

## Prayer: International Day of Peace -21 September 2021

Theme: Recovering better for a sustainable and equitable world

*This Reflection is prepared for use in communities, with partners and with those who wish to join us in praying for a sustainable and equitable world.*

**Leader:** *You are invited to gather and sit quietly with some gentle music in the background. For a few minutes, take time to breathe in and out and relax gently. Let yourself go into your deeper self. Listen as one of the group reads the introduction...*

**Reader 1:** September bring us an opportunity to focus on the International Day of Peace. This international day was **established** in 1981 by the United Nations General Assembly. Later, in 2001, the General Assembly unanimously voted to **designate** the Day as a period of non-violence and cease-fire.

Our world is full of conflict, strife, anger, hurt and pain. We know this in our own lives and communities to varying degrees. Communities in war-torn parts of the world are living with the threat of violence every day, never sure when they will be safe and able to regain some sense of normality. Added to this, we are living through a global pandemic that means we need extra energy to keep ourselves and our communities safe from illness.



**Leader:** *Name in your heart or aloud if you prefer, the conflict you wish to bring into this time/space... you may wish to write these on a slip of paper and place them in a circle around a candle.*

**Reader 2:** The theme chosen by the United Nations for this year's International Day of Peace is important. How we look after ourselves and our planet will impact on how we may be able to live into the future.

Our God is a God of the future.  
Our God is a God of love and compassion.  
Our God is – through each of us – loving and living!  
We are the embodiment of God's compassion and hope...

**Sharing of Scripture:** Take a few moments to listen and reflect quietly on the readings...

Luke 1: 76-79

“...And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,  
to give knowledge of salvation to his people  
by the forgiveness of their sins.  
By the tender mercy of our God,  
the dawn from on high will break upon<sup>[h]</sup> us,  
to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,  
to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

Ephesians 2:17:

“So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God.”

*In what ways can you as an individual “give light to those who sit in darkness...”?*

*How do you as a community “proclaim peace”...?*

Take a few moments to share with each other your response to one of the questions...

Once the sharing is complete, as a group Stand Up and hold your hands out palm-up, in an open attitude...

Then turn to the person on your right and offer a gesture of peace (Following Covid safety.)

**Leader:** May Peace be within and with us. Let us go and celebrate Peace by standing up against acts of hate online and offline and by spreading compassion, kindness, and hope in the face of the pandemic, and in the face of violence and oppression, as we recover.

*“If you want peace, work for justice”  
(Pope Paul VI)*

*“The earth should not be injured, the earth should not be destroyed.  
As often as the elements, the elements of the world are violated by ill treatment,  
So God will cleanse them through the sufferings, through the hardships of humankind”  
(St Hildegard of Bingen)*



Prepared by Caroline Price  
Province of Australia/Aotearoa /New Zealand