



Floating peace lanterns in front of the Hiroshima Atomic Bomb Dome for the 70th anniversary, Japan. WCC/P Jeffrey

## **Peace Sunday Resources 2016**

### **“Blessed are the Peacemakers” Matt 5:9**

Each year New Zealand churches join people throughout the world to remember the first use of nuclear bombs in war. On 6 August 1945 the bomb “Little Boy” was dropped on the centre of Hiroshima leaving 100,000-180,000 people dead and 63% of buildings destroyed. Three days later on 9 August a larger bomb “Fat Man” was dropped on the city of Nagasaki leaving 50,000-100,000 dead and 22.7% of its buildings consumed by fire.

On 2 July, 2016 Moruroa e Tatou and supporters marked the 50th anniversary of the atomic bomb test on Moruroa Atoll, Maohi Nui (French Polynesia). After 193 tests (ending in 1996) Moruroa and Fangataufa Atolls remain off limits. Former workers and their families are seeking compensation for the increased incidence of cancer decades later. So far the French government has compensated 19 victims although it has received more than 1,000 applications. In July, former prime minister Alain Juppé visiting Tahiti admitted the detrimental effects of the tests but local advocacy group Moruroa E Tatou is waiting for action. Churches are part of this campaign.

### **Mandate for Peace?**

Listening to the news, it would seem that religion is more often used as a pretext for violence than peace. Reading the Scriptures and learning from faith traditions, there is a strong mandate for compassion and peace. It can be seen in the common call to ‘love your neighbour’, and for Christians also in the Beatitudes, Matthew 5:3-11. Taken together they offer a radical reshaping of human relations in any century. Blessings (beatitudes from the Latin *beati*) in God’s eyes go to those who choose to live by these principles.

This year’s resources share examples of peacemaking as an encouragement to those concerned about violence in our communities and world. Let us work together for peace.





## Call to Worship

At this time

We come to worship and give thanks for the richness of your word and the sustenance of creation.

On this day

We come as your people seeking new ways to mend our lives and make peace in our world.

In this place

We meet to share and find the care and concern that is the fuel of our faith journey.

**Loving God we come together**

**In the Name of the Prince of Peace**

**Amen.**

## Children's Time

Each year on 6 August the people of Hiroshima release paper lanterns on the Motoyasu river.

They write or draw messages of peace in memory of those who died on the lanterns.

Depending on the age of the children you might like to make floating lanterns or simple lanterns.

*You will need:*

Waterproof yupo/rice/tissue paper

You may need dowelling or chopsticks for a square lantern if using tissue.

Scissors, tape and glue

Watercolour paints or permanent markers

Votive candle and matches

Thin wire for a handle if floating them

Something to sit the lantern on eg bamboo mat, yupo paper or styrofoam if you can float them.

*To make a lantern:*

You can make rectangle, square or cylinder shaped lanterns. If you need corners, fold the paper into four to mark the creases.

Draw or paint images and messages of peace on the lantern.

Place the lantern on the base —you may like to make a candle space in the Styrofoam or glue the candle in place for floating.

Make a wire handle and insert it through two

holes you have made at the top.

Light the candle with a taper or long match.

Make sure the flame will not touch the sides.

Float them on the water as you pray for peace.

Make sure you can collect all the lanterns when done.

Alternatively, line them up at the front of the church and share the prayer below.

*Think about peace:*

In making peace lanterns you are joining thousands of people making their own lanterns and prayers for peace today. Can you think of ways to make peace in our school/community?

**Loving God,**

**We pray for children living in the midst of war. Comfort them with your peace and keep them safe. May peace come soon. In Jesus' Name. Amen**

## Building Peace in the Community

Fifteen year old Giselle is training to be a Peace Community Mentor with CEPAD (the Council of Protestant Churches in Nicaragua). Along with trainees Marcos and



Lea, she has plans for the small village where they live. The three want to help young people, especially those struggling with substance abuse, domestic violence, low self-esteem and depression.

In poor, isolated communities like La Ceiba where they live, there are no services or programmes to deal with violence and build self-esteem for young people locked in a cycle of grinding poverty. Giving young people time to talk and play will help release some of the frustration they carry.

"People see alcohol as a refuge because they don't feel they have anything else to turn to," she adds.

Giselle joined the training because she wanted change in her family, but after the first sessions says, "I'm seeing how these skills will enable me to help the whole community."



## Lectionary Readings

### **Isaiah 1:1,10-20**

In this passage Isaiah pulls no punches in his warnings to the southern kingdom of Judah. Isaiah's words of condemnation thunder across the page. More and better religious ceremonies won't cut it. Isaiah demands repentance and right action. Comparing their actions to the residents of the inhospitable cities of Sodom and (v.10), Isaiah details the failings of Judah's worship. In v.17 he clearly states what that right action is: "seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow". Not only are these actions more pleasing to God than endless religious ceremonies, they are also the foundations of peace. This is the work we do together as CWS.

### **Psalms 50: 1-8, 22-23**

This is a prophetic psalm written with the universe as its stage. It invokes God as the judge of it all (v.6). Animal sacrifices are not needed (v.8) —rather thanksgiving and faithfulness to 'the right way' (v.23).

### **Hebrews 11: 1-3, 8-16**

The writer of Hebrews begins by defining 'faith' in v.1 and continues to show what he means first in the story of Abraham and Sarah and later in v.17-22 by reference to their descendants. Faith is not a one off event but a constantly unfolding commitment to obey God "not knowing where he was going" (v.8b). To live in faith is to live for a vision of 'not yet' but also by right actions.

### **Luke 12:32-40**

In this reading Luke is continuing to show the care and concern of Jesus for 'the little flock' (v. 32) he began in the previous passage. He seeks to encourage his listeners with the promise of the 'not yet' kingdom or rule of God, by telling them not to be afraid or worry about the future. Like Isaiah, his advice is for the world we live in and is unavoidable. Jesus was not speaking to the peasants in his audience for

they would have had no possessions to sell. His message in v.33 to "sell your possession and give alms" is one of the foundations for the Christian ministry of *diakonia*, loving service to others. CWS does this work with our supporters and member churches. Faith is not about being more comfortable but living in tension with a world where many are poor and in need of financial support.

### **Prayer for Peace**

God of Peace

We pray in memory of children, women and men who died in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, those who were injured and lost everything they had. We remember people damaged by

nuclear testing in the Pacific and elsewhere. We remember the people of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iraq, Turkey, South Sudan and Syria who are living in the midst of war. When our world echoes with the sound of war, violence and pain, **we dare to pray for peace.**

We pray for our country and community, for those places where poverty, greed and injustice foster

violence. We pray for the strength to stop violence and speak up for the vulnerable. May we find the strength and the faith to do the hard and painful work that makes the peace that comes with justice and care. When our world echoes with the sound of war, violence and pain, **we dare to pray for peace. Amen**

### **Closing Prayer**

At this time

on this day

From this place

We go in the confidence of our faith to seek justice, to rescue the oppressed, to defend the orphan and to plead for the widow.

Together we are peacemakers, ready to love our neighbour as ourselves.

**We go in the Name of the Prince of Peace Amen.**



*Returning home after years of bitter war in Sri Lanka, a Tamil woman takes pleasure in her flourishing garden.*



New arrivals at Adjumani Camp, Uganda Photo: ACT/A Rishøj

## Churches Making Peace

While international diplomatic efforts struggle to maintain negotiations between government and opposition forces, the **South Sudan Council of Churches** has continued peacemaking, work it began before independence. Members ask for your prayers and support in their efforts.

Last year SSCC developed its own peace action plan and is an example of what faith communities can do. The first pillar of the plan is advocacy with neighbouring countries and to improve communication from the people to the leaders and the leaders to the people. Better communication will prevent manipulation and allow the voiceless a voice. The second pillar is to create neutral forums to talk through the issues at all levels from the grassroots to the leadership. The church has a huge amount of respect and has more credibility than any other institution. The third pillar is reconciliation—but peace is necessary first.

SSCC is involved at the highest levels with a representative on the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission set up as part of international negotiations on the peace agreement. More than two years of war, widespread corruption and the near collapse of the oil industry that provides 98% of the country's earnings have left 4.8 million people in need of food.

When more violence erupted in July many people sheltered in Juba's church compounds. Churches did their best to provide food and water. In response to the fighting the SSCC

issued a statement on 10 July saying: “The time for carrying and using weapons has ended; now is the time to build a peaceful nation. We pray for those who have been killed, and for their families, and we ask God's forgiveness for those who have done the killing.”

## For Church Notices

On Peace Sunday we remember the people who died and suffered when atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and those seeking compensation for the effects of nuclear testing in the Pacific.

In the latest conflict in South Sudan:

- More than 60,000 people have fled to Sudan and Uganda
- 85% women and children.
- ACT (Action By Churches Together) Alliance is processing new refugees before transporting them to neighbouring camps.
- In the Adjumani camp they provide water, sanitation, protection and lifesaving help to 60% of the 138,000 residents and are struggling to cope with the new arrivals.

**CWS has launched an appeal to help South Sudanese with food, water, sanitation and protection. If you can, please help: [www.cws.org.nz](http://www.cws.org.nz)**

## More resources

There are **events** to commemorate Hiroshima and Nagasaki and **resources** on the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. More on **nuclear testing in the Pacific** can be found from Moruroa E Tatou.

**Global military expenditure** in 2015 was US \$1676 billion an increase of 1% in real terms and equivalent to 2.3% of the global gross domestic product and US\$4.6 billion a day. In June the government released a White Paper on Defence. Peace Movement Aotearoa is running the Campaign on Military Spending.

Progress continues in negotiations to **eliminate nuclear weapons** under UN auspices. The Working Group meets shortly. More on the campaign is available.

**Christian World Service**  
PO Box 22652,  
Christchurch 8140  
Tel 0800 74 73 72 or 03 366 9274  
[cws@cws.org.nz](mailto:cws@cws.org.nz)  
[www.cws.org.nz](http://www.cws.org.nz)

