



*A young Japanese girl pauses by candles lit to mark the 70th commemoration of the bombing of Nagasaki, Japan.
Photo: WCC/Paul Jeffrey*

Peace Sunday Resources 2018

***“The Bread of God ...
gives life to the World”***

John 6:33

Peace Sunday is designated as the closest Sunday to 6 August, Hiroshima Day in the Anglican and Methodist/Presbyterian Lectionary. Often overlooked in recent years, it was once marked across the country as a time of prayer and commitment, especially to a nuclear weapon free world. CWS encourages New Zealand churches join in prayer and reflection as we rediscover our mandate for peace. This year it falls on 5 August.

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.

On 2 July, 1966 France began nuclear testing in Maohi Nui (French Polynesia). In 1996 France completed 193 tests. Moruroa and Fangataufa Atolls remain off limits. Many former workers and their families have experienced harmful health effects but successive French governments have proved reluctant to award compensation. Last year the French appeal court ruled 25 victims had a right to compensation. The Protestant Church of Maohi Nui is preparing further legal action. Britain insists nuclear tests in the Pacific were clean and accepts no responsibility for health claims and has paid no compensation. The USA tested in the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands.

Bread and Peace

Some days you cannot get away from the horror of life. There are daily reports from the courts of people doing unspeakable things to others – though we do hear what they do in too much detail. Undoubtedly people are taking a beating somewhere in Syria and others are suffering because they have been scammed, denied a fair wage or are hungry.

The focus on bread in all its meanings is an appropriate one for Peace Sunday. Breaking bread together is a powerful symbol of our faith and a promise of peace. Whether sharing in the Eucharist or a meal with friends and family, we are taking part in a ritual where the common place creates a sense of connectedness. Magic can happen when we eat together. Dreams can be shared. Honest words spoken and new plans made.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus speaks of the bread of heaven—the bread that is broken for the life of the world. Peace Sunday is a time to reflect on stories of people demanding justice, defiantly standing in the way of violence and war or offering food and shelter to people who have fled their homes. Let us work together for peace.



Call to Worship

When our world is twisted by greed and bruised by violence

We come seeking signs of hope and healing,

When our concerns have become inward and narrow

We come seeking the Peace that passes understanding

When our actions are small and our vision weak

We come looking for you in friend and neighbour.

God, the Creator and Sustainer of All that is.

We come. Amen.

For Children

Because bread takes time to rise, you may want to bring some in ready to eat, but you could start the fermentation process at the beginning of the service and then add the flour and knead the dough as you speak. In Jesus' time, poor people ate barley bread—recipes are available on the internet.

A simple way to begin, is to talk about bread. Ask the group how they might describe it—point to the colour, shape, holes. What it smells like. How it tastes. Ask them if they know any stories about Jesus and bread—if necessary give them some pointers (in the Eucharist or at communion, feeding the five thousand). Finish with a prayer:

We pray for people who are hungry and need bread,

For people who are afraid and need safety,

For people who live with war and need peace.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

You may like to give out peace doves and ask the group to colour or write prayers that can be used to make a peace chain around the communion table.

Lectionary Readings

2 Samuel 11:26—12:13a

Even David the most powerful ruler could not escape the consequences of his actions. Committing adultery with Bathsheba and then sending her husband Uriah into the front of the battle where he is killed are actions from which he will never recover. The story is there for all time and so is the dramatic denouncement by Nathan in today's reading. Nathan the prophet effectively tries David by story. He uses a parable of tribal law to show how David has



Photo: WCC/ Paul Jeffrey

abused his royal power in taking Uriah's life and his wife. David only realises its significance when Nathan turns it on him. David is directly accountable to God. The violence of David's actions cannot be undone. Nathan's judgement (v11,12) warns that acts of violence will continue to cause great harm. His family will tear itself apart just as the abuse of government powers destroys community. David dies a lonely and broken man.

Psalm 51:1-12

After Nathan's visit, David realises he has done harm and offers this psalm of penance. In verse 1 he raises the possibility of forgiveness even as he acknowledges the sin that he has committed against God. After confessing his sin, David appeals to be renewed with a clean heart and a right spirit (v10).

Ephesians 4:1-16

The writer focuses attention on five distinguishing aspects of a Christian, humility, gentleness, patience, love for one another and the 'unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace' (v 3b). These essential virtues are not a soft option, rather they are a constant challenge in a world where the focus is more often on putting oneself first. These virtues are the foundation of our faith that help us confront the injustice and violence in our world. Together the community is equipped to deal with all manner of trickery and deceitful scheming (v14). The vision of a body made strong by its search for love and unity in the bond of peace happens as we listen closely to the needs of the whole



In Maohi Nui or French Polynesia, the indigenous Maohi people have experienced the combined effects of colonisation and nuclear testing. The Maohi Protestant Church and others are demanding justice for those who have been harmed by thirty years of nuclear testing. Each year on July 2, they mark the anniversary of the first test on Moruroa in 1966. *Photo: Moruroa e Tatou*

human family. When some live without peace or lack food and decent housing, action is needed for the sake of the whole body.

John 6:24-35

For Jesus the material needs of the people were important. The day before he had provided five thousand of his followers with (barley) bread. It was not enough to be a miracle manufacturer of bread—Jesus had more on offer. He told them not to work for the food that perishes (v 27a) but for that which is eternal. He responds to the crowds very public challenge to his message by saying that the manna of Moses's time and the bread from heaven have the same source—they are all gifts from God. For Jesus bread was to be shared but so was the gift of life. The bread of God 'gives life to the world' (v 33b) - for people living at a bare subsistence level as they did in Jesus' time, these ideas were very closely linked. If we forget those who are hungry and the intention for the bread to be shared, we miss Jesus 'the bread of life' (v35).

Prayer for Peace

We remember the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as they keep alive the memory of the harm made possible by nuclear weapons

R: We will work for peace

We remember people who have been injured or killed from nuclear testing, in wars and conflicts not of their making and those who have stood against them. For people who live in constant fear they will be next. For parents who try to comfort children traumatised by war or hungry because their food has been destroyed.

R: We will work for peace

We remember the earth which has been torn by war, poisoned and exploited by human actions. We hold fast to the dream of peace and a commitment to stand up for justice. We look to you and to each other for the strength we need.

**R: We will work for peace
In your Name we pray. Amen.**

Closing Prayer

We go with the memory of all those people who have died in wars and suffered from nuclear testing.

We go in the knowledge that you are the Bread of Life and the source of the Peace that passes understanding.

We go with love in our hearts and a new commitment to live and work for Peace—in our world which you have created for us to share and enjoy.

We go in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Amen.



Photo: ACT Alliance/ Paul Jeffrey

Churches Making Peace

The world's newest country has been embroiled in war since conflict broke out in December 2013. Violence rapidly spread. Repeated peace agreements have been broken, but with each new announcement, there is hope an agreement will hold. The South Sudan Council of Churches has been directly involved in the talks and . Please continue to remember them in prayer.

In a 19 July statement, the SSCC reflected on recent developments in the country: "Peace is the call from the hearts of all the people of South Sudan." The South Sudan Council of Churches encouraged people to remain hopeful. "We have facilitated and mediated within neutral forums and community conversations," the statement reads. "We have spoken out for peace and justice, we have called for our leaders to be accountable and we pledge to work continually for peace in our country, encouraging all of our people to hold on to faith and hope, trusting wholeheartedly that peace will return to our country sooner rather than later."

The South Sudan Council of Churches concluded that peace will require commitment and sacrifice. "Since the war began in December 2013, several agreements have been signed but never fully implemented, and as a result, our country remains in despair," the statement reads. "The people of South Sudan will no longer accept false promises."



For Church Notices

On Peace Sunday we remember the people who died and suffered when atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. We send our support to those people seeking compensation for the harmful effects of nuclear testing especially in the Pacific. We pray for the work of the Pacific Conference of Churches in its support for some of the workers and their families

CWS is appealing for South Sudan. Conflict is causing widespread hunger, forcing many people to flee their homes. ACT Alliance and Maridi Service Agency are helping some of the 7.1 million people who need food, water, sanitation and protection. If you can, please help: www.cws.org.nz. Thank you.

More Resources

There are **local 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.

The Stockholm Peace Research Institute reports 9 countries held 14,465 deployed and other **nuclear weapons** in 2018, down from 14,935 in 2017. Total **global military spending** rose to US\$1,739 billion in 2017, a marginal increase of 1.1%. This year's budget announced major increase in New Zealand's expenditure.

Peace Movement Aotearoa is running the Campaign on Military Spending.

On 7 July 2017 the UN adopted a treaty to **eliminate nuclear weapons**. The treaty prohibits states from developing, testing, producing, manufacturing, transferring, possessing, stockpiling, using, or threatening to use nuclear weapons once ratified by 50 states. The New Zealand Parliament is in the final stages of ratifying the treaty.



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