Worship@Home 21st September 2025 Peace Sunday
Led by Revd David Speirs

Opening Prayer:

Lord, we gather in the stillness of our homes, united through the Holy Spirit as one body in Christ. You are our refuge and strength, our ever-present help in times of trouble. As the world around us wrestles with conflict, fear, and division, we turn our eyes to you the source of true peace. May this time of worship renew our hope, restore our joy, and reignite our commitment to your kingdom of peace. Be glorified in our prayers, our songs, our reflections, and our silence. We offer this time and our very lives to you. In the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace. **Amen.**

StF 346 – Christ is the world's light https://youtu.be/Ne5MOMp6W_Y?si=vdW8jitxsj3gTISb

Christ is the world's light, Christ and none other;
born in our darkness, he became our brother.
If we have seen him, we have seen the Father:
glory to God on high.

Christ is the world's Peace, Christ and none other; no one can serve him and despise another; who else unites us, one in God the Father? Glory to God on high.

Christ is the world's Life, Christ and none other;
sold once for silver, murdered here, our brother he, who redeems us, reigns with God the Father: glory to God on high.

Give God the glory, God and none other;
give God the glory, Spirit, Son, and Father;
give God the glory, God with us, my brother:
glory to God on high.

Fred Pratt Green (1903–2000). Words: © 1969, Stainer & Bell Ltd.
CCLI Song Number: 2564601

Please read: Luke 12:49-56 https://bible.oremus.org/?ql=240296823

Time to Reflect

This Sunday is designated as ‘Peace Sunday’ a time when we are invited to reflect deeply on our role as Christians in seeking peace, not only in our own lives, but in the world around us; to consider how we respond to the violence, injustice, and division that we see, and how we align ourselves with God's vision for a reconciled and peaceful world.

In his letter to Timothy, the apostle St Paul gives some very specific and practical guidance to the early Church: Pray. However, Paul does stop there. He calls for "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving" not just for ourselves and for those we love, but "for everyone." (v.1)

At a time when the Roman Empire’s ‘Pax Romana’ was far from a guarantee of a peaceful life free from suspicion and persecution, Paul’s instruction must have felt radical. Praying for leaders who so often appeared to wield power unjustly and seemed so far from God may have been confounding advice to his audience. And yet it is Paul’s challenge to widen the circle of concern and allow God to expand our capacity for compassion, that lies at the heart of what it means to follow Jesus: The one who died and was raised for sinners and whose love reaches out to the whole of creation.

According to Paul prayer is more than just a private act of devotion to God. Instead it is has an impact on every aspect of our private and public life. It declares that God is sovereign over all things, and that no ruler or government is beyond the reach of God's divine rule. It is also a deeply hopeful act. In praying for peace, even when that peace seems impossible, we affirm our faith and trust that God is at work, even in the places when we do not yet see it.

Paul then goes on to connect this call to prayer with a vision of the public life that we are to lead as Christians; "a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity." (v.2) This is not a call to passive withdrawal from the world’s struggles but to allow the peace that we receive from God to shape how we engage with others. In a culture so often marked by outrage, conflict, and noise, this quiet peaceable living can be a powerful witness. Peace is not merely the absence of conflict, but the presence of wholeness, of shalom, where relationships are healed, communities flourish, and where God’s creation is honoured.

As followers of Christ, we are to embody this peace in our daily lives through the help of the Holy Spirit in how we speak, how we listen, how we forgive, and how we love.

At the heart of this passage is a striking theological truth that God desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of divine truth. Peace Sunday is a reminder that God's vision is never narrow or exclusive. Christ came not for the few, but for all; for the powerful and the powerless, for the near and the far off. This expansive vision challenges us to reconsider how we view others and especially those who are different from us, or whom we may find difficult to love. In that sense those who we may regard as ‘enemies’ are to be seen through the lens of God’s love as the ones that Jesus came to die and be raised for.

The foundation of this hope is the person of Jesus Christ, whom Paul names as the "one mediator between God and humankind" (v.5) the one who gave up his life for us. On the cross, Christ broke down the dividing walls of hostility, offering reconciliation for the whole of creation. His peace is not a temporary ceasefire but is instead a lasting and costly gift that has been given through his own life.

We are not called to be indifferent bystanders to God’s love but instead to be active participants in God's peace-making mission. That begins in the work of prayer; prayer that is generous, inclusive, and persistent, and it continues in action: in how we speak, how we serve, and how we live. As we reflect today, may we be reminded that peace is not just a distant hope but instead it is our present calling. Through our prayers and through our lives, may we become channels of the peace offered to us in Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Prayer of Intercession

You are invited to pray silently for:
The needs of the world…
The Church and its calling…
Loved ones going through difficult times…
For peace, justice, and reconciliation…
In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

The Lord’s Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven…

StF 707 – Make me a channel of your peace

https://youtu.be/NgIIzrQqnUg?si=7DrKPV06LunibAz3

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:

O 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:

Make me a channel of your peace.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
in giving unto all that we receive,
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.

Sebastian Temple (1928–1997) from the Prayer of St Francis.

Words and Music: Dedicated to Mrs Frances Tracy. © 1967 OCP Publications. One Licence Song Number: 85582

A Prayer for the Holy Land on Peace Sunday

Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world:
In your mercy, provide for all those in Gaza and beyond who suffer from hunger and starvation, that they may be given both physical bread to nourish their bodies and heavenly bread to sustain their souls. By the power of your Spirit, bring a speedy end to this cruel war, the release of all captives, care for the sick and wounded, comfort for those who have lost loved-ones, and the opening of a pathway for a just and lasting peace here in the very homeland where your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, ministered during his earthly life; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

By The Most Reverend Dr. Hosam E. Naoum,
Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem, August 2025