

**Community of the Cross of Nails  
at St Martin Coney Street, York**  
**Friday Prayers for Peace and Reconciliation**  
**Friday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2026**

**Bible Reading:** 1 John 4.7-21

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Saviour of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgement, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us. Those who say, 'I love God', and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

**Reflection**

I wonder if you have made any New Year resolutions. If you are like me you may have good intentions but may find it difficult to carry them through as the year progresses.

For my resolution I shall try to take to heart the message of our Bible reading. If we are asked to sum up the Christian faith in just one word, our reading gives us the answer: love. Not just any love, but God's love, God's love for us all. The message in this letter could not be clearer. "Love is from God". "God loved us so much". "God is love". And the consequence of that is that we should love one another.

I expect we are already doing our best to show love in your lives. Our reading certainly challenges me, though, to love even better. Yes, there is much love in our world, often in the face of so much that is hurtful and inhuman. Yet, if only there was more love, on all levels – personal, local, national, global – then ours would be a so much better world.

The Christmas and Epiphany season reminds us of the special way in which God's love came into the world. In the words of Christina Rossetti: "Love came down at Christmas". God coming into the world is his greatest gift to us. It is a gift of peace and of reconciliation - to reconcile us to God and to one another in true love.

That is a message of great hope as we embrace a new year. For there is so much that is wrong with our world. Conflicts continue. New ones arise. Injustice and inequality continue to affect so many people.

We may well not feel particularly hopeful. We may even be fearful for the future. And yet our reading reminds us that “there is no fear in love”. For God’s love is absolute. So is his justice. In God we can confidently put all our trust, Father, Son and Holy Spirit – creator, redeemer and sustainer of life.

*(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 Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine.

### *Community of the Cross of Nails Prayer Cycle:*

We pray today for partners in **Germany**  
in Dresden: The Memorial Busmann Chapel;  
the Deaconesses Hospital;  
Holy Cross Church;  
St Mary on the Water Church in Dresden-Hosterwitz-Pillnitz; and  
Church of our Lady Foundation.

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.**