

Welcome to



A Space to Be

November 2021 Shalom - Peace

On this Remembrance weekend
find a quiet place to meditate, to pray & be.

Maybe looking out to the garden or sitting in your favourite chair.

As you come to prayer now, pause and be still; breathe slowly
and become aware of God's presence with you right now.

You might like to light a candle.

*Almighty God, You are my 'ever present help in times
of trouble' (Ps 46:1).*

*Speak with me now as I spend this time with You.
May Your presence be peace to me, Your promises
fuel faith in me, and Your purpose be fulfilled in me.*

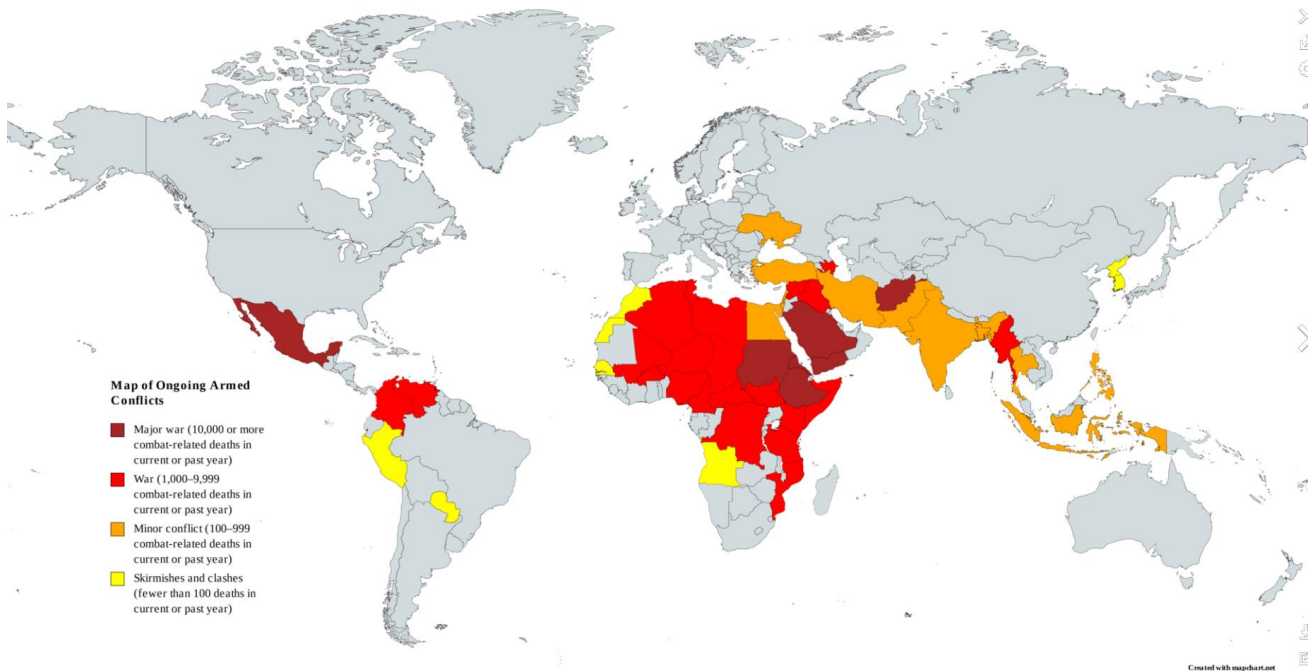
Amen

Peace in our world

Take time to remember all those who lost their lives in the two world wars.

Tools of death are still being used all over the world today.

According to Wikipedia there are 23 wars happening right now, which have resulted in tens of thousands of deaths in the past year alone.



A total of over 100,000 deaths have happened so far this year in the 4 areas of major conflict: Afghanistan, the Mexican drug wars, Yemen, and Tigray (Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sudan). Other wars are happening in 19 other countries including Myanmar, Colombia, Iraq, Syria and in many parts of Africa.

Prayer

Choose just one of these conflicts, and even if your prayers feel simple and inadequate say...

*God of Shalom, end this war - bring Your justice and peace to the nations.
Amen.*

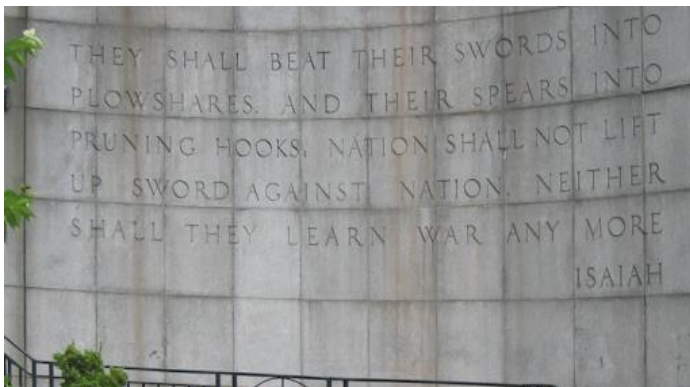
Mark on the map one country that you will commit to pray for on a regular basis.

Write the name of the country here as a sign of your promise to pray:

Many peoples will come and say,
'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
to the temple of the God of Jacob.
He will teach us his ways,
so that we may walk in his paths.'
The law will go out from Zion,
the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.
He will judge between the nations
and will settle disputes for many peoples.
They will beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks.
Nation will not take up sword against nation,
nor will they train for war any more.
Come, descendants of Jacob,
let us walk in the light of the Lord.
Isaiah 2:3-5



In New York, near the United Nations, there is a park named after Ralph Bunche, the first African-American to win a Nobel peace prize. His life was dedicated to working for peace in the Middle East. In this park is the Isaiah wall, which is inscribed with the promise that there will be a day when our world will not 'train for war any more.'



**Gun Sculpture at
United Nations
New York.**

A sculpture depicting a revolver with a knot in its barrel on display on the plaza outside the United Nations headquarters in New York.
by Mark Williamson



Ralph Bunche wrote: "This idea is startling and beautiful to me: even though humanity can work for peace, ultimately it can only come through Jesus and his return. There will be a time when His presence brings peace to the whole earth."

*Because of God's tender mercy,
the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us,
to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
and to guide us to the path of peace.*
Luke 1:78-79 (NLT)

Peace around us

Prayer

Dear Lord,

I pray that You would begin in my heart a work of peace. It's easy to look outside at the places of war and division and ignore my own battles. I pray that I would rest in the peace of knowing Your presence in my life today.

I think of a particular place of dispute or conflict, in my own home, in my wider community, or in my nation. I pray that You would show me how to build bridges, how to bring healing, and how to speak peace over the places of division that I might encounter.

I am reminded of the importance of walking in the paths of the Lord. I think of the many distractions that pull my heart and mind, my time and attention away from walking in the way of Jesus.

Holy Spirit, I pray that You will reveal to me the radiant presence of Jesus, walking with me on the paths of my daily life. I repent of the places where I have allowed distractions and discouragement to divert me. Refocus my attention on the light of Your presence today.

I imagine my week ahead with paths leading in different directions. I think about the places I will go and the people I will meet.

Holy Spirit, show me how to share the blessing of Your presence with those who feel You are absent.

God, I ask You to make clear to me the paths and choices that will lead to the peace of Your presence.

Amen.

The Lord said to Moses, 'Tell Aaron and his sons, "This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them:

*"The Lord bless you
and keep you;
the Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
the Lord turn his face towards you
and give you peace."*

'So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.'

Numbers 6:22-27

The deep desire of God is that you would receive His blessing.

Look for His favour in your life and the deep peace and shalom wholeness of His presence.

Shalom of creation

Isaiah describes the future reign of a righteous and just leader, a descendant of King David, whose rule will bring peace to all of creation...

*The wolf will live with the lamb,
the leopard will lie down with the goat,
the calf and the lion and the yearling together;
and a little child will lead them.
The cow will feed with the bear,
their young will lie down together,
and the lion will eat straw like the ox.
The infant will play near the cobra's den,
and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest.
They will neither harm nor destroy
on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.
In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the
nations will rally to him, and his resting-place will be glorious.*
Isaiah 11:6-10

Isaiah's words contain echoes of Eden; a creation without violence. His vision anticipates a future world where the last enemy, death, has been defeated (1 Cor 15:26). On that day, the day Jesus' kingdom comes in all its fullness, predators and prey will live together in peace. Humanity and all of creation will know shalom with God and with each other.

Prayer

Jesus, Your vision for the earth is so much greater than anything I could imagine or make reality. I recommit my life to following You, my God and my King. I repeat the ancient prayer of Your Church, 'Maranatha - Come Lord Jesus' (Rev. 22:20)

Lord, we are the people who carry Your personal presence by the Holy Spirit. Fill us up and send us out to open the eyes of others to Your presence today.

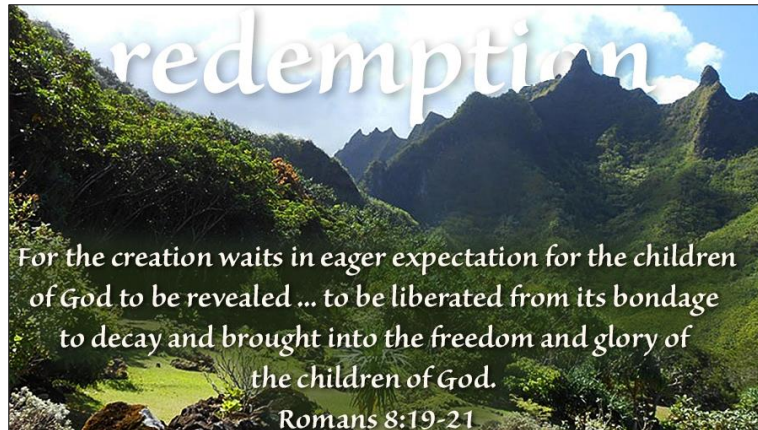
Theologian Tom Wright comments that, 'It looks as though God intends to flood the universe with himself; as though the universe, the entire cosmos, was designed as a receptacle for his love.'

We long for the day when everyone, everywhere knows who God is and what Jesus has done for them.

*...the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.*

Habakkuk 2:14

Peace with creation



The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Colossians 1:15-20

This is quite a declaration: Jesus' blood shed on the cross has brought about the reconciliation of all things to God! We too often narrow salvation down to being only about people and forget the wider view of reconciliation we are given in the Bible.

The Christian faith is not about escaping from the wider creation, but about discovering God's purposes for all that he has made, and then joyfully joining in.

Prayer

Lord, I am amazed when I consider that the created order has been made in and for You; this whole cosmos finds its meaning and purpose in You! Expand my vision of who You are, and help me to see the world as You do.

Lord of All Creation, as COP26 concludes, I recognise I also share responsibility for this world for which you died. May I be humble and wise in my actions and decisions.

Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

1 John 3:18

Peace in God's Word

This poem, likely written by David, speaks of the great beauty and wholeness we find in the Word of God...

Great peace have those who love your law,
and nothing can make them stumble.

I wait for your salvation, Lord,
and I follow your commands.

I obey your statutes,
for I love them greatly.

I obey your precepts and your statutes,
for all my ways are known to you.

Psalm 119:165-168

Today society is hungry for freedom. People are tempted to live for their own pleasure and desires.

The Psalmist writes about the great peace and freedom we can find when we know and love the instruction of God. True freedom calls us to true obedience. In freedom we are invited to follow the God who loves us enough to make all of His ways known.

Prayer

Father, I thank You that You know all of my ways and my thoughts even before I think them. I pray You would give me a greater love for Your word, a greater trust to wait for Your salvation, and a deeper desire for genuine obedience to You. I pause now and ask You to fill me with Your shalom; Your life-giving joy and freedom. Strengthen my heart to follow You today. Amen.

Pray for those who have experienced God's law as old, cold, dead, or boring. Ask God to revive His healing word in their life today.

The Psalmist speaks so personally, intimately, and tenderly of his relationship with God's law. Sometimes we can be frustrated by the limitations of the law, confused by the language of the Bible, or we try to carry the burden of the law.

Prayer

Thank God for the work of Jesus, who carried the full weight of the law on our behalf, and for His life, death, and resurrection which give us true freedom.

Lord Jesus, Yours is the voice that brings peace, freedom and life. There is far more danger in me ignoring Your words than in obeying them. Give me courage to obey You today, come what may.

Jesus, I repent of the times I have doubted Your goodness and kindness. Amen.

Peace with God

Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory.

We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.

Romans 5:1-5 (NLT)

Paul says, we have peace with God. Not we *can* have peace or we *might* have peace, but we have peace - shalom, wholeness, completeness.

We have hope too, and this hope doesn't disappoint, because it is rooted in the unfailing, unconditional love of God.

So, we have peace, we have hope and we have love. These aren't the only things that we have, because Paul also says that we will have problems and trials. He says that we can rejoice in the midst of these problems and trials, not just when they're over. These problems and trials do not produce rejoicing; but they cannot prevent rejoicing.

In these verses, Paul summarises our relationship with all three persons of the Trinity. We have peace with God because Jesus has brought us into this place; it's undeserved, and it's a privilege. We know love because God has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with love.

Prayer

Heavenly Father... Jesus, Son of God... Holy Spirit... thank You.

What can I say but thank You for the undeserved privilege of being made right with You and experiencing peace with You.

I did nothing, and You did everything.

I have nothing, and You give everything.

I come to You with deep gratitude and rejoicing today.

I pray You would show me how to live a life of beautiful truth and that You would teach me how to speak of the radiant story of your love today.

Amen.

(Sources: Lectio 365 and 24/7 Prayer)