

Interfaith Prayer Service for Peace



New Year's Day 2024

Welcome to Pax Christi's 2024 Interfaith Prayer Service for Peace

Opening song: *This is My Song (Finlandia)*

Lighting the Gathering Candle: O blessed God, God of light. As we light this candle, we are mindful of your love for us, and our faith in You. We ask you to help us be a light in this world for You.

Sharing the Beatitudes: *Matthew 5:1-16*

When Jesus saw his ministry drawing huge crowds, he climbed a hillside. Those who were apprenticed to him, the committed, climbed with him. Arriving at a quiet place, he sat down and taught his climbing companions. This is what he said....:

Reader: "Blessed are the poor in spirit,

ALL: ...for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Reader: Blessed are those who mourn,

ALL: ...for they will be comforted.

Reader: Blessed are the meek,

ALL: ...for they will inherit the earth.

Reader: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,

ALL: ...for they will be filled.

Reader: Blessed are the merciful,

ALL: ...for they will be shown mercy.

Reader: Blessed are the pure in heart,

ALL: ...for they will see God.

Reader: Blessed are the peacemakers,

ALL: ...for they will be called sons and daughters of God.

Reader: Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,

ALL: ... for the reign of God will be theirs.



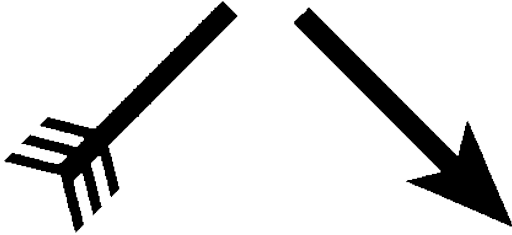
The Labels We Carry – A short video proverb.



A Hindu Peace Prayer

I desire neither earthly kingdom,
nor even freedom from birth and death.
I desire only the deliverance from grief of all those
afflicted by misery.
Oh Lord, lead us from the unreal to the real;
From darkness to light;
from death to immortality.
May there be peace in celestial regions.
May there be peace on earth.
May the waters be appeasing.

May herbs be wholesome and may trees and plants bring peace to all.
May all beneficent beings bring peace to us.
May your wisdom spread peace all through the world.
May all things be a source of peace to all and to me.
Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti (Peace, peace, peace).



A First Nations Prayer for Peace (Anishinabek)

We are blessed by you Lord,
you who connects all being.
We are blessed by you Sun,
you give us light and strength.
We are blessed by you Moon,
you teach us the importance of reflection.
We are blessed by you Land and Water
your circulation supports our living.
As we are blessed, we bless others.
As we are loved, we love others.
As we are healed, we heal others.
As we are related to you, we are related to one another.
Help us all now,
Sing to us all now,
Repair us all now,
Bring peace to all our souls O Lord.

A Bahai Prayer for Peace

Be generous in prosperity, and thankful in adversity.
Be fair in thy judgement, and guarded in thy speech.
Be a lamp to those who walk in darkness, and a home to the stranger.
Be a light to the blind, and a guiding light to the feet of the erring.
Be a breath of life to the body of humankind,
a dew to the soil of the human heart,
and a fruit upon the tree of humility.

This Great Human Garden *by New Creation*

**Let all associate therefore
In this great human garden
Even as flowers grow and blend together,
Side by side**

Love ye all religions
And all races with a
Love that is true
True and sincere
And show that love through deeds
And show that love

**Let all associate therefore
In this great human garden
Even as flowers grow and blend together,
Side by side**



The Tongue of Grandeur
 Hath, however, in the day of his manifestation,
 Proclaimed it is not
 his to boast who loveth his country
 But it is his who loveth
 Who loveth the world

Interlude

Love ye all religions
 And all races with a
 Love that is true
 True and sincere
 And show that love through deeds
 And show that love

**Let all associate therefore
 In this great human garden
 Even as flowers grow and blend together,
 Side by side**

**Even as flowers grow and blend together,
 Side by side...by side**



Lyrics taken from the sacred writings of the Baha'i Faith

THE LORD'S PRAYER *(Translated from the original Aramaic)*

Abwûn

**"Oh Thou, from whom the breath of life comes,
 who fills all realms of sound, light, and vibration.**

Nethkâdasch schmach

May Your light be experienced in my utmost holiest.

Têtê malkuthach.

Your Heavenly Domain approaches.

Nehwê tzevjânach aikâna d'bwasmâja af b'arha.

Let Your will come true - in the universe just as on earth.

Hawvlân lachma d'sûnkanân jaomâna.

Give us wisdom for our daily need,

Waschboklân chaubên wachtahên aikâna daf chnân schwoken l'chaijabên.

Detach the fetters of faults that bind us, like we let go the guilt of others.

Wela tachlân l'nesjuna

Let us not be lost in superficial things,

ela patzân min bischa.

but let us be freed from that what keeps us off from our true purpose.

Metol dilachie malkutha wahaila wateschbuchta l'ahlâm almîn.

**From You comes the all-working will, the lively strength to act, the song that beautifies all and renews itself
 from age to age.**

Amen.

Sealed in trust, faith, and truth. Amen.





A Muslim Prayer for Peace

In the name of Allah, the beneficent, the merciful:
Praise be to the Lord of the Universe who has created us and made us into tribes and nations, that we may know each other, not that we may despise each other.
If the enemy incline towards peace, do thou also incline towards peace, and trust in God, for the Lord is the one that heareth and knoweth all things.
And the servants of God, Most Gracious, are those who walk on the Earth in humility, and when we address them, we say "PEACE."

A Jewish Prayer for Peace

May we merit to bring about the day when war and bloodshed cease, and a great peace embraces the whole universe.
"No nation will lift up a sword to another, and the art of war will no longer be studied." (Isaiah 2:4)
May we live to see the leaders of all the nations inspired to do good with their peoples and with all other peoples of the world, bringing about the fulfillment of the Scriptural blessing,
"I will bring peace to the Earth, and you will lie down with no one to terrify you, and I will bring calm to all vicious creatures on Earth, and the sword will no longer pass in your Land." (Leviticus 26:6)
Let knowledge fill the Earth as water fills the ocean, and let all people of all ethnicities, races, beliefs, genders and orientations enjoy true equality, security, safety and livelihood, in a true spirit of co-existence and cooperation.
And let us say, Amen.



A PRAYER FOR PEACE IN ISRAEL AND PALESTINE:

"They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain..." -Isaiah 11:9

(Reader #1): God of Comfort,

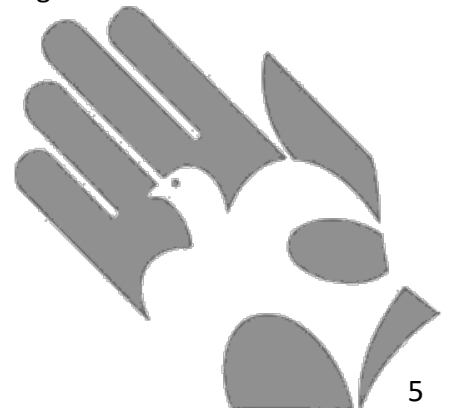
send your Spirit to encompass all those whose lives are torn apart by violence and death in Israel and Palestine.
You are the Advocate of the oppressed and the One whose eye is on the sparrow.
Let arms reach out in healing, rather than aggression. Let hearts mourn rather than militarize.

(Reader #2): God of Justice,

give strength to those whose long work for a just peace might seem fruitless now. Strengthen their resolve.
Do not let them feel alone. Show us how to support their work and bolster their courage.
Guide religious leaders to model unity and reconciliation across lines of division.
Guide political leaders to listen with their hearts as they seek peace and pursue it.
Help all people choose the rigorous path of just peace and disavow violence.

(Reader #1): God of Love,

we lift up Palestine and Israel - its people, its land, its creatures.
War is a monster that consumes everything in its path.
Peace is a gift shared at meals of memory with Christians, Muslims, and Jews.
Let us burn incense, not children. Let us break bread, not bodies.
Let us plant olive groves, not cemeteries.
We beg for love and compassion to prevail on all your holy mountains.





(Reader #2): God of Hope,

we lift up the cities of the region:

Gaza City and Tel Aviv, Ramallah and Ashkelon, Deir El Balah and Sderot,
so long divided, yet so filled with life and creativity.

Come again to breathe peace on your
peoples that all may recognize you.

(Reader #1): God of Mercy,

even now work on the hearts of combatants

to choose life over death, reconciliation over retaliation, restoration over destruction.

Help us resist antisemitism in all its forms, especially in our own churches.

All people, Israelis and Palestinians, deserve to live in peace and unafraid,
with a right to determine their future together.

(Reader #2): God of the Nations,

let not one more child or elder be sacrificed on altars of political expediency.

Keep safe all people from unjust leaders who would exploit vulnerability for their own
distorted ends.

Give wise discernment to those making decisions to pursue peace.

Provide them insight into fostering well-being, freedom, and thriving for all.

Teach all of us to resolve injustices with righteousness, not rockets.

Guard our hearts against retaliation, and give us hearts for love alone.

(Reader #1): Strengthen our faith in you, O God of All Flesh,

even when we don't have clear answers,

so that we may still offer ourselves nonviolently for the cause of peace.

- Rose Marie Berger

EVERYONE: Amen.

THE PEACE POEM (*words and music*)

Taking Sides

Left Side: Today I am taking sides.

Right Side: I am taking the side of Peace.

Left Side: Peace, which I will not abandon
even when its voice is drowned out
by hurt and hatred,
bitterness of loss,
cries of right and wrong.

Right Side: I am taking the side of Peace
whose name has barely been spoken
in this winnerless war.



Left Side: I will hold Peace in my arms,
and share my body's breath,
lest Peace be added
to the body count.

Right Side: I will call for de-escalation
even when I want nothing more
than to get even.
I will do it
in the service of Peace.

Left Side: I will make a clearing
in the overgrown
thicket of cause and effect
so Peace can breathe
for a minute
and reach for the sky.

Right Side: I will do what I must
to save the life of Peace.
I will breathe through tears.
I will swallow pride.
I will bite my tongue.
I will offer love
without testing for deservingness.

ALL TOGETHER: So don't ask me to wave a flag today
unless it is the flag of Peace.
Don't ask me to sing an anthem
unless it is a song of Peace.
Don't ask me to take sides
unless it is the side of Peace.



VOW OF NONVIOLENCE

Recognizing the violence in my own heart, yet trusting in the goodness and mercy of God, I vow to practice the nonviolence of Jesus who taught us in the Sermon on the Mount:

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons and daughters of God...You have learned how it was said, 'You must love your neighbor and hate your enemy,' but I say to you, 'Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you. In this way, you will be daughters and sons of your Creator in heaven.'"

I vow to carry out in my life the love and example of Jesus:



- ❖ by striving for peace within myself and seeking to be a peacemaker in my daily life;
- ❖ by refusing to retaliate in the face of provocation and violence;
- ❖ by persevering in nonviolence of tongue and heart;
- ❖ by living conscientiously and simply so that I do not deprive others of the means to live;
- ❖ by actively resisting evil and working nonviolently to abolish war and the causes of war from my own heart and from the face of the earth.

God, I trust in Your sustaining love and believe that just as You gave me the grace and desire to offer this, so You will also bestow abundant grace to fulfill it. Amen.

As we close this prayer service, we recognize the powerful challenges that we face in creating the world of peace with justice that we all desire. May our coming together here today remind us that we are not alone, and that together, we will and ARE making a difference.

Closing Song:

Brighter Day – by Michael Franti

Don't give up when your heart is weary
Don't give up when your eyes are teary
Don't give up when your voice is trembling
When your life needs mendin'
Don't give up when the hurt is near you
Don't give up when the world seems to be broken
I'm still hopin' with my heart open,
For a brighter day

Don't give up when your pride is bruised and
Don't give up when you fear you're losin'
Don't give up in your darkest hour
'Cause you got that power
Don't give up when you feel divided
Don't give up, I'll be by your side unbroken
I'm still hopin' with my heart open,
For a brighter day

And if you stay with me
I will stay with you
For a brighter day

Don't give up, you just keep on fightin'
Don't give up, you just keep on fightin'
Don't give up, you just keep on fightin'
Even when your eyes are cryin'

Don't give up, you just keep on fightin'
Don't give up, you just keep on fightin'
(Don't give up) even when your eyes are cryin', yeah
For a brighter day

And if you stay with me, I will stay with you
For a brighter day
Don't give up, you just keep on fightin'
For a brighter day

Don't give up, you just keep on fightin'
For a brighter day

Don't give up on equality
Don't give up on peace
Don't give up on people
Don't give up on the planet
Don't give up on a brighter day
DON'T GIVE UP.

