

**Community of the Cross of Nails
at St Martin Coney Street, York**
Friday Prayers for Peace and Reconciliation
Friday 24th October 2025

Bible Reading: Acts 17.24-28

The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him — though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For “In him we live and move and have our being”; as even some of your own poets have said, “For we too are his offspring.”

Reflection

When deciding on a topic for these Friday reflections I find it very helpful to check for any relevant United Nations commemorations. They are often related to issues of peace, justice and reconciliation, and thus help to make us aware of concerns in the wider world. A number of such special days fall today, but particularly significant is United Nations Day, when we think of the work of the United Nations itself. Indeed this year is special in that it marks the UN's 80th anniversary, with the theme: Building our future together. As the official website states:

“The United Nations is the most universal international organization, making it truly global in reach. By promoting peace, human rights and social progress, including access to healthcare and education, the United Nations has improved the lives of people around the world, creating better living standards for all.

Eighty years after its founding, the United Nations faces new challenges. The Organization is working on ways to adapt and strengthen itself. With the Agenda 2030, the Pact for the Future, and the UN80 initiative, the UN is looking to renew the foundations of international cooperation, and to ensure that it can deliver for people everywhere.

A symbol of hope for global unity

United Nations Day, on 24 October, marks the anniversary of the entry into force in 1945 of the UN Charter. With the ratification of this founding document by the majority of its signatories, including the five permanent members of the Security Council, the United Nations officially came into being.

There is no other global organization with the legitimacy, convening power and normative impact of the United Nations. No other global organization gives hope to so many people for a better world and can deliver the future we want. Today, the urgency for all countries to come together, to fulfil the promise of the nations united, has rarely been greater.

UN Day, celebrated every year, offers the opportunity to amplify our common agenda and reaffirm the purposes and principles of the UN Charter that have guided us for the past 80 years.”

Of course the work of the United Nations depends on the commitment of the member nations, with some more committed than others. That limits to quite an extent what it can achieve. That it is able to do what it does is thanks to its staff who are inspired by the vision of what it stands for.

As its name implies it is an organization formed by and for the benefit of all nations. Despite our many divisions we need to remember that we are at heart one world. The many challenges and problems we face can only be addressed and solved by working together, not by working in competition.

That too lies at the heart of the Christian faith. We are called to work together for God’s purpose for our world, for God’s kingdom. That comes across powerfully in our Bible passage – part of St Paul’s address to the people of Athens. We are all God’s offspring, children of God, equally loved by God. That is our vision. That is our hope for a world united in peace and justice.

(Kingsley Boulton)

Prayers

A prayer for the United Nations

God and Father of all humanity, we ask your blessing on the United Nations, that through it righteousness may be established in international relationships, fear and suspicion may be removed and a lasting peace ensured; through him who has shown to us the ways of justice, mercy and reconciliation, your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

A prayer for the Holy Land – praying that the current ceasefire will lead to real peace and justice

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. *(The Most Revd Dr Hosam E. Naoum Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem – August 2025)*

A prayer for Ukraine

Holy God, we hold before you all who live close to war and conflict; and all who live close to the threat of war and violence. We remember especially at this time, people in Ukraine and Russia. We pray for nonviolence and peaceful resolutions of conflict. Give us hearts of hospitality and sanctuary, forgive us

all our hostility and hatred. Bring all people to the humanity you give us, and to the reconciliation and healing for which you gave your life. Strengthen us all to work with you to build justice and peace, reconciliation and healing, in our hearts and homes, in our streets, in all communities, neighbourhoods and nations. Bless all who live lives for the peace and wellbeing of others, and make their service fruitful. In the name of Christ. Amen. (*The Revd Inderjit Bhogal, Honorary President, The Fellowship of Reconciliation*)

A prayer for peace throughout the world

Lord, you have taught us that the world is yours and those who dwell on it. Hear us therefore as we pray for the life of the world; that every nation may seek the way that leads to peace; that human rights and freedom may everywhere be respected; and that the earth's resources may be ungrudgingly shared among all people. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (*A Christian's Prayer Book*)

A prayer for refugees

Almighty and merciful God, whose Son became a refugee and had no place to call his own; look with mercy on those who today are fleeing from danger, homeless and hungry. Bless those who work to bring them relief; inspire generosity and compassion in all our hearts; and guide the nations of the world towards that day when all will rejoice in your Kingdom of justice and of peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (*Church of England prayers*)

A prayer for the Community of the Cross of Nails

Almighty God, you have committed to us the ministry of reconciliation of your Son, Jesus Christ; give us the confidence in your power to forgive, as your Son forgave us from the Cross. Enable us to be witnesses of your forgiveness at work and where we live. Unite us in a sacred fellowship to heal the hostilities we see, and give us the grace to love one another, rejoicing in this life together. Amen.

A prayer for all those affected by illness:

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy. Sustain and support the anxious, be with those who care for the sick, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may find comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

World Council of Churches Ecumenical Prayer Cycle:

We pray this week for the peoples of Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico.

Community of the Cross of Nails Prayer Cycle:

We pray today for partners in **Coventry**:

All Saints Church, Allesley;

Bablake School;

Barnabas Fund (hope and aid for the persecuted Church).

We pray too for the partners in **Israel/Palestine**:

in Bethehem: Mar Ephrem School;

in Jerusalem: Musalaha;

St George the Martyr Cathedral;

St Mark's Church and Monastery; and

Tantur Ecumenical Institute;

in Ramallah: Arab Evangelical Episcopal School;

in Shefar'Am: International Peace Centre (House of Hope); and

St Paul's Episcopal Church.

We pray too for the partners in **Ukraine**:

in Odessa: St Paul's Congregation;

in **Russia**:

in Kaliningrad: the Evangelical Resurrection Church;

in Moscow: St Andrew's Anglican Church;

in St Petersburg: St Catherine's Lutheran Church;

and in **Belarus**:

in Minsk: the International Conference Centre IBB.

And we ask God's blessing on our own ministry of peace and reconciliation at St Martin.

Coventry Litany of Reconciliation

All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

The hatred which divides nation from nation, race from race, class from class,
Father Forgive.

The covetous desires of people and nations to possess what is not their own,
Father Forgive.

The greed which exploits the work of human hands and lays waste the earth,
Father Forgive.

Our envy of the welfare and happiness of others,
Father Forgive.

Our indifference to the plight of the imprisoned, the homeless, the refugee,
Father Forgive.

The lust which dishonours the bodies of men, women and children,
Father Forgive.

The pride which leads us to trust in ourselves and not in God,
Father Forgive.

Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

**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.**