

Thursday Prayer 19 October 2023 at 10.30am

NB for those of you who will be joining on zoom, please have a pen and paper handy to jot something down.

Join Zoom Meeting

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Meeting ID: 898 4717 0351

Passcode: 201420

Focus: Dreams? Or Praying with Hope in a Troubled World? – Sue Claydon

Call to Worship

God of love and peace

We gather in your house

God of every nation

We meet to hear your word

God who welcomes friend and stranger

We meet as one in your presence.

Today finds us in the middle of the Week of Prayer for World Peace. This is the 49th year of this interfaith event. Those of you in the Cathedral will receive a copy of the Prayer Resource and those at home can email wpwp21@yahoo.com to get an electronic copy or to be sent a hard copy.

“Where people are praying for peace the cause of peace is strengthened by their very act of prayer, for they are themselves becoming immersed in the spirit of peace.” wrote George Macleod, founder of the Iona Community. He was one of a number of faith leaders who in 1974 signed A Call to Prayer for World Peace. They wrote “Believing that God is calling us to pray with new purpose and deeper understanding for peace and justice among all people, we invite our fellow believers of all faiths to join in a WEEK OF PRAYER FOR WORLD PEACE”.

So today we join our prayers with so many others for peace.

This year the theme of the WPWP is ‘Praying with hope in a troubled world’. When we look at the news and hear of all the terrible things going on in our world, it is easy to lose hope. One of things Christians are charged with is to have hope, and so I encourage you to keep praying for peace in all areas. Because of this our prayers today will take a slightly different approach.

One of the daily topics this year fits well with our MU objective -FAMILIES - *for those in areas of conflict and those who are displaced.*

God, please protect those who have fled their homes, especially children, the elderly, and people who are disabled, as they are among the most vulnerable. We ask in Your name to restore communities, re-unite families and repair this country. **Amen** Venezuelan refugee (World Vision)

The Mothers’ Union Thursday Prayer, we say together:

Heavenly Father, you have called us apart to share in a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer. Take our prayers, we humbly ask, fill them with your love and power, and use them in the cause of your glorious kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Reading - Isaiah 2:4

He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Reflection and activity

Sixty years ago on the 28 August 1963, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. gave one of the most iconic speeches of modern times. Its title was 'I have a dream'. He had been using the word 'dream' in many of his speeches to inspire people to work for justice. The most famous line from this speech is "*I have a dream that my children one day will not be judged by the colour of their skin, but by the content of their character. I have a dream.*"

He went on to work in many ways to achieve his dream of equality for all. Today many people dream about a better world and those dreams often include peace.

I would like you to think about what your dreams for peace can be.

- a dream for yourself
- a dream for your family/school/community/group
- a dream for the world

Think about what you can do to make these dreams come true.

ACTIVITY

We all seem to have unreachable ideals, but if we don't give up we shall eventually make our dreams come true." Jane Goodall.

Another significant anniversary, and much older, is the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Anti-Slavery Society in 1823. The aim was to abolish slavery in the British Empire. This objective was substantially achieved in 1838. There have been various mergers and now it is known as Anti-Slavery International. One of the founders was Thomas Clarkson of Wisbech. It is the oldest human rights organisation in the world and continues to work to bring about peace to those who are caught up in trafficking and other forms of modern slavery.

The tenacity of the men and women who worked to end the Slave Trade is an inspiration to us all. So, when we are 'dreaming of peace' let us remember how hard it was for them.

I would now like to read you the words of a song written by Sue Gilmurray, who lived for many years here in Ely.

The Tide Turns

It used to be normal
To buy and sell people,
To use them as cattle to exploit or to kill,
As long as their skin was
A different colour,
And some even said that this was God's holy will.
And any who spoke against slavery's evils
Was told "You're a fool, that's just the way the world's made."
But some had the vision,
And some had the courage
To work all their lives to see the end of that trade.
And then the tide turned,
A new light dawned in people's mind
As the tide turned,
Although the change seemed slow,

And so the world learned
A lesson for all human kind
As the tide turned,
And freedom could start to grow.

Today it is normal
To justify warfare,
In spite of its evils that are clear to be seen,
To talk as if missiles
Were agents of justice,
And slaughtering thousands could be noble and clean.
The minds of the leaders seem closed to all reason,
The weapons they wield could put the whole world to death.
We talk of a vision
Of peace for our children,
And who is to say that we are wasting our breath?
Because the tide turns,
A new light dawns in people's mind
As the tide turns,
Although the change seems slow,
And so the world learns
A lesson for all humankind
As the tide turns,
And peace can start to grow.

Hymn: Make me a channel of your peace

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 is doubt true faith in You

Make me a channel of your peace
Where there is despair in life let me bring hope
Where there is darkness only light
And where there's sadness ever joy

Oh, Master grant that I may never seek
So much to be consoled as to console
To be understood as to understand
To be loved as to love with all my soul

Make me a channel of your peace
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned
It is in giving to all men that we receive
And in dying that we are born to eternal life

Oh, Master grant that I may never seek
So much to be consoled as to console
To be understood as to understand
To be loved as to love with all my soul

Make me a channel of your peace
Where there's despair in life let me bring hope
Where there is darkness only light
And where there's sadness ever joy

The Mothers' Union Prayer: We say together:

Loving Lord, we thank you for your love so freely given to us all.

We pray for families around the world.

Bless the work of the Mothers' Union as we seek to share your love through the encouragement, strengthening and support of marriage and family life.

Empowered by your Spirit, may we be united in prayer and worship, and in love and service, reach out as your hands across the world.

In Jesus' name. Amen

Prayers

We begin today with a prayer for the 2,500 MU member in the Sudan who have been coping with a war situation since April.

Lord we pray for our Members in Sudan and for all the Sudanese people. Open the eyes and hearts of the warring factions to move them to peace. **We ask this in your name.**

As we pray for our troubled world, we cannot forget the ordinary people of Israel and Palestine. Your 'holy' Land is not holy. Bring to the peace that it desperately needs on all sides and with that peace reconciliation, dear Lord. **We ask this in your name.**

We pray for all who work to promote the aims of the Mothers Union at Communion, Provincial, Diocesan and Branch levels. **We ask this in your name.**

We remember our MU link Dioceses and Kigali and Velore and all who work in them to bring peace and justice to their areas. **We ask this in your name.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

A Blessing

Loving God,

Fill us with your Spirit now.

Help us to be curious about others' stories — listening as often as we speak.

Give us the courage to be present — engaging our whole and unique selves.

Inspire us to reimagine what's possible — finding hope by glimpsing you at work.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Go in peace,

as God's people of peace

May our words and actions

build your peace.

And may we each know your peace

in times of joy and trouble

In the week ahead

The Grace