

PRAYER VIGIL FOR THE MIDDLE EAST

On this day, we pray with and for our sisters and brothers in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory who have called for an ecumenical prayer vigil across the globe on the 24th of every month that will continue until we all can celebrate an end to occupation and a just and lasting resolution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. We do this as the Church of Scotland, the Scottish Episcopal Church, Christian Aid Scotland, and in partnership with the worldwide ACT Alliance of churches

Opening responses

Gather in our hearts Lord
BRING PEACE THROUGH OUR WORDS
Gather in our hearts Lord
BRING PEACE THROUGH OUR LISTENING
Gather in our hearts Lord
BRING PEACE THROUGH OUR ACTIONS
Gather in our hearts Lord
BRING PEACE THROUGH OUR SILENCE
Gather in our hearts Lord
BRING PEACE THROUGH OUR LIVES

Prayer of Approach

Spirit of the living God,
Come afresh on your holy land.
Help your people to restore broken relationships.
Give them patience to break down barriers of suspicion and mistrust;
ability to discern personal prejudices and the courage to overcome fear.
Teach them to respect each other's integrity and rights

so that your kingdom may be established on earth.
For Jesus' sake. Amen.

(Rt Rev Riah Abu El-Assal, from In God's Hands, WCC)

Lighting a candle for peace

In the name of Christ, who is our peace,
We light this light for peace in the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel.

The following may be sung several times as a candle is lit: (CH4 784)

*COME LIGHT, LIGHT OF GOD, GIVE LIGHT TO CREATION
ENLIGHTEN OUR HEARTS AND REMAIN WITH YOUR WORLD*

Readings

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
'May they prosper who love you.
Peace be within your walls,
and security within your towers.'
For the sake of my relatives and friends
I will say, 'Peace be within you.'
For the sake of the house of the LORD our God,
I will seek your good. *(From Psalm 122)*

Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. But the wisdom

from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for* those who make peace.
(James 3, 13 -18)

Prayers of Intercession

God of peace, encourage those who seek to establish a fair and just peace in the Middle East. Bless their efforts as they work to end conflict. Lead those who engage in violence to put down their weapons and to live in peace with one another.

God in your mercy
HEAR OUR PRAYER

God of justice, bless those who work for peace through justice. Strengthen their resolve in the face of seemingly endless violence. Guide the leaders of the peoples of the Middle East to know your will and to support a just peace for all of your children. God of love, lifting up the holy land for all humankind, breathe love and compassion into our prayers with a desire for nothing other than peace: peace in our hearts, peace for all creation, and especially peace in the land that is called holy.

God of mercy, even as we long to understand that which is often beyond our comprehension, we lay before you the hearts, minds and bodies of all those suffering from conflict in the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel, and from the ongoing occupation. Shower upon all the people of this holy land the spirit of justice and reconciliation.

God of the nations, give to all our people the blessings of well-being, freedom, and harmony, and, above all things, give us faith in you that we may be strengthened to care for all those in need until the coming of your son, our Saviour and Lord.
AMEN

(from ACT Palestine)

We pray for the torn and divided peoples of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq; for refugees and uprooted families; for all living in camps and for those who assist them, and for all who have been bereaved, injured and traumatized.

Especially at this time, we pray for all who suffer in the midst of renewed conflict and attack. We pray for Israelis living with the threat of rocket fire, for Palestinians in the West Bank subjected to the violation of their civil liberties and human rights and living under the constraints of military occupation and settler harassment. We pray for the people of Gaza, living under blockade and repeated military bombardment, adding fear to the misery of poverty and want.

In particular we pray for children and young people caught up in terror beyond their understanding or control. We pray for those who have been killed, maimed, bereaved; those who have had their future torn away from them; those whose lives are bleak, lacking opportunity, mobility and hope. We repent of our complicity in silence, our closing our eyes to the needs and wellbeing of the children and our failure to reject the ways of violence, threat and injustice.

We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our peace and our hope. Amen

Silence

May our silence speak the peace of God
May our silence sing the peace of God
May our silence bring about the peace of God
AMEN

Closing Responses

Pray not for Arab or Jew,
for Palestinian or Israeli,
but pray rather for ourselves,
that we might not
divide them in our prayers
but keep them both together
in our hearts.

When races fight
PEACE BE AMONGST US
When neighbours argue
PEACE BE AMONGST US
When nations disagree
PEACE BE AMONGST US
Where people struggle for justice
LET JUSTICE PREVAIL
Where Christ's disciples follow
LET PEACE BE OUR WAY
AMEN

ACT Alliance is a coalition of more than 130 churches and affiliated organisations working together in 140 countries to create positive and sustainable change in the lives of poor and marginalised people regardless of their religion, politics, gender, sexual orientation, race or nationality in keeping with the highest international codes and standards.