Community of the Cross of Nails
at St Martin Coney Street, York

Friday Prayers for Peace and Reconciliation
Friday 6th November 2026

Bible Reading: Amos 5.18-24

Alas for you who desire the day of the Lord! Why do you want the day of the Lord? It is darkness, not light; as if someone fled from a lion, and was met by a bear; or went into the house and rested a hand against the wall, and was bitten by a snake. Is not the day of the Lord darkness, not light, and gloom with no brightness in it? I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon. Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Reflection

"Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." That final verse of our Bible reading, which is one of those appointed for this coming Sunday, seems particularly appropriate as we look to Remembrance Sunday and then to Remembrance Day on Wednesday 11th November.

The prophet Amos is declaring that the externals of religion mean nothing unless there is a deep commitment to what God intends for humanity, to the values and demands of God's kingdom. That kingdom is founded on justice, peace, love. Those are the values that should motivate nations, communities and individuals. Those are the prerequisites for a world as God intended.

Remembrance Sunday is an occasion to remember those who gave their lives for the cause of freedom. It is a time to remember all victims of war and conflict. It is an opportunity to pray for peace and for respect for the sanctity of human life. Peace and justice go together. Peace and justice have a chance of becoming a reality when there is righteousness, being right with God.

We know of course that is far from the case in too many parts of our world. Atrocities are committed. There is great suffering, inflicted not least on the most vulnerable. The cry for peace and justice is loud and clear, but not always heeded by those in positions of power. It is, however, we believe, a cry that is heard by God. It is heard too by those who have the courage and the tenacity to work for peace, justice and reconciliation. We give thanks for their efforts and commitment.

This time of the year has a special significance for our church of St Martin since Remembrance Day on 11th November is also the feast of our patron saint Martin of Tours, the soldier who became a monk and a bishop. That coincidence is particularly poignant, especially given the destruction of most of the church in the Second World War. The church itself stands as a witness to the pain and suffering of war. Yet it witnesses too as a place of healing and reconciliation, as a place of hope for true peace and justice in the world.

Though it bears the scars of war it proclaims a message of rebirth and hope. Our calling as a church and as individual Christians is to offer that message of hope to our world, a message the world longs to hear.

(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

O God of all justice and peace we cry out to you in the midst of the pain and trauma of violence and fear which prevails in the Holy Land. Be with those who need you in these days of suffering; we pray for people of all faiths – Jews, Muslims and Christians and for all people of the land. While we pray to you, O Lord, for an end to violence and the establishment of peace, we also call for you to bring justice and equity to the peoples. Guide us into your kingdom where all people are treated with dignity and honour as your children for, to all of us, you are our Heavenly Father. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.
(The Most Revd Hosam 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 Canada and the United States of America.

Community of the Cross of Nails Prayer Cycle:

We pray today for partners in Berlin in **Germany**:
Action Reconciliation Service for Peace;
the Evangelical Chaplaincy for the German Army;
the Evangelical Reconciliation Church;
the Emperor Wilhelm Memorial Church;
Church in the World of Work Kreisau House.
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's.

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.