

St James's Piccadilly

Sunday 22 October, 3pm

Ecumenical Prayers for Peace

Draft order of service

This prayer vigil is hosted by St James's Piccadilly in partnership with Christian Aid, Embrace the Middle East, the Amos Trust, Sabeel Kairos, Bloomsbury Baptist Church, The Methodist Church in Britain, Quakers in Britain, and the United Reformed Church.

A collection will be taken for Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza City. Given the terrible attack on the hospital this week, the Diocese of Jerusalem will be given the funds, to be distributed to the hospital as necessary.

Please join in the Taizé chants and the words in bold.

During periods of silence, you are invited to light candles at the front of the church. If you wish, you may use this prayer as the candle is lit:

In the name of Christ, who is our peace,
we light this light for peace in Israel, peace in Gaza, peace in the West Bank, and peace across the Middle East.

Welcome and Introduction

We meet in the name of God, the source of life, hope, and peace.
The Lord be with you

And also with you.

Words of welcome are offered.

Oh Lord hear my prayer, oh Lord hear my prayer. When I call, answer me. Oh Lord, hear my prayer, oh Lord hear my prayer. Come and listen to me.

Psalm 31:3-4

You are indeed my rock and my fortress; for your name's sake lead me and guide me, take me out of the net that is hidden for me, for you are my refuge.

A 19-year-old survivor of the attack by Hamas on Kibbutz Be'eri who was evacuated to the Dead Sea after the attack. After speaking of her loss of people she has known all her life, she offered up this plea:

How am I supposed to wake up every morning and know that 4.5km away from my home in Kibbutz Be'eri in Gaza there are people for whom this is not over? For me this is ended after 12 hours. I'm here at the Dead Sea.

Yes we are in a lot of pain that is true. And after everything I just went through, I feel depleted every time I hear the word revenge. What I went through and to know there are people going through it in Gaza and there's no-one to rescue them? We cannot go on like this... They keep asking "Do you think you'll go back to the Kibbutz after all you've been through without additional soldiers and protection." Don't tell me about soldiers and protection. Tell me about a political solution. For years we have been asking for a political solution

**Good and gracious God, you are the source of peace and hope.
If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.¹**

We pray for the people of Israel, Gaza and the West Bank. We long for peace and for an end to violence and destruction of every kind. We unite our hearts with all who are suffering, with those who have lost loved ones, and with all who cry out in anguish.

We keep silence together.

Stay with me, remain here with me. Watch and pray. Watch and pray.

Psalm 139: 13-15

For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.

My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

Abed, a woman living in Haifa:

We really hope it won't escalate here ...Cleaning up hundreds of bomb shelters has been good for everyone so far, making sure people know where they are and are fit for purpose...I hope the solidarity we have built between different communities can endure against such a polarising moment.

¹ Mother Teresa of Kolkata

A woman living in Gaza City:

All my neighbours and families are evacuating from their homes, but we don't know where can we go. No shelters, no safe places now in Gaza. All Gaza under attack, under bombing. No electricity, no internet, no power. About food and water...we are running out too. We are not safe, we don't know what's next.

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We pray for the people of Israel, Gaza and the West Bank. We long for an end to violence, death, and destruction of every kind. We unite our hearts with all who are suffering, with those who have lost loved ones, and with all who cry out in anguish.

We keep silence together.

Stay with me, remain here with me. Watch and pray. Watch and pray.

Psalms 31:9, 23-24

Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am in distress; my eye wastes away from grief, my soul and body also.

Love the LORD, all you his saints. The LORD preserves the faithful, but abundantly repays the one who acts haughtily.

Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the LORD.

Employee at the Near East Council of Churches:

Gaza is no longer a big prison, it is becoming a big grave.

Mike Ryan, WHO Director of Emergencies:

The violence has to stop, the bombing has to stop... And that needs to happen now, that needs to happen tonight, that needs to happen tomorrow morning. This cannot wait. It simply cannot wait.

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We keep silence together.

Oh Lord hear my prayer, oh Lord hear my prayer. When I call, answer me. Oh Lord, hear my prayer, oh Lord hear my prayer. Come and listen to me.

Psalm 42:1-3, 8

As a deer longs for flowing streams,
so my soul longs for you, O God.

My soul thirsts for God,
for the living God.

When shall I come and behold
the face of God?

My tears have been my food
day and night,
while people say to me continually,
'Where is your God?'

By day the LORD commands his steadfast love,
and at night his song is with me,
a prayer to the God of my life.

An Al Ahli hospital doctor, whose home was destroyed:

Thanks for your prayers, and asking about me and my family. I think that what happened with me and many others, makes us understand that peace is the best. May the king of peace show his love for all the people. God bless you all.

**Good and gracious God, you are the source of peace and hope.
If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.²**

We pray for the people of Israel, Gaza and the West Bank. We long for peace and for an end to violence and destruction of every kind. We unite our hearts with all who are suffering, with those who have lost loved ones, and with all who cry out in anguish.

We keep silence together.

What to do now but love?
Love as fiercely as we ever have.
A revolutionary love.

² Mother Teresa of Kolkata

A love that shatters empire.
That carries us through the most impossible struggles.
That cries for all death and suffering.
That honours the grief and trauma of all violence.
Not a reactionary love. Not a love that takes sides.
But a love that is loyal to everyone - traversing borders,
dissolving the logic of empire that has pitted our
communities against each other for far too long.
We are here at the altar of revolutionary love.
Offering prayer with our whole being, reaching for you in
the grief, heartache and determination for justice.
Flailing, despairing, but following that thread towards the
irresistible world we all deserve to live in.

- Sara Moon

The Prayer of the Mothers:

God of Life: You who heals the broken-hearted, binding up
our wounds.
Please hear this prayer of mothers.
You did not create us to kill each other
Nor to live in fear or rage or hatred in your world.
You created us so that we allow each other to sustain
Your Name in this world: Your name is Life, your name is
Peace.
For these I weep, my eye sheds water:
For our children crying in the night, For parents holding
infants, despair and darkness in their hearts.
For a gate that is closing - who will rise to open it before
the day is gone?
With my tears and with my constant prayers, With the
tears of all women deeply pained at these harsh times I
raise my hands to you in supplication:
Please God have mercy on us.
Hear our voice that we not despair
That we will witness life with each other,
That we have mercy one for another
That we share sorrow one with the other
That we hope, together, one for another.
Inscribe our lives in the book of Life For Your sake, our
God of Life Let us choose Life. For You are Peace, Your
world is Peace and all that is Yours is Peace, May this be
your will And let us say Amen.

- Co-written by Sheikha Ibtisam Mahameed and Rabba Tamar Elad-Appelbaum and
translated by Amichai Lau-Lavie

We pray without ceasing for justice, reconciliation, peace, and an end to hatred and war. We also pray for God to change the hearts of all leaders and decision-makers in our countries and around the world. For we are in dire need of hearts that love, show mercy, and are willing to live in unity with others—hearts that respect human dignity and choose life rather than death.

- *The Most Reverend Hosam E. Naoum, Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem*

Closing Responses

Blessed are the peacemakers.

For they will be called children of God.

In the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us,

**to shine upon those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.**

Our Father who art in heaven

Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory.

For ever and ever.

Amen.

We give thanks to the Creator who offers us that peace which the world cannot give, and provides immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine. By the power of the Spirit who is at work among us, we ask for courage, strength and resilience, to go out from this place, heeding God's call for justice, and resolving to work untiringly, together, for peace in a world at war.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. Amen.

Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

Christian Aid

Christian Aid is a global movement of changemakers, supported by more than forty sponsoring churches, working with people of all faiths and none. Our vision is a world where everyone has fullness of life; a life lived with dignity, free from poverty and need; where global resources are equitably shared and sustainably used; and where the voice and agency of the poor and marginalised are fully realised. Christian Aid has been working with partners in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory since the early 1950s. Today we work with Palestinian and Israeli partners to protect human rights and to support a just and lasting peace for all.



Embrace the Middle East

Embrace the Middle East have been partnering with Middle East Christians since 1854. We have worked in Israel and Palestine since 1948, and currently partner with 18 organisations in Israel, Gaza, the West Bank and Jerusalem. Our partners work in reconciliation, healthcare, young people and women's empowerment, and work with those with disabilities and affected by trauma.



Amos Trust

Amos Trust is a small creative human rights organisation. We are committed to promoting a just peace, and call for full equal rights for Palestinians. We have 4 partner projects in Gaza and a further 4 on the West Bank. www.amostrust.org

Quakers in Britain

Quakers in Britain are a faith group working for equality and peace. We manage the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) on behalf of 18 ecumenical partners. EAPPI recruits and trains ordinary people to live for 3 months in communities in Jerusalem and the West Bank, accompanying Palestinians and Israelis working nonviolently for peace. We call for the end of the occupation so that all can live with freedom, dignity and security based on international law. www.quaker.org.uk/applyeappi



Sabeel-Kairos

Sabeel-Kairos UK is a Christian campaigning charity that works for human rights, justice and equality for Palestinians in partnership/solidarity with the Christian community in the Holy Land. www.sabeel-kairos.org.uk