

SHARING CHRIST'S HEALING PEACE IN THE WORLD

CIRCLE OF PRAYER
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INTRODUCTION

Psalm 148:1-10; Matthew 10:1

1Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights!
2Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his host!
3Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars!
4Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!
5Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded and they were created.
6He established them forever and ever; he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.
7Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps,
8fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling his command!
9Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars!
10Wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds! (NRSV)

1 Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. (NRSV)

WOW! What can I say, and what can we say? The phrase “Praise Him” and even just the word “Praise” appears about 39 times in this Psalm! “Praise Him” or simply ‘Praise’ is an invitation to all of nature, including humanity, to exalt and adore God the Creator! And why should we not? God has made the World with all that is in it and saw it was very good.

Here in the Pacific, we are surrounded by massive Oceans which we call our home and our source of livelihood. On the other sides of our globe, you live on massive land – continents (Mountains and forests) and the skies (the Heavens) surrounding us, to round it all up! The Psalm speaks of unison and oneness, and it speaks of the ideal situation where there is harmony in the created order. And this harmony is meant for the glory and praise of God!

But is there harmony? Is there order? Should we still “praise God” when, we keep on hearing and listening to stories and watching on TV or on social media about the sea level rising, the earthquake, volcano eruptions, tsunamis, soil erosion and frequent cyclones in our world that affect the people’s livelihood and creatures? We are guilty of choking our Blue Ocean with all kinds of pollutants. We are guilty of discharging eight million metric tonnes of plastic into the womb of the Ocean every year – the womb that gives and supports life. Moreover, we have used our ocean for nuclear testing which spoils our people’s livelihood and caused deformed babies and cancer in human beings.

Do we still “praise God” when people are dying from bombs, from missiles and people fighting and killing each other during conflicts, wars and tribal fighting? Do we still praise God when a lot of hatred exists among people in the world: Families taking each other to courts, incest and rape happening to our women, girls and children in their homes, and their own communities?

There is discord and disconnect especially when at least half of the world’s population experience violence due to gender-based violence, conflicts and wars!

Yet, Psalm 148 does not end with a “doom and gloom” scenario. Rather, Psalm 148 is filled with hope! This hope has to do with the renewed life that God has always intended for all his creation. This psalm invites all of nature, all of humanity to respect and relate to each other and exalt God.

In Matthew 10, Jesus called his disciples and gave them authority to drive out bad spirits that harm people and to heal all diseases that hurt, discomfort and kill people. Amid all that is happening in the world, Jesus calls us to be agents of peace, agents of change that will bring Christ’s healing to the world. He has given the authority to share His healing with the world. We are invited by Psalm 148 and commissioned by Jesus to share Christ’s healing peace through the work we are doing in our own corners to bring peace, order, and hope and healing to the world.

I want to end this reflection with the prayer from St Francis of Assisi:

Make me a channel of your peace; Where there is hatred, let me bring your love; Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord; And where there’s doubt, true faith in you. Where there’s despair in life, let me bring hope; where there is darkness, only light; and where there’s sadness, ever joy.”

I pray we commit ourselves to respond positively to Psalm 148’s invitation and Jesus’ commission to be agents of peace to the world. In the Name of the God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit...Amen.

Rev. Siera Tion BIRD

Convener – CoP v. 28 Committee (2024)



PEACE IS ACTIVE NOT PASSIVE

John 14:27

Mary NORDICK, Canada

On September 21st, 2025, Christians across Canada were invited by the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) to participate in a Prayer Walk for Peace. The walk was an opportunity to actively (literally one step at a time) engage in prayer for peace in our troubled world either individually or as a group. As I walked, I reflected on what peace means for me as a follower of Christ and lifted up people and places in need of peace in our world: Jesus the Prince of Peace's life was bound by peace from the announcement of His birth in the Angels' greeting to the Shepherds to His Last Discourse in John 14. As followers of Jesus, we are tasked to share Christ's Healing Peace in our world. The word peace abounds in the Bible, both Old and New Testament. Usually, it is a comforting word but at times can be challenging. One thing that stands out for me is that action is often associated with peace. We seek, long for, pray for, make, give, live in, and most especially at the end of our lives rest in peace. Peace heals, comforts, calms, is given, is left, is shared, is a state of being, a promise, a command: Peace be with you!

*And so, we pray for peace. I would like to share the following **PRAYERS** courtesy of the CCC's Prayer Walk Toolkit:*

World Peace: We pray for peace throughout the world. Lord, as your Word in John 16:33 reminds us, you have overcome the world's troubles. We ask for your peace to rule in places of conflict, tension, and unrest.

Peace for Canada (any country): We lift up our nation, Canada (your country). We pray for peace in its leaders, its people, and its diverse communities. May your wisdom guide decisions and your grace unite hearts.

Peace in Our Communities: We bring our own neighborhoods and towns before you. We pray for harmony, understanding, and reconciliation where there is division. Help us to be instruments of your peace in our daily lives.

Peace in Our Relationships: Finally, we pray for peace in our personal lives – in our relationships with others and within ourselves. Heal brokenness, soften hard hearts, and free us from anxiety. Help us to live in a right relationship with you, allowing your peace to fill every part of our being.

As we conclude, we trust in your promise that when we live in relationship with you, your peace will flow freely in our lives. Amen.



Mary Nordick is a member of the Board of Directors for the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada (WICC) and serves as the WICC Liaison to the World Day of Prayer International Committee, and WICC representative to the International Committee for the Fellowship of the Least Coin starting until 2024. A retired teacher from Saskatchewan, one of the prairie provinces, Mary is active with her church parish, refugee sponsorship and support, the Catholic Women's League of Canada, and the Board of the Prairie Centre for Ecumenism.



EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH FAITH

Matthew 9:20–22

Latha MAGESWARI, India

Amy Carmichael's (1867–1951) ministry in India highlights the importance of empowering women through faith. Carmichael and the girls of the Dohnavur (Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu, India) Fellowship navigated significant struggles related to menstruation, dealing with the deeply ingrained social stigma of impurity and the practical challenges of managing hygiene. Hence women and girl children were treated as impure. They were victims of rape and physical violence as they stay outside the village.

Amy's holistic approach to caring for the rescued girls' physical, emotional and spiritual needs included addressing the struggles of menstruation. By providing a compassionate and educational response, her ministry helped break the cycle of shame and poor hygiene that afflicted countless girls. She also helped abolish temple prostitution and restore the humanity of children dehumanized and abused by cultural practices.

Indian women are still considered woes to society in religious practices and rituals. The 'Sabarimala Temple issue' in Kerala revolves around prohibition of the entry of women and girls of menstruating age (10–50 years old) into the Sabarimala Temple. Historically, they were barred from entering due to the belief that the deity, Lord Ayyappan, is celibate. This practice was challenged in court, leading to a landmark 2018 Supreme Court decision that ultimately allowed women of all ages to enter the temple. Yet, the locals and the people in the temple do not allow women to enter the temple even today, saying they are impure.

The woman with a flow of blood for 12 years is a prominent example of empowerment for women in India and across the world. The woman broke traditional laws and patriarchal restrictions that labeled her "impure." She overcame social stigma and isolation. She challenged fear and shame, daring to come out in public. Faith gives courage to resist injustice and to step into God's liberating grace.

She endured 12 long years of pain, rejection, and loneliness. She did not allow her condition to define her or end her hope. Her persistence shows that faith is not passive but enduring even in suffering. Women today, too, carry heavy burdens but hope in God transforms

pain into power.

She touched Jesus' garment, defying society and seeking direct healing. Jesus affirmed her dignity, calling her "Daughter," restoring her identity and worth. In Christ, women receive equality, dignity, and freedom to live empowered lives. God not only heals. God honors those who step out in faith.

Faith in God empowers women to break barriers, bear burdens with hope, and become bold in Christ. The church is called to stand with women by promoting their education, empowerment, and encouragement.

PRAYER

Compassionate and merciful God, Father and Mother, thank you for celebrating all humans by your grace, especially women. When society says woe to women, you say WOW! With this faith and hope in you, we can be empowered together. Continue to allow women as channels of your liberating and gracious love to society and to the church. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.



Rev. Latha Mageswari, from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Madhya Pradesh currently serves as the Coordinator for the Ecumenical Dialogue Center India (EDCI) at the United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India. Her work focuses on fostering ecumenical dialogue, promoting unity among churches, and engaging in theological reflection and social concerns within the Indian context.



SHARING CHRIST'S HEALING PEACE IN THE WORLD

Genesis 1:1; Luke 12:49—56; James 4:1

Ann GARTON, USA

What a wonderful world we live in! From outer space the world appears to be a blue marble because 71% of the earth's surface is covered with water. It appears peaceful, calm and serene on the outside. This is how it appears in the photo taken from Apollo 8 by Astronaut Bill Anders in 1968; peaceful, calm and serene.

However, within the inner core of the earth there is a hot molten mass of magma. When that magma is released in the form of lava due to the shifting of the earth's tectonic plates, the molten lava surges to the earth's surface, creating mayhem and destruction to everything in its path. Eruptions are like war from within the earth.

Now let us focus on God looking down on God's children here on Earth. We appear calm and serene on the outside like Earth in outer space. BUT God knows our innermost feelings and our harmful and hurtful thoughts. We cannot hide from God and ourselves. What can we do?

The Old Testament tells of more than 400 conflicts/wars that occurred as God looked over those who we now know were the Israelites. God cared for them and reprimanded them for not following God's commandments. And they still didn't listen and obey. Conflicts/wars followed.

In the New Testament Jesus appeals to the disciples to "Love one another" and "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you". BUT Jesus also tells his disciples that everything is not peaches and cream. He warns them, as reported in Luke 12, of bringing fire to Earth, having families torn apart and not reading the signs of the times. This is not the 'soft-spoken' Jesus we know!

Do you think the rage and Conflict/War Jesus is talking about could be a symbol of God's presence? Could Jesus be telling us how we can be transformed from within to prepare us for inner peace and God's Kingdom?

The Gospel unites us with God, and we feel inner peace BUT it also puts us at war from within when we have those bad thoughts of

those around us.

Like the Earth, we appear calm and serene on the outside, while our innermost feelings are constantly being bombarded by conflicting (war) and bad thoughts!

I end this reflection with the prayerful words from the song, "Change my Heart O God", written by Eddie Espinosa.

Change my heart oh God, make it ever true;
Change my heart oh God, may I be like you.
Change my heart oh God, make it ever true;
Change my heart oh God, may I be like you,
You are the potter, I am the clay;
Mold me and make me, this is what I pray.
Change my heart oh God, make it ever true,
Change my heart O God, may I be like You.

Let us commit ourselves to responding to the conflicts within our souls by seeking peace from within by communing with God through prayer. Amen.



Ann Garton lives a good, wonderful life all the time. A Christian who likes music, mysteries, fellowship, family and friendships, she enjoys volunteering and new experiences. She taught science and mathematics. She and her husband traveled to many countries and hiked in and out of the Grand Canyon twice after age 65. They have 6 children followed by grandchildren, greats, and great-greats.

SHE WHO KEEPS THE GARDEN: WOMEN, CREATION, AND THE CALL TO JUSTICE

Genesis 1:26–31; 2:7, 15, 18–25

Sheena Camille CALMA-SANCHEZ, the Philippines

Genesis 1 and 2 give us two perspectives on creation. Genesis 1 gives a clear picture of an orderly vision of creation, with goodness and shared dignity. Male and female are created in God's image and entrusted with responsibility for the creation. Pope Francis reminded us that having dominion over creation means caring for, protecting, overseeing, and preserving it, not controlling and exploiting it for profit.

Genesis 2 provides details on how humanity is formed from the soil (adamah) and placed in the garden to till and keep it. A woman is created as an equal partner, emphasizing partnership rather than subjugation. These stories zoom in on the interconnectedness of life. Any distortion of these relationships, through patriarchy and its dominating -isms (capitalism, colonialism, militarism, racism, sexism, etc.), will lead to brokenness and crisis.

Throughout history, "dominion" has been misunderstood and abused to justify the domination of creation. This mindset completely contradicts God's vision for creation: male and female are equally created in God's image, and they are stewards of creation. Greed brought devastating consequences that broke the harmony in creation. It resulted in environmental destruction, climate change, human suffering, violence, and injustice, where poor communities are disproportionately affected. They are losing access to clean water, food security, and safe shelter, adding to the multiple layers of vulnerability of the poor, particularly women and children.

The Philippines, as one of the climate-vulnerable nations, faces many natural disasters throughout the year. Disasters have forced women and girls into early marriage, migration, unpaid labor, and human trafficking. Despite their multiple-layered vulnerability, they serve as the main responders to disasters. They sustain families and rebuild communities after disasters.

Church leaders raise awareness in creation care and call for ecological justice. Indigenous women defend their ancestral land against powerful entities seeking control over their resources for profit. Environmental defenders work with the grassroots communities and campaign against illegal practices. Despite their important roles and contributions, women are harassed, red-tagged, and even killed for "tilling and keeping the garden". Genesis 1 and 2 reaffirm our identity of being created in God's image and our responsibility to be stewards of creation. As the church, we must lead in dismantling the systemic sin that destroys the creation. We must resist exploitation. We must stand with defenders. We must demand justice.

We must advocate for policies. Until brokenness is restored to wholeness. Until drought yields to abundance. Until capacities overcome vulnerabilities. Until death bursts forth into life.

PRAYER

Creator God, you made us partners with creation and entrusted us to protect and sustain life. Forgive us for the suffering of Your creation because of greed and neglect. We remember the women who carry water after floods, the mothers who feed families during drought, the indigenous sisters who guard their ancestral land, the girls who lose schools and homes in every typhoon.

O God of justice, empower women who are defenders of life, strengthen children who long for a safe and sustainable future, and move Your Church to repent, resist patriarchy, and live faithfully as caretakers of creation.

Renew the earth, dear God. Renew us to be partners in Your work of justice and peace.

In Christ, who reconciles all creation, we pray. Amen.



Dss. Sheena Camille Calma-Sanchez is a deaconess of the United Methodist Church in the Philippines, having faithfully served in various capacities for over a decade, and now as the Program Manager of the Board of Women's Work. A licensed professional teacher and actively participates in church and community leadership, she holds a Bachelor of Arts in Christian Education and has earned 40 units in the Master of Arts in Women and Development at the University of the Philippines Diliman.



LET US SOW PEACE!

Ephesians 4:3; 6:15

Marilyn LARIVIERE, USA

Using different translations of scripture can help us to get a better understanding. The words that Paul wrote from prison to the people of Ephesus ring true for us today. We need to believe more than ever that the bond of peace can overcome conflict. Paul is telling us that love and unity can transcend the barriers of social distinction.

How often do we literally judge a "book by its cover?" When we meet someone who is "different" from us it is easy to assume that we have nothing in common. I have had the opportunity to participate in a "Human Library experience". The Librarian at the Osterville Village Library asked me to share about my experience as a caregiver for my husband who died of Alzheimer's, particularly about how people would be uncomfortable and try to avoid him. Other "Books" included an amputee, a non-binary individual, a recovering addict, an immigrant, a person with chronic pain, a police officer, an individual with mental illness, a person of color, a veteran with PTSD, and a fully tattooed person. Three events were held, one at the library and the other two at two different hospitals for the staff during their lunch hours. All the "Books" were at different tables with a brief description and a few conversation starters. Then people went from table to table taking as long as they liked to talk.

The Human Library or "Menneskebiblioteket" as it is called in Danish, was created in Copenhagen in the spring of 2000 by Ronni Abergel and his brother Dany and colleagues Asma Mouna and Christoffer Erichsen.

The original event was open eight hours a day for four days straight and featured over fifty different titles. The broad selection of books provided readers with ample choice to challenge their stereotypes and so more than a thousand readers took advantage by leaving books, librarians, organizers and readers stunned at the reception and impact of the Human Library.

This concept is now in 85 different countries. All of us who participated found it to be a profound experience.

When you take the time to share a conversation with someone, you find you can no longer judge them by their "cover." This is what Paul is telling us to do every day. We

don't have to participate in an event like the Human Library to live out the Gospel message of love and unity. When we meet folks who don't share our ideas or religion or even our values it can be easy to judge them. But when we accept that we are made in God's image we can come together in a spirit of unity and peace.

PRAYER

God of our understanding, let us pray that we may be accepting of those who are different from us. Help us to put aside any prejudices that may creep into our souls. Open our eyes to see beyond what is on the surface and to understand the pain that may be in someone's heart. May we share the gift of our presence with those who need what we can give. Then together we can help to create a world of peace, unity, and diversity. Amen.



Marilyn Lariviere is the Director of Homeless Ministries for the Cape Cod Council of Churches in Hyannis, Massachusetts. She founded the Youth StreetReach Program for teenagers to work with the homeless population, serving meals and providing clothing. She is a Past National President of Church Women United Inc. and served as the Honorary Treasurer for the ICFLC. Her four children, ten grandchildren, ten great grandchildren and one great-great grandchild keep her busy.



UNITED IN PRAYER FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE: A CENTENNIAL WITNESS

1 Samuel 2:1-10; Luke 1:46-55

Maral Barzkian HAIDOSTIAN, Lebanon

In 2027, World Day of Prayer will celebrate its Centennial—one hundred years of women united in prayer across every border and boundary. As we approach this centennial, the theme “United in Prayer for Justice and Peace” speaks to our deepest need in the Middle East today. The centennial Bible passages — Hannah’s song in 1 Samuel 2:1–10 and Mary’s song in Luke 1:46–55 — remind us that prayer is both thanksgiving and trust. Hannah, once bitter and desperate, rejoiced in God when God gave her a son, but more importantly when God changed her heart. Mary, young and humble, accepted God’s plan with faith, praising God for lifting the lowly and filling the hungry. These two women declared God’s justice and peace, proclaiming that God can do what is impossible for us.

Each year, women from a different country write the World Day of Prayer liturgy, and in 2024, that liturgy came from Palestine. In February 2024, during chapel hour at the Armenian Evangelical Central High School in Beirut, I presented Palestine as the focus country for World Day of Prayer. As I shared about the land, its people, their joys and their deep struggles, the students and teachers listened with heartfelt concern, especially considering the devastating war in Gaza. A powerful slide showing the loss of Palestinian land from 1946 to 2010 left a strong impression — painful, eye-opening, and heartbreaking.

Afterward, one teacher approached me and admitted how little she knew about the reality of Palestine as our neighboring country. She noted how years of conflict in our region often numb us, making us indifferent and careless. Lebanon and Palestine are geographically close, both resting on the Mediterranean, sharing similar nature, climate, and culture, yet it is difficult to visit one another. As a Bible teacher, whenever I point to Palestine on the map to explain where Jesus lived, taught, and performed miracles, my students are always surprised to realize how near we are to those sacred places. And yet, though borders divide us, the World Day of Prayer bridges us together. Through prayer, Lebanon

and Palestine—and indeed the entire world, with friends or adversaries—stand united.

For one hundred years, the World Day of Prayer has carried forward this witness. Standing with Palestinian sisters in 2024 continues the tradition begun in 1927 — when women first dared to pray across the divisions of a world torn by war, to believe that prayer could heal what violence had broken.

PRAYER

God of justice and peace, we long for these gifts that come only from you. We cry out for your healing in lands torn by conflict. Help us to seek justice faithfully and actively — by becoming well informed, by praying without ceasing, by holding each other’s hands, and by standing together in faith. United in prayer, open our hearts to your transforming love. Amen.



Maral Barzkian Haidostian is serving a second term as Middle East Regional Representative for the World Day of Prayer International Committee (WDPIC). She is a member of the Armenian Evangelical Church in Beirut, Lebanon. For more than 25 years, Maral has been a Bible teacher, a Sunday school coordinator, and a member of the World Day of Prayer National Committee of Lebanon.



HEAL THE EARTH, PROTECT LIFE

Genesis 2:4-15

Yuliana M. BENU, Indonesia

Back in the early 2000s, a Timorese women Aleta Baun, Lodia Oematan, Anaci Anin and Deci Nifu from the Indigenous Mollo people, organized traditional weavers to protect Fatu Nausus, a twin-sacred mountain rock, from a mining corporation that had been operating for almost a decade in West Timor. After approximately five years of mineral extraction activities, half of the rocks which contain marbles had been excavated and taken out of the island. These activities reduced water sources, increased poor harvest and malnutrition, massive land grabbing, created segregation and social conflict among families and society.

Facing these destructive impacts, Aleta with local leaders and people fought against powerful mining corporations. During the protests - where many women spent a year sitting on the marble rocks at the mining site, quietly weaving their traditional cloth in protest - the military terrorized them. Yet, they continued their advocacy and movement as they had been raised by an indigenous belief that nature is like human beings: "forest is our hair; water is our blood; land/soil is our flash or body; Stone is our bones".

The women went on with the weaving protests for years with countless terror and violence from the military until they won the battle and companies halted the mining operations. Aleta, representing the local movement, received the Goldman Environmental Prize award in 2013.

Greenpeace, a global independent environmental advocacy network, says that mining poses huge pressure to the environment. Villages being mined tend to experience higher water, soil, and air pollution levels than other villages. Mining activities cause serious damage to local ecosystems, including deforestation and contamination of water sources, threatening the health and livelihoods of residents.

We do not want these calamities to continue to destroy people and their lands. Learning from the Bible reading and indigenous women's bravery, passion and wisdom, we are called to take action to protect the Earth as a safe home for all living creatures.

There are two messages I want to share on this reflection. First, "an educated person must be just, even in thought," by Indonesian novelist Pramudia Ananta Toer. We are reminded to treat the Earth fairly and justly beginning from our mindset. We should not have a greedy, harmful and destructive mindset. Second, our actions must be in line with

our thoughts. It is called integrity. With a new perspective, we will understand clearly God's commands 'to work' and 'to take care' of the Earth. God settled us in a place where we live now which is a "Garden of Eden" as it is surrounded by the beauty of mountains, rivers, forests, oceans, and unique creatures. To work means to labor or to manage responsibly the natural resources that God has provided for us to sufficiently meet our necessities to keep us alive. This work requires our responsibility to sustainably care for nature. When we protect the Earth, we protect life.

PRAYER

Almighty God, we commit to be your agents of justice and peace that bring hope to this suffering world. Every day we witness the destruction of your creatures because of human greed and propensity to create conflict and war. We commit to act right now, even in a small way beginning with ourselves, our family and the community we live in. Please guide and bless us. In the name of God the Creator, of Jesus our Christ and the Holy Spirit our Guide, Amen.



Yuliana M. Benu or Yube is a pastor candidate of the Evangelical Church in Timor (QMIT), Indonesia. Along with her ministry in the church over the past five years, she has worked with grassroots communities focusing on migration, human trafficking, and gender justice. (sekitimor@gmail.com).



SWORDS AND PLOWSHARES

Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:3; Joel 3: 9-10

Ann GARTON, USA

Isaiah and Micah symbolize a future of peace when nations will no longer wage war. Joel presents the opposite view suggesting a time of war. God had told God's 'chosen people' God would help them fight for their land by turning their plowshares into swords!

The United Nations (UN) was established in 1945 after World War II to help provide a peaceful world. Currently there are 193 countries that have pledged to be peace-loving states AND accept the obligations of the UN Charter. The emphasis on War and Peace has been a worldwide concern/dream now that the UN is in place. In 2025 there are 13 Conflicts/Wars on the continents of Africa, Asia and Europe—the most since 1945!

When the UN was established in 1945, the UN Headquarters was built in New York City. The theme of the UN was taken from Isa. 2:4 where it refers to a time of peace when weapons of war (swords) would be transformed into tools for peace (plowshares).

A plowshare has a cutting edge that can turn the soil so crops can be planted and cultivated. The edge of the sword becomes the cutting edge for the plowshare when the iron is beaten with a hammer. Since agriculture occurs during peacetime, the plowshare represents peacetime.

Behind the UN Headquarters Building in the north garden at 760 UN Plaza Manhattan New York is a 9-foot brass sculpture based on the scripture "Let us beat swords into plowshares." This brass sculpture was donated in 1959 by the USSR to the UN.

The sculpture depicts the figure of a nude man holding a hammer aloft in his right hand and a sword in his left hand while he is beating it into a plowshare. This represents the transition of war

into peace reminding us of the biblical prophecy found in Isaiah and Micah.

Humankind has struggled with conflict and war seeking peace since the beginning of time. The Bible addressed it. Worldwide, peoples and nations have tussled with it. We need to be assured that God is always with us providing strength and guidance and assuring us we are never forgotten and alone.

I want to end this meditation in a prayer with the words from the hymn "God of Grace and God of Glory" especially the second stanza:

PRAYER

O God, cure Your children's warring madness: bend our pride to Your control; shame our wanton selfish gladness, rich in things and poor in soul. Grant us wisdom, grant us courage lest we miss Your Kingdom's goal, lest we miss Your Kingdom's goal.

I pray we commit ourselves to seeking God's Peace during times of Conflict. Amen.



Ann Garton lives a good, wonderful life all the time! A Christian who likes music, mysteries, fellowship, family and friendships, she enjoys volunteering and new experiences. She taught science and mathematics. She and her husband traveled to many countries and hiked in and out of the Grand Canyon twice after age 65. They have 6 children followed by grandchildren, greats, and great-greats.

BEYOND THE FRONTIERS OF FEAR: SOWING CHRIST'S PEACE IN NORTHERN BENIN

John 14: 27

Fifamè Fidèle Houssou GANDONOU, Benin

For a long time, Benin was celebrated as an oasis of stability in West Africa. However, in recent years, the face of peace has changed. In our northern regions, the distant echoes conflicts in the Sahelian region have become a daily reality. Families are being displaced, farmers fear for their harvests, and mothers worry about their children's future in the face of rising violent extremism. Fear, like a shadow, attempts to take root in people's hearts.

Recently, I met a woman named Mariam in a camp for displaced persons. She had left everything behind after an armed incursion in her village. Despite losing all her earthly possessions, she held her Bible firmly. She told me: "They took my house, but they could not take the Peace that Christ deposited within me."

Her testimony resonates deeply with Jesus' promise in John 14:27. The world often defines peace as the mere absence of conflict, but Christ's peace is a presence — an inner strength that allows us to remain standing even amid a storm.

Sharing Christ's healing peace in a context of conflict means refusing to give in to hatred. This is what we strive for through our biblical listening groups where, beyond ethnic and religious barriers, we relearn to look at one another with a "Look of

Love" (Regard d'Amour). As agents of peace, we are called to transform our corners of pain into spaces of hope, healing, and reconciliation.

PRAYER

Dear Jesus, Prince of Peace, we entrust to you the populations of Northern Benin and all conflict zones throughout the world. Make us channels of your peace where discord and insecurity reign. Heal hearts bruised by violence and give us the courage to build bridges rather than walls. May your peace, which surpasses all understanding, guard our hearts and minds in You. Amen.



Rev. Dr. Fifamè Fidèle Houssou Gandonou serves as the General Secretary of the Bible Society of Benin. As a theologian and committed leader, she works to strengthen the capacity of local communities through the Word of God, particularly in areas affected by social and security vulnerabilities.



HEALING AND JUSTICE IN AFRICA: ENDING FEMICIDE

Isaiah 53: 4-6; Mark 5:34

Ann KIOI, Kenya

Our God is a God of peace, but not a peace devoid of justice. The prophet Isaiah reminds us that true peace—shalom, wholeness, well-being—is the fruit of righteousness. Where righteousness is absent, peace is elusive, and often, violence flourishes. Femicide, the gender-based killing of women and girls, is a grievous manifestation of unrighteousness, a profound denial of the sacred worth of human life created in God's image.

Across Africa, as in many parts of the world, women and girls live under the shadow of violence, their quietness shattered, their confidence undermined by fear. This is not Christ's peace. Christ's peace is not merely the absence of conflict, but the active presence of justice, healing, and flourishing. It is the peace that brings life to the full (John 10:10), challenging oppressive systems and confronting the darkness with light. To share Christ's healing peace in this context means to actively work for justice, to advocate for the vulnerable, to challenge harmful cultural norms, and to bind up the wounds of those who suffer. It means empowering women and girls to live in safety, dignity, and confidence. It means calling for accountability for perpetrators and fostering communities where every life is cherished and protected.

As followers of Christ, we are called to be instruments of this transformative peace, bringing healing to the brokenhearted and striving for the righteousness that yields true and lasting quietness and confidence for all. And the passage from Mark 5:34 demonstrates the gift of peace Jesus gives (shalom) which is a state of completeness, safety, and wholeness that is a direct result of our faith and right relationship with God.

PRAYER

Gracious God of Justice and Peace, we come before you with heavy hearts, yet with unwavering faith in your boundless love and divine power to heal and transform. We lament the scourge of femicide across Africa, a brutal assault on your image, a profound denial of the sacred worth of every woman and girl. We pray, Merciful God, for an end to femicide. Break the cycles of impunity and grant swift and equitable justice for all victims and their families. Stir the consciences of leaders, communities, and individuals to dismantle the structures and ideologies that permit such atrocities, and to uphold the inherent dignity of all our children.

Almighty God, pour out your healing power upon the wounded hearts of survivors, comfort those who

mourn, and mend the fabric of communities torn apart by violence and grief. Grant them strength and courage to those who stand against injustice, to advocates, activists, and all who bravely speak truth to power.

We pray for the transformation of perpetrators. Soften their hearts and renew their minds renewed and turn their actions towards repentance and restoration. May your Spirit expose the roots of hatred and misogyny, replacing them with reverence for life and respect for all humanity.

Empower your Church in Africa and globally, to be true agents of Christ's healing peace—a peace rooted in righteousness and justice. May we be prophetic voices against injustice, compassionate hands that bind up wounds, and steadfast advocates for the dignity and safety of all women. Inspire us to be sanctuaries of hope, places where healing begins and justice is relentlessly pursued. May your Kin-dom come, and your will be done, especially in the nations of Africa, where women and girls long for quietness and confidence, free from fear and violence. Inspire us to live out the peace you offer that demands justice, reconciliation, and the flourishing of every soul.

We pray all this in the powerful and peacemaking name of Jesus Christ, our Healer and Redeemer. Amen.



Ann Kioi is a member of the Presbyterian church of East Africa (PCEA), and the Director for Gender, Women, Youth and Sustainable Population at the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC). She holds a BA in International Relations, an MA in Gender and Development Studies and currently pursues a PhD in Development Studies at the University of Nairobi.



MANIFESTING CHRIST'S HEALING PEACE THROUGH GENDER JUSTICE

2 Samuel 11:2

Melinda Grace AOANAN, the Philippines

The woman in this text is Bathsheba. Later she is summoned by the king so he could “lay with her” [verse 4]. Clearly, what happened was rape, and because she got pregnant, her husband, who refused to “lay with her” for religious purity reasons, had to be killed.

Many women have endured sexual harassment at least once in their lives. Victims usually do not file formal charges and those who press charges face retaliation like being fired from work, given poor performance evaluations, and treated poorly in general. Clergy are not exempt from committing sexual abuse, but more often than not it is the church hierarchy that protects the abusers, conceals the abuse and dismisses complaints.

Esmeralda [not her real name] was sexually harassed by her boss, their supreme bishop, and just a few months after she began to press charges, she was illegally terminated from work. She filed a case with their church's justice system, which she already considered a big victory, but the case was dismissed for lack of any witnesses. She requested for mental health intervention, but none was given. At first, she would not disclose what happened to her except to her family and closest friends, but when she decided to tell her story, she found out how so many others had similar stories as hers, and many stories even more horrific.

A human rights and gender justice advocate herself, resolved that gender-based violence (GBV) in the church and elsewhere must be eradicated. She knew that the fight comes from a place not of revenge but for peace- and justice-seeking as we are exhorted in 1 Peter 3:9-11.

It is stories like this of Esmeralda's that have emboldened me to start, along with a handful of women, the movement WAGI: Women Against Gender Injustice. In Filipino, “wagi” means to win, to triumph, to overcome. When we saw how prevalent these injustices were within the church, it strengthened our resolve to strategize the fight. We saw there was no support system to go to for survivors of GBV within the church. With WAGI, we felt that we might be able to help mitigate issues and problems like victim-blaming, the survivor keeping silent for fear of retaliation, and the survivor feeling the need to protect the image of the church. Survivors also need to have safe spaces to share their vulnerabilities and experiences and to get help. Importantly for WAGI, mainstreaming gender justice is a vital component of the work for social transformation.

WAGI felt that we must create awareness of these rampant injustices and to create open and safe spaces for survivors to come where we listen to them and believe them. The world needs to know that there are church leaders and church workers who perpetrate GBV and these cases need to be documented. Appropriate responses and mechanisms to address GBV need to be established and we need to stop the church as an enabler of GBV through its silence and manipulations. We need programs and policies on sexual harassment complete with sanctions and implementing rules and procedures. We need more literature like When Pastors Prey (WCC and WSCF) and Liza B. Lamis's Ending Sexual Abuse in the Churches, and to network with like-minded groups and to pool resources together. Most importantly, we need to win! MagWAGI!

PRAYER

As we seek your Peace to reign in all the earth, dear God, we know that you are with us, Immanuel. As we stand in solidarity with the Othered who endure gender-based violence, remind us that we are in solidarity with you. The fact that there is oppression, subordination, exploitation, harassment of women, children, and the Othered just because they are women, children, and the Othered is cause for us to rise and join you in this fight. May we not only turn away from evil but fight it. Bless us as we seek your Kin-dom and pursue it. Amen.



Melinda Grace Aonan dancing the One Billion Rising Dance. The photo was taken on the day Esmeralda was sexually harassed. She is Esmeralda.



JESUS CALMS THE STORM

Mark 4.35-41

Marianna APRESYAN, Armenia

I'm a believer of the Armenian Apostolic Church (Eastern Orthodox Church), and there are several reflections and interpretations about this biblical story in the Orthodox tradition.

When I think about this New Testament story, I identify it with the Christian world globally. The lake is the world, and we are all in the boat of life. This word always faces storms: pandemic, wars, violence, migration, natural disasters, diseases, crises, secularism... And what do we do? What comes first: mind or heart? What do countries and people do for their salvation? Instead of believing that God is with us and we shall rely on God, instead of praying and acting, and hoping for the salvation of the world, the leaders of countries and their followers keep on fighting and destroying.

We are busy with our private lives. People are involved in different activities, and often we forget that God is with us. But when the storm starts, we become panic-stricken, and we are in a hurry to wake up God. However, there is no need to wake God up, because God isn't asleep. God will not let us be destroyed!

What did Jesus say to His disciples?
"Why are you frightened? Do you still have no faith?"

Let us always keep our faith strong, praying and remembering that God is with us all times, wherever we are.

PRAYER

Armenian Blessing

*Keep us in peace, O Christ our God,
Under the protection of Your holy and
venerable cross;*

*Save us from our enemies, visible and
invisible;*

*And count us worthy to glorify You
with thanksgiving,*

With the Father and the Holy Spirit

*Now and forever, world without end.
Amen.*



Dr. Marianna Apresyan is a Doctor of Theology and History. She is the President of the "Christian Women's Forum" NGO in Armenia and one of the Co-presidents of the Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women. She is married and has two children.



LIGHT BEYOND THE WOUND: THROUGH HURT, TOWARD HEALING, RECLAIMING GOD'S HARMONY

Isaiah 26:3; Romans 12:18

Carolyn L. BOYD, USA

In June 2015, during a Bible study at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, nine faithful believers were murdered in an act of racially motivated violence. The sanctuary — a place where scripture was opened and prayers were shared — became the site of unspeakable violation.

Yet, only days later, some family members of the victims stood in a courtroom and spoke words the world did not expect: "I forgive you." These were not shallow or easy words. They did not erase the pain, nor did they excuse the sin. Instead, they revealed a different path — one that refused to be defined by vengeance or consumed by hatred.

In that moment, they bore witness to what Isaiah called perfect peace — the deep, steady peace that comes only from trusting God when trust feels impossible. And they embodied Paul's charge to live at peace "as far as it depends on you," choosing a way that confronted evil without mirroring it.

This is what I call Light Beyond the Wound. War and violence tear at the very fabric of creation, leaving wounds that scar communities, nations, and the shared body of humanity. By this, I mean the deep spiritual and relational connections God wove into creation itself, now frayed and broken by human conflict.

To walk in this way is to face those tears with courage, compassion, respect, and dignity — mending what has been ripped apart so that divine harmony may be restored.

It is not peace as avoidance, nor reconciliation as denial. It is the costly, holy work of moving through the wound, trusting that God's justice and mercy can dwell together, and that the light of peace is stronger than the chains of hatred.

To choose Light Beyond the Wound is to reject the counterfeit wisdom that claims peace comes from domination or silence. It is to stand in the truth that perfect peace is sustained by a steadfast trust in God, and that living at peace with everyone is not a passive hope but an active, daily practice.

This path invites us to listen honestly, speak truth from the heart, and honor the dignity of every person — becoming co-creators with God in healing the world.

PRAYER

*God of perfect peace,
When violence rends the fabric of creation,
keep our minds and hearts steadfast in You.
Give us courage to face the wound without
fear, compassion to see the humanity of all,
and wisdom to mend what hatred has torn.
Teach us to live at peace as far as it depends on
us, rejecting the false comfort of revenge and
embracing the radiant work of reconciliation.
Let our lives bear light beyond the wound,
until justice and mercy meet, and all creation
rests in Your peace.*

*Walking in the Light Beyond the Wound:
Through hurt, toward healing, reclaiming
God's harmony*

In Christ's name, Amen.



Rev. Dr. Carolyn L. Boyd is a pastor in the United Church of Christ, past President of CWU, DC Unit, public theologian, and founder of Radiant Wisdom Theology (RWT), a vision for spiritual wholeness rooted in divine wisdom, harmony, and growth.

She teaches globally through conferences, ecumenical gatherings, and cross-cultural partnerships — in person and online — equipping people in many nations to join her in the emerging movement to live the Light Beyond the Wound, courageously moving through hurt toward healing and reclaiming God's harmony. Revcarolynboyd@outlook.com



WHEN WOMBS LEAP FOR JOY: WOMEN GATHERING ACROSS ALL BOUNDARIES

Luke 1:39-45

Joyce Larko STEINER, Ghana

The story of Mary and Elizabeth is a demonstration of God's abundant grace. The importance of this grace becomes especially profound in situations that are beyond human comprehension – situations like the world faced in the 1950s and '60s.

In 1956, Shanti Solomon of India traveled through Asia on a mission team, hearing stories of violence and trauma from World War II. In Japan, Shanti saw the destruction in Hiroshima from the 1945 atomic bomb dropped by the US military. In the Philippines, women were selling jewelry to rebuild their church, destroyed during Japanese occupation. Shanti herself was denied entry to South Korea due to tense diplomatic relations with India.

Out of this brokenness, Shanti envisioned the Fellowship of the Least Coin – women praying for justice, peace, and reconciliation, giving a least coin with each prayer, creating ripples of healing across the world's divisions. Then in 1967, 125 women from 42 countries gathered in Anderson, Indiana. There, as war raged in Vietnam, something miraculous happened. As the International Committee for the World Day of Prayer was being formed, Shanti shared FLC's vision. Like Mary visiting Elizabeth in the hill country, these two movements recognized God's work in each other. Like the babies in their wombs, they leaped for joy – sister movements born to carry Christ's peace to a world torn by conflict.

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She cried out, "Blessed are you among women!" What a miracle that an unborn baby will leap for joy in the mother's womb! This wasn't just physical movement. It was prophetic witness – the Spirit bearing witness to the Spirit, joy that couldn't be contained.

This is what happens when women gather across boundaries: something leaps to life. For over fifty years, WDP and FLC have walked as sister movements. Both understand that nothing is impossible with God.

May God meet you at the point of your need today; make a way for you where there seems to be no way; and may favor bring you joy beyond measure.

PRAYER

God, we thank you for Shanti Solomon's vision and for every time women have gathered to recognize your work in each other. Open our hearts to recognize your presence, even in the smallest moments, and to respond with uncontainable joy. Fill us with your Holy Spirit, so we may prepare the way for you in the world. Give us joy that leaps in recognition of your peace, and courage to pray for reconciliation even when it seems impossible. Through Christ, who brings peace to all humanity, we pray. Amen.



Joyce Larko Steiner is the Chairperson for the World Day of Prayer International Committee (WDPIC). She previously served as the Africa Regional Representative to WDPIC from 2012-2022. Joyce works at the Christian Council of Ghana as the Director for Programs and Advocacy and is passionate about women's work. Her commitment is to ensure participation of young women at all levels of the ecumenical movement. She is a Counselling Psychologist by profession.



TRUSTING GOD, LIVING THROUGH CONFLICTS AND WARS

Jeremiah 30:17, Jeremiah 33:6, Joel 2: 25-27, Romans 12:21, Matthew 24:6, Mark 13:7

John EDE, Nigeria

Princess was born a refugee and has never returned to her homeland, a country rebuilt on the blood of its citizens. She lives in a refugee camp and has known only displacement. Janet is staying with generous host families in a community in Plateau State, Nigeria. Her village was attacked for the third time - farms were razed, houses burned, and relatives were wounded and killed. Her family fled to a neighbouring community at night with only a few belongings, and later they were attacked a midnight.

sat frail, sick, and deeply traumatized. She showed us a knife mark on her neck from when attackers forced her to convert. She refused and miraculously survived. She is unsure if her husband is still alive after their village in Northeast Nigeria was attacked. She escaped with the children while her husband fled separately to avoid being killed.

The Bible remembers suffering and calls for justice and care. In the Psalms the broken are invited to cry out, and prophets demand that the powerful defend the widow and orphan. Mariam's story echoes the witness of those who keep faith amid exile, trusting that God walks with the displaced. The stories of these women challenge our communities to move from pity to faith in God, to seek peace through justice-making, reconciliation and practical care while at the same time, trusting God for healing and restoration.

PRAYER

O God of mercy, we lift the faces of those who tremble under the shadow of war and conflicts. Grant courage to women like Princess, Janet, and Mariam to rebuild lives from ruins; give wisdom to leaders to choose justice; open the hearts of neighbours to welcome the strangers. Heal the land where conflict has sown bitterness; turn weapons into tools for life. May justice roll like a river and compassion be the law of our streets. Strengthen those who mourn, feed the hungry, and bind the broken-hearted. In hope we commit to work for justice, peace, and in faith we trust your sustaining presence.

May communities across Africa and the world rise to protect the vulnerable, to listen to survivors, and to transform grief into rebuilding. Let churches, leaders, and neighbours work together for restorative justice, education, and healing. May children grow without fear, and may future generations inherit a land renewed by peace, mercy, and shared responsibility. We stand together refusing despair, always onward in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



John Ede is an NGO leader with a background in community development and humanitarian work sharing the love of God to people and neighbouring communities. He combines practical field experience with strategic planning to support displaced populations and strengthen local resilience. John is known for clear communication, collaborative leadership, and a commitment to inclusive, sustainable solutions.



SHARING CHRIST'S HEALING PEACE IN THE WORLD

John 14: 27

Nataliia GOSHYLYK, Ukraine, and Linda DORAN, USA

In the 1960s and during the Vietnam War, as a teenager I felt that we were in an era of volatility for our country. The draft of military service was implemented for young men and many others enlisted for duty in the military services. Truly, I tell you I had ambivalent emotions at that time and no peaceful feelings about all, and of war!

Our loving Christ's scripture about peace opened me to an understanding of how Christ gives his peace. John 14:27, says: Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. This is Christ's love for us, and he set this apart for us, his peace. Our hearts are not to be troubled and to not be fearful.

Ukraine and Russia are at war with each other. I heard poems written by Ukrainian women and girls of their losses during this war. We pray for Christ's healing Peace.

I met Nataliia from Ukraine. Here is Nataliia's Prayer for Ukraine:

PRAYER

I speak for millions of Ukrainians who yearn for peace to break through the darkness shadowing our beloved homeland. When I speak of peace, I speak from the deepest wellspring of our national soul, a soul that has known suffering, yet refuses to be extinguished.

What do we Ukrainians truly want? We want Christ's healing peace — not the peace the world gives, not the peace of surrender. We want the peace John 14:27 promises: peace that does not trouble the heart, that casts out fear. We advocate for peace built on dignity, freedom, and the right to exist in our own land.

Every Ukrainian standing for our Homeland carries courage and hope. This hope is forged in loss, tempered by the tears of people who have written poems and told stories about what this war has stolen from us.

We stand for our Homeland because we love it, and because we believe in Christ's peace, which transcends what any army can take. This peace lives in our hearts even now,

sustaining us, keeping us from despair.

Let our hearts not be troubled. Let us not be afraid. This is the peace Ukraine wants and prays for.

*Боже, Україну бережи! ("God, Save Ukraine".)
Peace for Ukraine. Amen.*



Linda Doran, a member of Church Women United, Inc., seeks Peace as a number one passion with Christ's will. She believes that praying around the world with CWU continues to make a difference in countless ways.

Nataliia Goshylyk, Ph.D. is currently a Lecturer at the Slavic Languages and Literatures Department at UC Berkeley, USA. In 2021, as an Associate Professor of the English Philology Department at Carpathian National University in Ukraine, she came to UC Berkeley for the Fullbright research project. Since the war began in 2022, she has been a relocated scholar residing in California and cofounder/Vice President of the nonprofit "Ukraine Matters". She is a Friend of Church Women United, Inc.



PRIVILEGE BEYOND MONEY

Luke 12:48

Mary Cook JORGENSEN, USA

When we hear the word privilege, our minds often jump to wealth — financial security, luxury, or material possessions. But privilege goes far deeper than money. It can take the form of education, access to opportunity, strong relationships, good health, freedom of movement, or simply being born into a stable environment. Recognizing these other forms of privilege is key to living a life of gratitude and one of great responsibility.

Many of us are privileged in ways we don't always notice or acknowledge. We may have grown up in homes where love was spoken and widely shared, where meals were regular, and where encouragement was freely given. We may have been taught how to manage our emotions, how to think critically, or how to advocate for ourselves. Sadly, these aren't universal experiences — they are privileges.

Scripture reminds us that “every good and perfect gift is from above” (James 1:17), and with those gifts come responsibility. Jesus said in Luke 12:48, “To whom much is given, much will be required.” This means that privilege, in any form, is not meant to be hoarded or ignored. At its very core, it is a stewardship issue. God blesses us so that we can be a blessing to others and share those blessings.

So, how do we live this out? First, we cultivate awareness. We must take time to reflect on the advantages we've been given that others may not have. Maybe it's the ability to speak freely without fear. Maybe it's access to quality healthcare, a safe neighborhood, or simply a support system of people who care. Next, we respond with humility, not guilt. Privilege isn't something to be ashamed of — it's something to be used for good. We must use our voices to speak for the voiceless. Use our education to mentor someone who didn't have the same opportunity. Use our time and energy to serve the vulnerable. Use our influence to open doors for others.

We must recognize our privilege as a gift. Instead of being indifferent in a world that needs all our gifts, let's be people who recognize all that we've been given and

joyfully use it for the good of others and the glory of God.

PRAYER

God, thank you for the privileges we often overlook: the riches of grace, purpose, community, and eternal hope. Help us to see beyond worldly measures of success and recognize the incredible blessings we have in you. May we live humbly, gratefully, and generously with the privilege you've given us. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Mary Jorgenson is an active member of Presbyterian Women (PCUSA) and lives in Kansas City, Missouri, USA. She promotes the FLC through her local and regional Presbyterian Women's organization and Church Women United in Kansas City. She was thrilled to participate in the launch of Shanti Means Peace while serving as Churchwide Moderator for Presbyterian Women. Mary is a retired educator and enjoys retirement with her husband Mark, four children and five grandchildren, and currently serves as ICFLC Treasurer since 2025.



LIVING IN HARMONY
Romans 12:14–16
Laurel PEARCE, Australia

We live in a world where violence seems to be increasing. We hear of wars and rumours of war. We see leaders at every level enforcing their will on others, destroying people in their communities with whom they have a history of conflict.

In our own communities we are constantly hearing of acts of violence. Someone is shot or knifed in the street or shopping centre. Sometimes the offenders are only children.

We see and hear of the horrible impact of domestic violence on people's lives. It seems to be a "me first" world.

In the book of Romans, we are told that love must be sincere and that we are to be devoted to one another. Jesus tells us to love our neighbour as ourselves.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to follow his example of love. As we practice his love, showing kindness, listening and caring, we are on the way to living in harmony.

Let us also live in harmony with the beautiful world God has created and given to us to care for, and nurture.

PRAYER

O God our Creator, help us to be channels of your peace. Amen.



Major Laurel Pearce, a retired Salvation Army officer who lives in Perth, Western Australia, is currently a National Vice President of Australian Church Women and has served two terms as National President.



NOW IS TIME FOR PEACE

Ecclesiastes 3:8

Verlinda HENNING, USA

As I sit writing this morning, it's three days after the United States' bombing of suspected nuclear sites in Iran.

The fog of war and conflict permeates the air everywhere — just as the carefree summer season has started, it feels like we're all trapped in an endless loop of anger and hate. People love differently than we do? People worship in ways that we don't understand? Peoples' skins are a different color than ours? People come from other parts of the world for something they believe they can find in our nation? People don't understand our way of living? People fear authorities we believe are designed to protect us? The kneejerk response is anger and fear, hatred and apprehension — directed to the individuals themselves.

There's rarely a day that goes by without a glaring and blaring headline about a mass shooting incident, a confrontation with law enforcement ending in injury or death, an angry protest, a community gathering, or scathing words coming from the mouths of community, national, and global leaders.

Looking for a scripture reference to include, I kept turning to Ecclesiastes. While many of us (including me) first think of this as the lyrics to "Turn! Turn! Turn!" by The Byrds, this verse speaks about the rhythm of life; more importantly, it doesn't link the concepts of hate and war to individuals or nations, but to behaviors.

What if we looked at war and conflict from the perspective of the writer of Ecclesiastes? There is a time for war against oppression, against discrimination, against greed, against selfishness — and that time is now. As persons of faith, we are called to oppose those forces by the power of love — loving our fellow humans unconditionally, and actively standing for freedom, equality, compassion, and generosity of resources and spirit.

There is a time for peace of mind, heart, and spirit for every one of God's beloved children — and that time is now. As persons of faith, we are called to be peacemakers through sharing our resources of time, finances, and talents to actively bring about God's peace to

places torn by conflict and war.

What might that look like? Working with children to assist them with the supplies needed for learning? Planting a community garden to feed the hungry? Working to prepare adults with skills to enter the workforce? Standing up and with the marginalized in your community? Letting your voice be heard at the local, state, and national levels?

Whatever we do, individually or collectively, may it help bring about the peaceable kingdom here in this time.

PRAYER

Loving God, be with us. Broaden our hearts and minds as we work in your name to bring about your peace on earth. Amen.



Verlinda Henning is a native Memphian and current president of the Memphis and Shelby County Unit of Church Women United, whose faith compels her to be the hands and feet of Christ in her community.

Professionally a human resources and leadership consultant, Verlinda is actively involved in the local community serving as board president of the University District neighborhood coalition, board member of Porter-Leath and the MILE (Memphis Institute for Leadership Education) at the University of Memphis, as well as past president of SHRM-Memphis (Society for Human Resource Management). faithpeoplememphis@gmail.com



WHEN NATIONS DREW BATTLE LINES, WOMEN DREW PRAYER CIRCLES

Isaiah 2:4

Katie REIMER, USA

"Humanity's extremity is your responsibility." These urgent words were part of the very first World Day of Prayer liturgy on March 4, 1927—less than nine years after World War I's guns fell silent.

On that single day, women gathered simultaneously in Austria and Germany, in China and Japan, in India and Burma, in Korea and Syria, across Canada and the United States, in Poland, and throughout South America and Africa. This worldwide prayer was profound in who it brought together: Former enemies. Colonial powers and colonized peoples. Nations whose sons had died in each other's trenches. And women said: We belong to each other. The world's divisions do not define us. We will wade into this river of prayers together.

When the world insisted certain people were enemies, women insisted they were sisters. That first 1927 liturgy revealed a profound truth: war takes many forms. These women prayed not only for world peace but for racial brotherhood/sisterhood, industrial justice, and exploited migrant workers. They understood that violence happens on battlefields and in factories, through unjust laws and economic systems that crush human dignity. This wasn't naïve optimism. It was Spirit-filled resistance.

When World War II threatened to shatter this fragile network, the river of prayer ran underground but never stopped flowing. When authorities banned their gatherings, women met in secret. In 1943, during segregation and lynching in the United States, Georgia Harkness, a white theologian, and Sadie Gray Mays, a Black educator, co-wrote the service together. Women in India, moved by their witness, sent offerings specifically to help Black American children—a circle of love crossing oceans and color lines.

These women were living Isaiah's vision—beating swords into plowshares. Not just transforming literal weapons, but every instrument of division: hatred into love, exploitation into dignity, segregation into solidarity, violence into peace.

PRAYER

Creator God, who formed us in love; Christ Jesus, who showed us the way of peace; Holy Spirit, who empowers us for justice: we join the river of prayer that has flowed for centuries through the voices of faithful women. Open our eyes to see all the forms that violence takes—in weapons and in systems, in hatred and in indifference. Give us boldness to draw circles of prayer that include those the world calls enemies. Transform our hearts until we see every human being as our responsibility, every crisis as our concern. Help us to wage peace when others wage war, to build bridges when others build walls, until your kin-dom comes on earth as it is in heaven. In the name of the Triune God, we pray. Amen.



Katie Reimer is the Executive Director of the World Day of Prayer International Committee (WDPIC). She is a worship leader, theologian, pianist, and teacher who is passionate about creating spaces for connecting to the Divine and building relationships across all that divides. Katie strives to nourish the conditions that allow life to flourish for all of God's creation.



INFORMED PRAYER, PRAYERFUL ACTION: THE HEARTBEAT OF A MOVEMENT

Matthew 6:9-13

Senka Sestak PETERLIN, Croatia

How often have I truly, with awe and conviction, prayed the Lord's Prayer?

The Lord's Prayer has been woven through our World Day of Prayer liturgies since our founding in 1927. I often think of the power of this Lord's Prayer being spoken or sung in over 100 languages on the same day. Each voice is different, yet united.

Saying Our Father is both intimate and powerful. Not just my Father or your Father—but our Father. In those two simple words, we are drawn into a sacred relationship — with God and with one another. When we truly grasp what it means to belong to God, it reshapes everything. It transforms how we live and how we engage with a hurting world. The motto of the World Day of Prayer captures this beautifully: Informed Prayer, Prayerful Action. Simple, but radical. This motto has guided the World Day of Prayer through decades of war, economic crisis, and global upheaval, and it resonates deeply with the history of the Fellowship of the Least Coin. It reminds us that our faith is not passive. It resists both empty action and shallow prayer. Instead, it calls us to live with compassion, understanding, and courage — especially when we face injustice, conflict, or suffering. Informed prayer begins by listening. As women, we often carry the burdens of others. Informed prayer invites us to listen closely to those stories — not just to headlines, but to the hearts behind them. It means opening our eyes to the world's brokenness and lifting it all before God, trusting God sees, hears, and cares.

When we pray Thy kingdom come, we are longing for a world where peace and justice take root. What does that look like in our lives? Maybe it's reconciliation in a strained relationship, a quiet act of generosity, or a decision to speak up. No action is too small. Like the widow who gave her two coins, what we offer in faith is precious to God.

When we say Thy will be done, we're not just reciting a line — we're making a choice. Jesus didn't give us words for ritual, but a guide for living. He invites us to join Him in bringing healing, hope, and restoration.

I ask myself: Am I willing to let God's will shape my day, my decisions, my heart? Where is God calling me to embody this prayer?

Informed Prayer, Prayerful Action is a heartbeat of faith moving through generations — through World Day of Prayer and Fellowship of the Least Coin. Women who pray with open hearts and act with open hands, rooted in love for our Father, trusting God's power to heal, redeem, and restore.

PRAYER

Our God, I believe that your kingdom is already breaking into the world. May your kingdom come through me today — through my words, my choices, and my actions. I know that my small acts of faithfulness matter to you. Show me your will. Let your peace flow through me to others. Amen.



Senka Sestak Peterlin is serving a second term as European Regional Representative for the World Day of Prayer International Committee (WDPIC). She is also the president of WDP Croatia and has been involved with WDP for fifteen years. Senka's areas of interest encompass visual arts, literature, and Christian theology. She is deeply passionate about these disciplines and continually seeks to explore them in both theoretical and practical ways. She is particularly interested in finding meaningful connections between these disciplines, striving to integrate them into a creative expression of thought and faith. Senka writes book reviews, articles, and short stories.



A RIGHTEOUS REMINDER

Micah 6:8

Peggy LINDSEY-OWENS, USA

This text is a powerful reminder of what God expects of us. The prophet Micah delivers God's message of judgement to the leaders of Israel. He also reminds them of their sins and speaks specifically about how the leaders have taken advantage of the people. Currently, in the USA, our values, our beliefs, our practices, and our integrity are challenged in an unusual way. The current culture has created internal and external conflict in our country and among God's people. However, the prophet reminds us of God's expectations. The expectations are Equity, Justice and Love. Therefore, I submit to you that we must continue the journey in advocating for Equity and Justice in our communities. Equity is a process, where we are intentionally creating the conditions for all people, particularly those who are historically marginalized- people of color and those live in poverty and below the poverty level. Equity also recognizes that due to racial or social status some communities need more help than others need to achieve the same outcomes.

Justice means the fair treatment of historically marginalized communities to ensure their thriving and healing through generations. It is the concept of moral rightness. Doing the right thing. As Christians, we need to model the Creator of the Universe, the one who created you and me in God's image and likeness. The One whose attributes are love, kindness, generosity, forgiveness, mercifulness, righteousness, holiness and justice. Micah 6:8 tells us to act justly, to love mercifully and to walk humbly before God.

How do we act justly? When Diversity Equity Inclusion (DEI) programs are being cut and there are attempts to erase the history of African Americans and people of color, we must organize our churches and communities to teach and to provide DEI learning opportunities for our children, youth and adults.

How do we act justly? Five years ago, COVID -19 exposed the numerous inequities and injustices in various government systems (health, education, housing, law enforcement) and now five years later, we have the 47th President of the USA dismantling and removing those systems which will increase the disparities among people of color and those marginalized communities. We act justly by

providing scholarships to our students, by supporting and encouraging our children to attend HBCUs. By establishing and supporting minority-owned businesses.

How do we act justly? Amid the recent school shootings, ongoing war in Ukraine, Israel and Gaza, cutting of federal programs (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Medicaid), we act by showing love, compassion, sharing human and financial resources, creating food banks in food desert communities, establishing learning labs and tutoring programs in our churches and faith-based organizations.

PRAYER

Dear God, teach us to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly beside you as we commit to do your work here in this world. Thank you for reminding us that you are a righteous and just God. Amen.



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LOVE YOUR ENEMY

Matthew 5: 43-48
Aline TAHAZIAN, Lebanon

I woke up today to a video of an Iranian woman filming bombs descending on her own town. She did not know it would be the last thing she would ever see; she did not know it would be the final act of her life. In a single, silent moment, her world- and life- ended.

For too long, the search for peace in the Eastern Mediterranean and the surrounding areas has been a journey of unrest. We, both living within the area and those watching from afar, have long argued over who the "enemy" is. We ask: Who is right? Who is wrong? Who deserves our support? And who does not?

Yet, as a woman living in this region I ask, what good has "finding a side" done so far? What good has the tally of blame achieved in the face of such violence?

For countless years,
Women still shed tears,
Shed tears for a lost son,
Or tears for a lost daughter.
For a husband, or a brother,
A sister, mother, father.
Tears for a friend,
Or a nearby neighbor.
Tears of pain, fear, and hunger:
Hunger to feed, hunger to nurture,
Hunger to end this ancient malice,
Hunger for reconciliation, peace, and justice.
Our Savior God has long seen our grief and has known our hearts. God knew that blame and anger are not the answers to a broken world. This is why God spoke the unthinkable:
"You have heard the law that says, 'Love your neighbor' and hate your enemy. But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!"

Love has always been, and will always be, the answer. This love that Jesus mentions is not "eros" (romantic desire), nor is it "philia" (the friendship we feel for those like us). It is "agape"- the selfless sacrificial love of the Divine for all creation.

Agape does not wait for the "enemy" to change before it offers a prayer. It is the love that seeks the well-being of the "other" simply because they are a child of God. It is a love that refuses to take sides in war and chooses

to take the side of humanity. It is the kind of love that prays for the neighbor; the kind of love that prays for the other - the "other" who does not think like me, the other who does not share the same belief as me, the "other" who I identify as the enemy.

We pray for the "other" to meet with Christ, we pray for the Spirit to touch their hearts. We pray for hope, peace, faith, and love. Above all, we pray for God's Kingdom to come!

PRAYER

Our God and Creator,
The source of all love and wisdom.
Help us see all as your children,
Created, like us, in your image.

Help us realize "the other" is not just a number,
But a precious child You have died for.
Help us love all, as you have loved us.

May reconciliation, peace, and justice
Reign over us all. May your Kingdom Come,
Amen.



Aline Tahazian holds a Master of Arts in Christian Education. She is the Social Media and Children's Ministry Coordinator for the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East. Aline hosts a Christian podcast in Western Armenian called AVELI podcast, works as a Bible teacher in an Evangelical school, and creates Christian content for children. Aline has represented the Middle East Conference of Churches (MECC) since 2025.

