

Sunday 30 October, Christ Church Rayleigh A Taize style liturgy for peace and remembrance

Explain how the service will work. Chants before and during prayers seated... sing from hymn book & sheet. No entrance of the Bible – the Word is already amongst us.

Song of the Birds by Pablo Casals

Pablo Casals is known as a man of peace, who pursued justice. He worked on behalf of the poor and used his music to draw attention to injustices. After the Spanish Civil War, Casals left Spain and refused to perform his cello in any country that recognized Franco as the leader of Spain. He made one exception. He performed *Song of the Birds* at the White House in 1961 for President John F. Kennedy. In 1971, Casals received the United Nations Peace Medal, and he again performed *Song of the Birds*.

OPENING SENTENCES:

Of God we ask,

What is the time?

There is a time to be born and a time to die.

There is a time to kill and a time to heal.

What is the time?

There is a time to weep and a time to laugh.

There is a time for mourning and a time for dancing.

What is the time?

There is a time to tear and a time to mend.

There is a time for silence and a time for speech.

What is the time?

There is a time to love and a time to hate.

There is a time for war and a time for peace.

What is the time?

SILENCE IS KEPT for places of conflict. Particularly Ukraine, but also Iran and...

We Sing – O Lord hear my prayer

PRAYER

We are members of a family, the human family
which, in the ancient land of Ukraine, is torn by tension, suspicion, hatred, hunger, killing and death.

We are troubled by cruelty and disaster such as we have never known,
and we are unclear of the cause and unsure of the remedy.

We believe that God accepts confusion as well as concern,
and has never been deaf to the cries of anger, fear and hopelessness in the face of injustice.

We are the Body of Christ in which if one part suffers, the other parts pray to heal it and help to bear it.
And so we pray as the people of God, the body of Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit for peace – in
our homes, our communities, and across the world. Amen

We listen to Come Now, O Prince of Peace

We Sing – O Lord hear my prayer

PRAYER

In you, our God, is our hope and consolation.

Your love is beyond our deserving, your wisdom is beyond our understanding,

your light is greater than our darkness.
We wish we could enter your presence with songs of rejoicing; but not here, not now.
Our hearts are heavy, our minds bewildered, our uncertainty disturbs our faith.
Why? and how long? and what next? ...
these are the questions we bring, not looking for instant answers,
but hoping that we will be heard.

We sing the Ukrainian Kyrie, once

Gracious God, quieten our personal anxieties,
so that we may better feel
for those whose land has been invaded
whose towns and homes are ravaged,
and whose lives are under threat.
Quieten us, so that we may listen for a word from you. Amen

We sing the Ukrainian Kyrie, 3 times – Kyrie, Christe, Kyrie

READING from the Letter of James 4:1-3

REFLECTION

These words from the Letter of James talk about the cause of disputes and wars – we want what we cannot have, we want what others have, we are envious – the grass is always greener on the other side and we want to be seen to be keeping up with the Joneses. Wars like the one in Ukraine are an extension of this thinking and wanting – Russia wants more land and resources, land it believes should be hers and Putin wants more power. Sometimes people are violent and lash out at others because they are in pain. Sometimes fighting for justice results in violence, especially when police and the military attack peaceful protesters. Sometimes revolutions get out of hand. These verses from James also talk about prayer. For James prayer is a fundamental practice in the life of Christian communities. It is mentioned several times in the letter. We are led to believe that James cannot imagine a Christian community that is not inspired by prayer, for it is through prayer that the Christian identity of these oppressed communities, the recipients of his letter, becomes visible. James insists that his readers practice justice to be consistent with their faith in God. He also insists that this practice be permeated and consolidated by a life of prayer, as an act of recognition, acceptance and hope in God. In chapters one and four, James speaks of erroneous kinds of prayer. In 4:3 he mentions inappropriate ways of praying. He alludes to people with double hearts who have two attitudes because deep down they look after only their own interests and not those of the needy. They bless the Lord and Father but they also 'curse men who are made in God's image' (3:9). They are not consistent with their faith; they do not know how to pray. James tells them that they must not expect that God will give them anything for 'when you do pray and don't get it, it is because you have not prayed properly, you have prayed for something to indulge your own desires.' (4:3)

But God is ready to listen to the prayers of others as we shall hear in our next reading from the letter, later in the service.

SILENCE IS KEPT

We sing – Make me a channel of your peace R&S 629

Psalm 20 – read together

This is a translation of a text the Czech people turned to when Russia invaded their nation in 1968.
We will read in two alternating sections A and B.

A May God draw near when the hour of trouble strikes,
 may Jacob's God be your strength and shield;
 out of the sanctuary, out of his home,
 may God provide in your time of need.

B May God remember the sacrifice you make
 and take delight in the gifts you bring;

may God respond to your heart's deep desire,
and grant fulfilment to all your plans.

A With every blessing our mouths will shout for joy
to celebrate what the Lord has done;
and ever after when God shows you favour,
in every triumph we'll trace his love.

B O let us know that the Lord is God indeed,
and grants success to his chosen ones.
From highest heaven, God answer our call
and bring us victory with your right hand.

A Some trust in weapons and some in skills of war,
but all we have is our faith in God.
They that are mighty shall stumble and fall
but we will rise and will overcome.

READING from the Letter of James 5:1-6

REFLECTION

God is ready to listen to the prayers of others. The outcry of the reapers has reached the ears of the Lord. God hears the cries of the mowers of fields whose salaries are held back by the landowners. This is a spontaneous cry that arises from the hunger and pains of exploitation. It is a prayer that reveals the unjust inconsistency between what the landowners promised and what they are actually paid. This bitter prayer is indeed heard by God. These verses from the letter of James are part of the response to the workers' prayer. The whole letter exhorts its recipients to action – to practice and prayer. And James does not mince his words about the rich. I have heard people say not all rich people are bad, and of course many of them are not. Many give thousands if not millions away to charity, but if the wealth were more evenly distributed, perhaps we wouldn't have so much need of charities, and foodbanks and government handouts to pay our energy bills. If the rich were taxed appropriately, how much better our public services could be for everyone. If the huge profits of energy companies were taxed, the government wouldn't need to go into debt to help people pay for their heating. The countries which are consistently shown to have the happiest people are those with very high taxation, because they have the money to take care of everyone. We have a government of rich people and our new Prime Minister is one of the richest people in the UK. Can he really be expected to understand the challenges of ordinary people struggling to pay their bills and feed their children? There is a reason Jesus says it is harder for a rich man to enter heaven than it is for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle. In the eyes of the rest of the world, the places already suffering the consequences of the climate crisis, are not all of us rich?

SILENCE IS KEPT

We sing the Ukrainian Kyrie, 3 times – Kyrie, Christe, Kyrie

READING If War Goes On - based on the experience of people who lived through both the civil war in Argentina and the Falklands war. **Jean**

We sing – Make me a channel of your peace R&S 629

We light candles for peace

READING - 1 Thessalonians 4: 13 – 18 **Jean or Thora**

REFLECTION written by Revd Susan Durber

Few people go through life without experiencing the pain of bereavement or without having to go through a time of grief. It is one of the wonders of human life that we are able to love each other so deeply that we grieve, sometimes so profoundly, for those who die. Of course, the particulars of every experience are different, but grief is an experience we can recognise across the years. And here is a Christian writing to other Christians, who are grieving. It may be that

their grief was made worse because of fears that, by dying before Jesus had returned, their loved ones would not rise with Christ. But, whatever the specific situation, this piece of this letter offers something to anyone of us who might read it. Paul does not tell these Christians in Thessaloniki not to grieve, that death is nothing at all, or that those for whom they grieve have gone into the next room or 'passed away'. He tells them to grieve, but not to grieve 'as others do who have no hope'.

There is no escape from the pain, or the work, of grief. As someone once said, 'the only way through it is through it'. However, we grieve, as Christian people, in a context of hope. Just as Jesus died and rose again, just as death could not defeat him, so death does not have the final victory over our lives, or the lives of those who have already died.

Few of us might feel we can say more than this, about times and seasons. But the Christian faith is founded on the conviction that even the deepest pain and wounds of human life, those profound experiences of grief and loss, can be framed with hope.

We light candles in remembrance of those who have died

We Sing – O Lord hear my prayer

PRAYER

When the leader says 'Lord hear us' we sing the Ukrainian Kyrie, once

Loving God, because you have the whole world in your hands,
cradle gently those who are rocked by fear,
shocked to a depth they have never known and frightened to face tomorrow.
On the people of Ukraine: their children, their old people,
their vulnerable adults, their babies soon to be born,

Lord hear us

On the people of Ukraine: their defenders, their advocates,
those who care for the wounded, who sit with the despairing,
who witness and report on the savagery and destruction, who bury the dead.

Lord hear us

On the people of Ukraine: their leaders that they may continue to inspire,
in word and by example, and continue to receive help and solidarity from across the world.

Lord hear us

On the people of Russia, that they might learn the truth kept from their hearing;
On the churches in Russia that they might find the vocabulary and courage to speak truth to power,
On the soldiers of Russia who do not believe in the carnage they cause.

Lord hear us

On the Russian president, and those who affirm his policies,
we ask the judgement of heaven, a radical conversion
and an end to their lies, scheming and murder.

Lord hear us

And for our own nation we ask for commitment to match conviction
so that the pain of the Ukrainian nation be shared by us,
their weary people sheltered by us, their peace assured by us.

Lord hear us

In this time of remembrance, we pray for all those who mourn,
especially those known to us who have lost loved ones this year, whom we recall in the silence.

Lord hear us

We sing the Lord's Prayer

CLOSING PRAYER – a prayer of St Augustine

Watch now, dear Lord, with those who wake or watch or weep today;
and give your angels charge over those who sleep.

Tend your wounded ones, O Christ; rest your weary ones,
bless your dying ones, soothe your suffering ones,
shield your joyous ones and all for your love's sake. **Amen**