

**Community of the Cross of Nails
at St Martin Coney Street, York**
Friday Prayers for Peace and Reconciliation
Friday 5th December 2025

Bible Reading: Romans 15.4-13

Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles, and sing praises to your name"; and again he says, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people"; and again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him"; and again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles shall hope." May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Reflection

Preparations for Christmas seem to be in full flow around us, with Christmas lights decorating our streets and houses, Christmas markets, all sorts of festive food and goods in our shops, and even the sound of Christmas carols. Not that we would want to deny the pleasures of all that to people. Yet for Christians this all seems rather premature.

For us this season of Advent is rather one of quiet waiting and expectation for something far greater than what so many people are preparing for. For us this is a time to prepare both to celebrate the incarnation, the coming of God into the world as a vulnerable baby, and the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ, however we understand that. Quite rightly we give gifts to one another. Yet, in Advent we are preparing to celebrate the greatest gift of all, the gift of God's Son for our redemption and reconciliation.

Of course Advent and especially Christmas are not for everyone a happy time. At this cold time of the year the plight of those suffering from war and conflict, from poverty, from illness, from loneliness, can become much more difficult and challenging. Seeing others able to enjoy themselves and indulge can be painful.

The season of Advent, far from cocooning us in a sense of comfort and cosiness, instead addresses the often harsh reality of the human condition and challenges us, yet in a positive way. The traditional Advent theme of judgement reminds us that God is a God of justice, that any form of injustice can never be condoned. There is a higher authority to whom those who oppress or exploit others will be called to account.

Above all the Advent message is one of hope. Our Bible reading is the New Testament reading for this coming Sunday, the Second Sunday of Advent. In it the word hope appears no fewer than four times. This hope is not some vague wishful thinking that all will be well in the end. It is hope that we are given by God, the God of hope, a promise that evil and suffering will be overcome. For in God we can fully trust. God's love, mercy and justice are absolute and one hundred percent reliable.

Looking at the state of our world it is easy to become disheartened. Advent assures us of God's love for all without distinction and for the whole of creation. We look forward in genuine anticipation to Christmas as a celebration of God's love in action, in coming amongst us and sharing both our sorrows and our joys. What better gift could we hope for.

(Kingsley Boulton)

Prayers

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 Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore.

Community of the Cross of Nails Prayer Cycle:

We pray today for partners in the **Netherlands**:

in The Hague: the Anglican Church of St John and St Philip;
the Bezuidenhoutse Churches.
the Church of Christ Triumphant.

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.**