

**Community of the Cross of Nails
at St Martin Coney Street, York**
Friday Prayers for Peace and Reconciliation
Friday 3rd July 2026

Bible Reading: Amos 5.14-15a, 24

Seek good and not evil, that you may live; and so the Lord, the God of hosts, will be with you, just as you have said. Hate evil and love good, and establish justice in the gate.

But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Reflection

There is perhaps a temptation to dismiss the Old Testament and to focus solely on the New Testament. There is much violence and slaughter in parts of the Old Testament. That is bad enough but it is often understood not only as sanctioned but as actually commanded by God. That is difficult to square with the God of love, mercy and peace we see in the New Testament. I suggest that we are not dealing with two different gods, as some maintain, but rather a developing understanding of God.

The contrast between the two Testaments is, however, not quite as simple as that. There are difficult parts of the New Testament, which we have to try to interpret in a positive sense for our own age. At the same time there are parts of the Old Testament that affirm the holiness and goodness of God in a way that remain powerful and inspiring for us today.

A good example is provided by our Bible reading, verses from the prophet Amos. The theme of justice indeed runs throughout the Old Testament, and particularly justice for the vulnerable. This is the theme taken up especially by the prophets.

Amos's words are a particularly powerful expression of this. We find there simple and unambiguously direct statements: "Seek good and not evil", "Hate evil and love good, and establish justice". He then concludes with an extremely vivid and memorable image: "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream".

What Amos is talking about is real justice, God's justice, and not what sometimes purports to be justice but is not. God sees the whole picture. God's justice is totally reliable and trustworthy. Yet God's justice is also tempered with compassion, forgiveness and love. God's justice and God's love are not contradictory but part of God's very nature, of God's grace.

The task of people of good will, as made clear both by prophets like Amos and by Jesus, is to make that higher justice a reality in our world. We need those in our own day who will speak up against injustice, who will call to account those who abuse power. We need those who will articulate the cries of victims of injustice, oppression, exploitation, prejudice, discrimination.

Thankfully there are those who do just that, often at serious risk to themselves. Jesus himself, in proclaiming the values of God's kingdom, indeed paid the ultimate price. Yet by his resurrection he was victorious over sin and death. Ultimately our hope and trust is that good will prevail over evil, that justice will prevail over all that diminishes humanity.

(Kingsley Boulton)

Prayers

A prayer for Iran and the Middle East

Ever-loving God, who hears us in our anguish and distress, and longs for us to be free. We pray for the people of Iran and the wider Middle East, at this time of fear and uncertainty. Be near to those who are anxious; bring comfort to all who are suffering. Guide those with the power to make decisions, and lead them in the ways of wisdom, compassion and moderation: that people of goodwill would seek harmony and reconciliation. Join us with our Christian brothers and sisters in all places, in praying for peace with justice, through him who is the prince of peace, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(The Rt Revd Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani, Bishop of Chelmsford)

A prayer for the Holy Land

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)*

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 Kenya and Tanzania.

Community of the Cross of Nails Prayer Cycle:

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

in Kingston, Ontario: St George's Cathedral;

in Montreal: Christ Church Cathedral;

and the Church of St James the Apostle;

in Ottawa: Christ Church Cathedral;

in Sorrento, British Columbia: The Sorrento Centre.

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

in Bethlehem: 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.