 6 August 1945 US forces dropped the first atomic bomb “Little Boy” on Hiroshima leaving 100,000-180,000 people dead and 63% of buildings destroyed. Three days later a larger bomb “Fat Man” was dropped on Nagasaki leaving 50,000-100,000 dead and 22.7% of its buildings consumed by fire. Today we remember the men, women and children who lost their lives or were harmed.

Closer to home we remember the people of Maohi Nui, Kiribati, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands who experienced 313 nuclear tests. We remember the division of the Korean peninsula on 15 August 1945 and [join](#) with World Council of Churches in 70 days of prayer to end this long war.

Many people are living with violence that has been building for centuries. We need to heed their deep cries for justice and learn again about how to make peace. “No justice. No peace.”

In 2011 young families arrived in Jordan for what they believed would be a short term stay. Before the war Syria’s population [was](#) 13.2 million people—now 6.6 million are scattered throughout the world. Covid has not stopped the fighting and refugees are not ready to go home.

*Photo: ACT Alliance/
Magnus Aronson*

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Call to Worship

Today is Peace Sunday, a time to explore our responsibility to be peacemakers. We especially remember people killed or hurt when the first atomic bombs were dropped on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki 75 years ago, and our Pacific neighbours whose lives have been affected by nuclear testing. In our hearts we hold a deep sadness for people facing violence and war. We long for the peace that passes understanding, that turns swords into ploughshares, that comes wrapped with justice.

In the name of God we come in hope and expectation. Our hearts are open to hear your word. Amen

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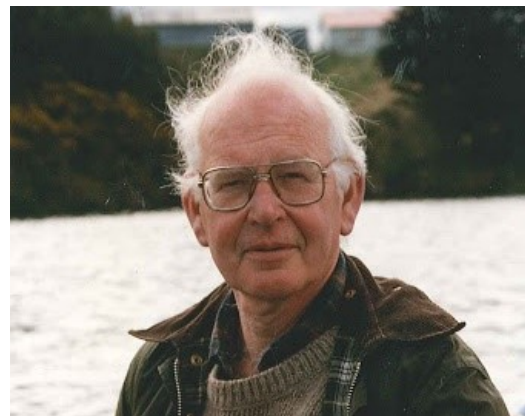
Children's Talk

In the middle of church, it's like we take a break. People get up to touch and say words like "the Peace of Christ be with you". And may reply "And with you also". It is a moment for each other before the Eucharist/communion and a time to forgive people who have hurt us and make right the wrongs we have done. Sharing the peace says we must be right with each other to be right with God. It is something the first Christians did and something we do at church that reminds us to always make peace. Let's do it now.

"Sharing Peace"

Rev Dr Peter Matheson writes:

I was born in Scotland, joined the Iona Community, and am really a historian, having taught in Edinburgh, Otago and Melbourne. With Heinke, my partner, I was involved in the Peace Movement in Scotland and Aotearoa. Recently we published together Love and Terror in the Third Reich, based on a thousand letters of her parents. Though lovely people, they were swept away by Hitler's rhetoric, and their tragic story sharpens for us the terrible urgency of peace-making today.



Peace Sunday. We have been here so often before. Memories flooding back. Gentle, strong people sharing their hopes and fears for peace and a more just and verdant world.

In our congregation a key element in every service is sharing the peace. We get up and wander around and touch and bless one another. Peace begins there, does it not, with you and me.

James K. Baxter:

*Lord God you are above and beyond all things,
Your nature is to love.
You put us in the furnace of the world
To learn to love you and love one another.*

Yes indeed, Baxter is right: our world **is like** a hideous furnace. Auschwitz, Hiroshima, the endless pain in Afghanistan, Syria... The distress of refugee mothers, the helplessness of fathers. And these wild, populist leaders, beating the drum of ethnocentrism and violence. Awful. Awful.



Easter Sunday, Mount of Olives, Jerusalem. Albin Hillert/WCC

But wait: we also know and believe that this is God's good creation. We know we are fashioned to be like angels. Girded around with the armour of light. Treading the paths of peace. Lighting bright candles of justice and defying the darkness.

So what are your memories of Peace events? Here are some of mine:

I remember a kitchen table in hate-riven Belfast, army helicopters beating the air overhead, barbed wire forts of the Brits, and in the midst of all this our little group of Catholics and Protestants breaking bread and wine together. The defiant conspiracy of the good.

Or the kitchen tables in Kiwiland in the 1980s. Dreaming of a better world, a nuclear-free and independent Pacific, working out strategies, and soon to witness David Lange's triumph at Oxford. What a Spirit-led turn-around! Peace becoming part of our national consensus! Unbelievable!

Or today's school students striking for a green future, pouring along our civic streets, a young, rippling river of hopefulness.

Reflections on the Bible Readings

The Methodist/Presbyterian sets the following readings for Peace Sunday: Micah 4:1-4, Psalm 85, II Corinthians 5:16-20, John 20:19-21 or Matthew 5:1-12

The continuous lectionary readings are: Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28, Psalm 105:1-6, 16-22, 45b, Romans 10:5-15, Matthew 14:22-33.

Peter Matheson continues:

Micah 4: 1-4

"Accepting death is no longer an option". This is the Rev Dr William Barber speaking in the National Cathedral in Washington, shaking with sorrow and passion, co-leader of the [Poor People's Campaign](#) in the US. Recalling colonisation's slaughter of first peoples, our acceptance of decade upon decade of slavery, and evoking the massed and massive lamentation of Black Lives Matter. *Accepting death no longer an option.* Amen to that.

Matthew 5: 1-12

"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, CHOOSE LIFE!"

Down the ages our saints and prophets have born witness to that vision of a new Jerusalem. Today, in the wake of Covid-19, our hearts and minds are beginning to grasp the signs of the times, the real possibility which seizing the imagination of our young people, and of marginalized folk throughout the world, that God is making all things new, that we are at a tipping point, that there can be no going back any more.

Thanks to Peter for writing these resources.

Genesis 37:1-4, 12– 28 — A migration story

Joseph the favoured son of Jacob, told on his brothers when they came home from tending the family's flocks. Fed up, his brothers planned to kill him but after the intervention of Reuben instead stripped him of his robe and dropped him in a pit. Picked up by traders, he was sold to Egyptians and ended up working at court where he became very influential. Later, he was able to use his influence to save his family from famine.

Matthew 14: 22-33

Immediately after feeding the 5,000 people, Jesus retreated to the hills to pray and consider how to respond to their expectations for change. The disciples took to their boat, perhaps to catch fish for the evening meal. Frightened by a major storm at sea, they headed back to shore. In their fear and anxiety they encountered Jesus. Where are our dangerous places? What can we do to stop violence in our homes and communities? How can we be peacemakers? Where do we find strength in adversity? We hold on to the vision of peace that comes with justice.

A venerable prayer from the Iona Community:

Lord Jesus Christ, master carpenter of Nazareth, who at the last through blood and nails hammered out our whole salvation, wield well your tools in this your workshop that we, who come to you rough hewn, may be fashioned to a true beauty in your eyes. Amen.

From the [World Council of Churches](#)

Prayer written by Christian, Jewish and Muslim clergy for inter-religious worship around the time of the 1991 Gulf War:

Eternal God, Creator of the universe, there is no God but You.

Great and wonderful are Your works, wondrous are Your ways.

Thank You for the many splendoured variety of Your creation.

Thank You for the many ways we affirm Your presence and purpose, and the freedom to do so.

Forgive our violation of Your creation.

Forgive our violence toward each other.

We stand in awe and gratitude for Your persistent love for each and all of Your children: Christian, Jew, Muslim, as well as those with other faiths.

Grant to all and our leaders attributes of the strong; mutual respect in words and deed, restraint in the exercise of power, and the will for peace with justice, for all.

Eternal God, Creator of the universe, there is no God but You. Amen.

Closing Prayer

May the blessing of the God of peace and justice **be with you;**

May the blessing of the Son who weeps the tears of the world's suffering **be with us;**

And may the blessing of the Spirit who inspires us to reconciliation and hope **be our guiding light;**

from now into eternity. **Amen.**



Blessed are the Peacemakers



CWS partners are deeply committed to peacemaking in their communities and the wider world. Determined to make people safe, they challenge the perpetrators of violence at home and at a community or national level. Whether helping young men explore new ways of being male, supporting displaced people to find new livelihoods, or organising encounters across ethnic or caste lines, they are deeply caring and often seem fearless. Their stories are touching points—allowing us to connect with the work they do to address the causes of injustice and violence. When so much is at stake, building communities of care and support are vital to us all.

Take Action

Everywhere we can find people who long for safety and peace—the challenge is where to begin. Working together, we can begin to rectify past injustices, end violence and make the world safer for us all.

*Look at local history— St George's Anglican Church at Pukehinahina or Gate Pa is one [example](#) or learn the story of [Parihaka](#).

*Join [Operation Refugee](#) raising funds for Syrian refugees— a new option is to organise a winter banquet.

*[Make a donation](#) for the Pacific Conference of Churches for their work on self determination.

*Support the [International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons](#)

*Join the [Aotearoa New Zealand Campaign on Military Spending](#)

*The world [spent](#) US \$1,917 billion on the military in 2019. NZ is budgeting \$4.6 billion.

*Find out about [Aotearoa New Zealand Campaign to Stop Killer Robots](#)



Korean churches and the World Council of Churches invite you to join the [global prayer campaign](#) "We Pray, Peace Now, End the War" March 1 - August 15. For 70 years the Korean peninsula has been at war. Churches [say](#) peace will only come by peaceful means, through



After years of occupation, many indigenous West Papuans are [demanding](#) self-determination and safety in their own lands. The [Pacific Conference of Churches](#) which includes two members from West Papua is promoting their demands for justice. CWS is part of the national campaign. In solidarity, we raise the Morning Star flag on December 1.



In Sri Lanka, the [Women's Centre](#) works with factory workers in the country's free trade zones. The primary focus is on the women and their need for safe and fair living and working conditions. Members use street theatre (pictured) to educate other women about their right to be safe from sexual violence. They promote understanding and solidarity between Sinhala and Tamil women.



Women who have fled after their husbands and homes were attacked, seek shelter in Maridi, South Sudan. With Maridi Service Agency, single women with children [learn](#) how to run a stall at the local market or plant gardens to support their family. MSA and the churches are very active in the search for peace and prosperity.

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