

A photograph of a boy blowing bubbles at a border crossing. The boy is in the foreground, slightly out of focus, looking up at the sky. Several bubbles are floating in the air, with one large bubble near the top center. The background is a clear blue sky. The image is framed by a green border on the left and right sides.

# PEACE!

## Peace Sunday Resources

A boy blows bubbles  
after arriving at the  
Vyšné Nemecké border  
crossing between  
Slovakia and Ukraine.

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# INTRODUCTION



*"Do not be afraid, little  
flock..."  
Luke 12:32a*

## Peace!

On Peace Sunday August 7, we remember the terrible destruction at Hiroshima on August 6, 1945 and think about how we can work with others to promote peace. Looking in our communities and around our world, the need for peace is greater than ever. Here are worship resources and ideas for action for you to use in your own reflections or for your community.

Throughout history, people have started and stopped wars. It is people who commit acts of violence in the home or the streets and people who can stop spreading harm. Praying for peace without actions has never been enough. Our faith challenges us to turn weapons into ploughshares, enemies into neighbours, destruction into new life.

Let us focus on peace as one way to deal with the interconnected crises we all face. War in Ukraine is pushing up global food prices. Severe drought has destroyed crops in East Africa and provoked tensions in Afghanistan. Climate change is threatening us all. Let us look together for ways to make peace.

*Photo credits: thanks to ACT Alliance, Devasarana, Stop Killer Robots, Lutheran World Federation, Mororua e Tatou, Paul Jeffrey, Peace Crane Project and WCC/Peter Williams.*

# FOR CHILDREN



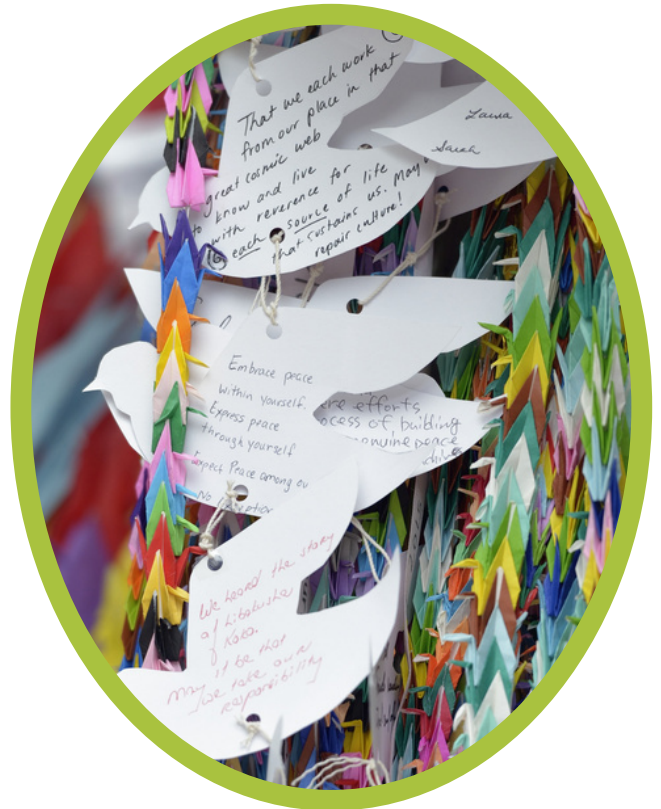
*Used with permission.*

*"This is our cry. This is our prayer. Peace in the world."*

From Sadako's memorial

Sadako (pictured above) was a young Japanese girl on the day the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima at the end of World War II. She was taken to the hospital for treatment. The nurses at the hospital encouraged her and the other children to take their medicines by folding origami figures out of the medicine wrappers. Sadako's favourite was the crane.

An old Japanese legend stated that anyone who folded 1,000 cranes would have her wish fulfilled. Sadako began folding cranes. With every crane that she folded, she whispered, 'I will write peace on your wings and you will fly all over the world.' She had folded 664 cranes when she died. On Hiroshima Day, you can see thousands of paper cranes suspended from the tower in its Peace Park, continuing her prayer.



## **Have a go making paper cranes.**

- [peacecraneproject.org/downloads/folding-guides/](http://peacecraneproject.org/downloads/folding-guides/)
- [origami-fun.com/origami-crane.html](http://origami-fun.com/origami-crane.html)

**Write prayers on or colour images of a dove to form a prayer chain.**

# FOR CHURCHES



## NO NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Each year the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki remember those who lost their lives in the nuclear bombings at the end of World War II.

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 “Fat Man” was dropped on Nagasaki leaving 50,000–100,000 dead and 22.7% of its buildings consumed by fire.

Today we unite for peace in their memory and for all those who have lost their lives or have been harmed from war.

## FAIR COMPENSATION

We remember the people of Maohi Nui or French Polynesia, Kiribati, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands who have experienced 313 nuclear tests. The French government dropped the first of 193 bombs on Moruroa Atoll in Maohi Nui on July 2, 1966.

Most claims for compensation by workers on Moruroa and Fangataufa atolls and their families with radiation-related illnesses have been denied.

The Maohi Protestant Church currently led by Rev. Francois Pihaatae has supported workers and their families for decades. Globally, more than 2,000 tests have been detonated.



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# READINGS FOR AUGUST 7

## ISAIAH 1:1, 10-20

Isaiah was a keen observer of what was happening in his lifetime. He watched and responded with words that were highly critical and often sharp. Likening his people to those of the inhospitable cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (v.10c), Isaiah condemned the people's love of spectacle: futile offerings (v. 13), solemn assemblies (v.13d) and appointed festivals (v. 14a). He warned listeners that God would not listen to their prayers, especially those from people with blood on their hands(v.15). Isaiah opposed imperial power and the accumulation of wealth.

In this passage, Isaiah affirmed the Biblical imperative to care for the poorest people. He demanded repentance and right action, challenging the arrogance and greed of the powerful. God is always on the side of people who have few resources. People with resources are called to right action, to "seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow" in v.17.

The passage ends with a prophetic warning. If the people refuse to obey, they will be devoured by the sword (v.20). Seeking justice, rescuing oppressed people, defending orphans and pleading for widows are what God requires - not religious ceremonies or spectacles. God is very concerned about meeting the human need for water, food and justice. This is one passage where God is warning us to care for the most vulnerable people. If we don't care, there will be trouble.

What are the signs of the times? How is God warning us today?

"If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land," he says in v.19.



# READINGS FOR AUGUST 7

## PSALM 33:12-22

This psalm is a celebration of the power of God's word to create the world (v.6). It invites us to look closely at the world or creation from the vantage point of God's throne. God's power is greater than any king or warrior (v.16). God's eye is on the people that fear God and hope in God's steadfast love (v.18). In v.19, the psalmist notes God pays close attention to people who are in danger of death, especially those facing famine. Our longing for God is more than matched by God's concern for our lives, especially those who live with hunger.



## HEBREWS 11:1-3,8-16

As the writer of Hebrews reminds us, "...faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (v.1). God accompanied Abraham and Sarah on their journey, opening new opportunities and protecting them from harm.

These words offer strength to displaced people who like Abraham and Sarah set out on a journey into the unknown. They can encourage anyone who longs for a world moving closer towards peace.

As Christians, we believe in God who is the God of Life. When there is much talk of the world's shrinking resources available only to a few, we hold on to the vision of a planet with abundant life – enough for everyone.



# READINGS FOR AUGUST 7

## LUKE 12: 32–40

Luke builds on the previous passage to show the care and concern Jesus has for 'the little flock' (v. 32). Jesus directs his listeners to focus on the well-being of the community rather than on material things or themselves. He was speaking to people who had possessions, most would have nothing to sell. Time was short and possessions can be a liability if not a hindrance in life's journey. In v.33b, Jesus instructed his listeners to give alms – food or money to people with none. Sharing resources with those most in need anticipates the kin(g)dom.

His message in v.33 to “sell your possession and give alms” is one of the cornerstones for the Christian ministry of *diakonia*, loving service to others. *Diakonia* is at the core of the work CWS does, thanks to our supporters and partner churches. Jesus reminded his audience that they needed to be watchful and alert to what was happening around them so they can respond.

This kind of faith rejects what is easy and lives in relation to others who experience discrimination and exploitation. God has given us skills and wealth with the expectation that we live in relation, giving alms, sharing with our neighbour in need, and advocating alongside people who have been denied water, food and justice. We find joy and solidarity in sharing what is good and life-giving even in troubled times. In this way we are always ready.



# PRAYER FOR PEACE

God, who brings Peace

On this day we remember the children, women and men who were killed in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, those who were injured and lost everything they had. We remember people harmed by nuclear testing in the Pacific and elsewhere – the workers and their families who carry the cancers in their bodies. We are watchful and alert, **we dare to pray for peace.**

On this day we pray for the people who live in the midst of violence and war, for those who carry mental and physical injuries, for those whose lives are in danger, without food or protection, and for people uprooted from their homes. We are watchful and alert, **we dare to pray for peace.**

On this day we pray for the people who cause destruction and sometimes death, for the political and military leaders who no longer know how to keep the peace, for the manufacturers of weapons and the employers of armies and militia, for those who live in ways that undermine and destroy the lives of others. We are watchful and alert, **we dare to pray for peace.**

When our world echoes with the sound of war, violence and pain, we affirm our faith in the resurrection. We pray for ourselves and our community – that we will find ways to be peacemakers and lifegivers, bringing life in the face of death. We are watchful and alert, **we dare to pray for peace.**

**In Jesus' name we pray. Amen**





# PRAYERS

## GATHERING WORDS

Come in thanks

Come in peace

Come rejoicing in the love that is God.

**We come together to share this moment in time**

**In Jesus' Name we come.**

**Amen**

## PRAYER OF APPROACH

God calls us into a place of peace

A safe place where we might see ourselves as God sees us

A new place where we might see our world as it could be

A deep place where we might find faith and strength for the day.

Today we come in search of God's place of peace

Knowing that we have not always listened when God has spoken to us

Knowing that we have not always welcomed the stranger or cared for our neighbour

Knowing that we have not lived up to what is right and true.

**May the God who is the source of peace, forgive us and make us whole.**

In God's place of peace

We breathe the air deeply and find the courage to face what we have been avoiding

We open our eyes more widely to see beyond people, our fears and anxieties

We listen closely for the cries of creation, longing for life and resurrection.

**Amen**

## COMMISSION AND BENEDICTION

Peace is like a river.

It rises and falls – sometimes it floods.

Be watchful. Be alert.

Find ways to make peace in the places where it hurts.

May you sense the love of God with you and in the world

May you experience the grace of Jesus Christ in your life and your life with others

May you feel the presence of the Holy Spirit making all things new.

Go in peace.

Amen.

# IN A WORLD OF TURMOIL



The world has changed dramatically – again. The war in Ukraine has dominated global news for much of the year, eclipsing long-standing conflicts and diverting attention from other conflicts and injustices. Social media can be a battleground, spreading harm and hatred. Within Aotearoa, more attention is being paid to the unpeaceful history of the land and the harm done to tangata whenua and their taonga. There is a growing awareness of the need for actions to stop the violence in our homes and on the streets. The stories presented to the Royal Commission of harm done to children and adults in state and church care are confronting and show us why striving for peace with justice is urgent.

In reflecting on peacemaking, it is always good to remind ourselves that people start conflicts, make the weapons of war and destroy people's lives and livelihoods – we cannot blame God. The opposite is also true – people stop wars, care for people who are injured, and rebuild homes and livelihoods.

Climate change, the Covid-19 pandemic and conflict like the war in Ukraine show us very clearly that events occurring in any part of the world can affect us all. Peacemaking is a process that happens when we take action to change the systems and behaviour that inflame tensions. It can be as simple or as hard as having a conversation or speaking out when someone is in danger.

Today's readings remind us to be watchful and alert to what is happening in our world. Instead of turning away, the Bible challenges us to pay attention. Whether it is with the people closest to us or those who live in other parts of the world, let us choose to do something new to create peace. Blessed are the peacemakers.

# MUSIC

- God Weeps by Shirley Erena Murray  
<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/god-weeps-a-hymn-for-times-of-war-and-suffering>
- Christ is our Peace by Shirley Murray Alleluia Aotearoa 16  
<https://www.hopepublishing.com/find-hymns-hw/hw2854.aspx?FeedbackProgram=PR>
- I am the Light of the World by JIm Strathdee - With One Voice 669 -  
<https://vimeo.com/461673864>
- Mā te Mārie a te Atua - With One Voice 679 - Sung by Stan Walker  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3oweuXcqCVg>
- I've got Peace like a River by CJ and Friends:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6085sLXCMs>
- O God, the things that Make for Peace by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette:  
<http://media.umcom.org/gbod/sibfiles/Gillette-OGod,theThingsThatMakeforPeace,MARYTON.pdf>
- My Peace by Taizé <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cY22uNjIXj8>
- Peace Train by Yusuf Islam <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sdq4T3iRV80>



# ALL AGE ACTIVITIES

## A PEACE TRAIN

Peace Train written by Yusuf (or Cat Stevens) is a well-known peace song that inspires action. The lyrics are available here:

<https://catstevens.com/media/songs/peace-train/>

Yusuf sang Peace Train in Otautahi Christchurch at the memorial service for the people killed in the attacks on two mosques. You may like to listen to this version:

<https://youtu.be/wB4M2Z8x9-0>

**Make:** Provide paper, cardboard, scissors, glue, paint or markers and perhaps poles suitable for flying flags. Spend some time together decorating banners and flags together for the peace train. Supply music instruments, streamers and whatever you have available.

**Sing and Dance:** Make yourself a peace train. You might like to stand up and parade around the church or stay in your place. Wave your flags, move, and make noise as you listen or sing peace train: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sdq4T3iRV80>

## OFFERING OF LETTERS

Share information about Killer Robots (see page 14). Invite people to write a letter to your local MP or Minister of Disarmament Phil Twyford MP

[phil.twyford@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:phil.twyford@parliament.govt.nz) or Freepost 18 888, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160. Support New Zealand's participation in the international campaign and ask them to draft legislation for our parliament.

## A CIRCLE OF PEACE

Organise two circles of chairs, one inside the other, facing each other. Ask one group to sit on the inside and another on the outside – you could differentiate them on the basis of age or other criteria. Ask them a few questions that are appropriate for your community, like where you were born or what is your favourite food, can you share a story of when you were very scared or what do you do for fun. Then move to some peace questions like who are the people who are hurting, what situations make you sad, who needs peace and our prayers?



# ACROSS HUMAN FAULTLINES

## MAKING FRIENDS

In Sri Lanka, a small team from Devasarana based in Kurunegala made their annual trip to the Mannar District at the end of June. The trip occurred a fortnight before the departure of president Gotyabaya Rajapaksa after months of political turmoil. The trip is a pilgrimage of sorts, promoting understanding between people of different ethnicities and religions in a very practical way.

In the midst of the economic crisis enveloping Sri Lanka, Devasarana wanted to share resources with Tamil and Muslim families who were already struggling with hunger and malnutrition. With no foreign reserves and inflation reaching 57.4% last month, the future for looks bleak.



## HELP THAT MATTERS

CWS supports Devasarana's programme in two villages made up of 50 families who reclaimed their lands, 10 years after the war between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Since their return, these families have been clearing land for replanting, rebuilding their homes and establishing new livelihoods with your help.

Devasarana knew the families would need food to get through the country's economic crisis. This time the team took 50 breadfruit plants, seeds, some cash to help families establish new livelihoods, and an expert in eco-farming on their trip north. Organising transport was difficult because of the severe shortage of fuel but they were determined to keep their commitment to peace.



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# STOP KILLER ROBOTS

CWS supports the international campaign for a new treaty to ban fully autonomous weapons systems (AWS) and a domestic ban through legislation in our parliament.

## What are killer robots?

Killer robots or AWS are weapons that could, without meaningful human control, select and attack targets.

## Do they already exist?

AWS are under development in a number of countries. Some existing weapons systems could be programmed to remove meaningful human control. AWS could be readily adapted for law enforcement.



**CAMPAIGN TO STOP  
KILLER ROBOTS**

CWS supports negotiations for a legally-binding treaty to prohibit the further development of AWS. If not, we risk delegating life-and-death decision-making to algorithms, removing accountability and undermining human dignity and life.

## What are some current efforts to stop killer robots?

The World Council of Churches advocates for a ban on AWS. It released a Stop Killer Robots campaign guide for churches. Read it on their [website](#).

The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots is a global coalition of non-governmental organisations advocating for new international law to maintain meaningful human control of weapons systems. Watch *Immoral Code* a short film produced by the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots: [immoralcode.io](http://immoralcode.io)

The New Zealand Government has committed to international efforts to ban and regulate killer robots. CWS made a [submission](#) in support of a joint petition.

CWS as a member of the [Aotearoa Campaign to Stop Killer Robots](#) advocates for domestic action to prohibit the development, production and use of AWS in New Zealand. For more information on how to support this campaign, visit our website [cws.org.nz/get-involved/campaign/making-peace/](http://cws.org.nz/get-involved/campaign/making-peace/)

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# JOIN OPERATION REFUGEE

## Pray Walk Eat

Operation Refugee is a time to pray, walk and eat for refugees and displaced people. **It runs from June 20 to August 20.**

You might like to organise a Gathering, eat rations or walk to raise funds for emergency supplies, food, education and medicine for refugees.

The money you raise will help displaced people from Ukraine, Palestine, Syria and Afghanistan sheltering from conflict, violence and persecution in neighbouring countries.



*Sign up online Today!*  
**cwsoperationrefugee.nz**

**The United Nations reports a staggering 100 million people are displaced – the highest number on record. Through supporting local partners and churches we can share God's love for each one.**



**Olena and baby Laura, Ukrainian refugees near the Poland/Ukraine border.**

Photo: ACT Alliance/FCA/Antti Yrjönen

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CWS is a member of [ACT Alliance](#) (Action by Churches Together).

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