On 4 August 1918 King George V, the Queen’s grandfather, met to pray with members of the Houses of Parliament as part of a National Day of Prayer. One hundred days later, the war ended.

We have compiled these 100 thoughts and prayers for peace, together with ideas to promote peace and reconciliation, to encourage churches, schools and communities to reflect on the past and bring hope for the future.

These thoughts, prayers and peace-making actions can be used by individuals and groups at any time, but especially in the 100 days leading up to Armistice Day on 11th November.

We are grateful to the Archbishop of Canterbury and to the many Christian denominations, ministries and chaplaincies who have contributed these readings and prayers for peace as we continue to pray for peace in our time.

Roy Crowne
Executive director, HOPE
On 4 August 2018 churches across the country, across the spectrum of denominations, are starting 100 days of prayer, peace and reconciliation. We are calling this Remembrance 100. There are many ways in which you, your community, church or school can get involved. Here are a few key dates for your diary.

Saturday 4 August 2018
One hundred years on from a National Day of Prayer called by George V is the first day of 100 days of prayer across the country, running until Armistice Day in November. Every day there are prayers, reflections and Bible readings to download a week at a time from www.Remembrance100.co.uk

Friday 21 & Saturday 22 September 2018
Hold a peace festival linked to the United Nations’ International Day of Peace and launch a Peace Awards competition.

Monday 5 November to Saturday 10 November
Schools are marking the centenary of the end of the First World War with a week of action for peace. School assembly ideas and lesson plans are available from www.Remembrance100.co.uk

Sunday 11 November 2018
Many Remembrance Services around the country will be followed by Peace Parties.

100 DAYS OF PEACE + HOPE

You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you... all whose thoughts are fixed on you! Trust in the Lord always, for the Lord God is the eternal Rock.
Isaiah 26:3-4 (NLT)

PERFECT PEACE

Peace is not dependant on what is going on around us, but on what is going on within. I have often struggled with times of fear or anxiety. For 20 years being in the army or married to someone in the army, meant I was often called to face my fears. One of my hardest times was when my husband was fighting in the Iraq war, and our baby son was born in his absence. It was hard to find that place of faith where I truly believed all would be well, where I was truly able to put my trust in God.

But, God always remains constant, faithful and in control. As I learned to look to him I could start to see the world from his perspective, and find his perfect peace.

PRAYER
Father, thank you that you are my rock, my resting place, that in all situations you are all that I need. I pray that I might always know that ‘peace that passes all understanding’ as I find my rest in you. Amen

Rachel Ross Russell
served with the Armed Forces for 20 years and is now a secondary school chaplain.
SACRIFICE AND HOPE

My grandfather had the sad task of collecting bodies during the Great War, one of which was chosen for burial in the tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Westminster Abbey. There are four Bible verses inscribed around edges of the tomb, which speak to us about sacrifice and hope.

‘Greater love hath no man than this’ (John 15:13) is often quoted at Remembrance services. These are Jesus’ words to his followers: ‘My command is this: love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.’ Jesus showed the extent of his love by dying on a Roman cross.

‘In Christ shall all be made alive (1 Corinthians 15:22) reminds us that death is not the end. Jesus died and rose again, so we too can have life beyond the grave.

‘The Lord knoweth them that are his’ (2 Timothy 2:19) helps us to understand why Jesus died. His death means we can know God personally, a fact reinforced by the fourth verse: ‘Unknown and yet well known, dying and behold we live’ (2 Corinthians 6:9).

These words, literally set in stone, remind us that we are known by a loving God who gave his Son so whoever believes in him will have eternal life with him.

May we also live sacrificially with that same resurrection hope.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, as we grieve for those who have sacrificed their lives in so many wars, we thank you for the greatest sacrifice of all - your Son Jesus. Help us to live in the power of the resurrection today and every day, Amen.

ACTION

We may not be required to give up our lives for our country, but how can we show God’s love to our community? Giving our time, our money or our hospitality can be a sacrificial action. What will you give today?

Prayers and readings for Monday 6 August to Sunday 11 November can be downloaded in weekly sections from www.Remembrance100.co.uk
But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility.

Ephesians 2:13-14 (NIV)

BUILDING BRIDGES

In the social and civil context as well, I appeal not to create walls but to build bridges. To not respond to evil with evil. To defeat evil with good, the offence with forgiveness. A Christian would never say “You will pay for that.” Never. That is not a Christian gesture. An offence you overcome with forgiveness. To live in peace with everyone.’ Pope Francis speaking about attitudes to migrants in February 2017.

PRAYER
Lord Jesus, When we find it so easy to remember the faults of others and so difficult to understand our own, give us the will to build understanding between people and so dismantle the walls of hostility, in pursuit of your gift to the world of peace.

REST IN PEACE

‘Rest in peace.’ It’s a phrase commonly spoken over a loved one who has passed away. Often we say it because the person may have experienced many battles during their earthly life. A huge part of our Christian hope is that when we step into eternity with Jesus, all suffering will end. But we don’t have to wait until eternity to experience something of God’s precious peace. In Exodus 33, Moses is looking for some assurance from God as he leads the Israelites from slavery to freedom. In this moment God makes a beautiful promise – I will go with you, giving you peace and rest. It’s the amazing promise he makes to all of us.

PRAYER
Jesus you are the Prince of Peace who has promised to be with us always. Help us every day to be more tuned in to the reality of your presence and, as we do, may we experience your peace and rest, here and now – even on this side of heaven.
**RUNNING AFTER PEACE**

Blessed are the peacemakers, and one sure way of peace-making is to let the fire of contention alone. Neither fan it, nor stir it, nor add fuel to it, but let it go out by itself. Begin your ministry with one blind eye and one deaf ear.

Charles Spurgeon, 1834-1892.

**PRAYER**

God of Peace, in calling us to be people of peace, your Word reminds us of the need to reject evil and run after good. We pray that you would give us strength when we are feeling unable to run. Amen

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**FROM TRAGEDY TO HOPE**

In the face of tragedy, neglect and disaster - whether through war, terror or events such as the Grenfell Tower fire - it is right to lament the destruction of lives and communities. In doing so we can be brought from a realm dominated by individual pain to a shared resolve for a better world. In reading the scriptures (especially psalms of lament) we can become more sensitive to the sufferings of others whose experiences may be very different, and begin to hope. Our increased understanding helps us to see what justice, peace and reconciliation might look like, and how they might be accomplished. This will take not only courage and vision, but also the humility to listen and be changed.

**PRAYER**

God of infinite compassion, give us the strength to seek healing, justice and peace for all; the humility to listen to the voices of the marginalised and those who feel excluded; the ability to pursue tolerance amid difference, yet be intolerant towards evil and injustice; for the sake of your kingdom, demonstrated in Christ. Amen
I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.

John 16:33 (NIV)

Jon Stockley is Christian Vision for Men’s National Director for Wales.

When Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount, he declared: ‘Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God!’ I love that God is so committed to bringing peace into our world, communities, families and lives. Yet, we see from the life of Christ that peace always comes at great, personal cost. The purpose of Christ’s life was to bring peace and reconciliation between God and humanity, yet his life here on earth culminated in the most brutal death. For this everlasting peace to be won, Christ had to go to war with the enemy of our souls. He did that, then he came back from the dead and now we can all have peace with God.

PRAYER

Father God, we thank you that when your Kingdom comes, it always brings peace and reconciliation. We ask you to use your people to be true peacemakers, by bearing witness to your love and sharing the great news of Jesus Christ with everyone we meet. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen

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In 1918, this quote from John’s Gospel began appearing upon war memorials across Europe, commemorating those who had died. Many had indeed given their lives in battle in the hope that others might be saved. A century on, these are verses to be reclaimed in the hope that we might be able to live out Jesus’ words in peace, rather than war. That instead of dying in battle for others, we might live our lives in service that emulates Christ’s life. Our call is to live a life of love, loving one another as Jesus first loved us and walking in the way of justice and of peace.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, you have commanded us to love one another as you first loved us. Fill us today with your Father’s love, so that our lives might be lived serving others. We pray this too for those who lead our nations, that peace and love might prevail over conflict and military action. Amen

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Jesus said: ‘I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.’

John 16:33 (ESV)

**PEACE AMIDST TURMOIL**

Jos was known as a peaceful, welcoming city, but it all changed in September 2001 when fighting, killing and destruction began. Since then hundreds have been killed, homes destroyed and livelihoods lost. Outwardly there is relative peace in the city now, but recently more than 40 surrounding villages have been totally destroyed.

It is not spectacular programmes which bring peace; moves for peace do not make media headlines. Important factors are:

- **Prayer** – by thousands of people all over the world; this is what has held the church.

- **The building of relationships, on a personal basis as well as on a community level.** For example the members of a church and of a mosque acknowledged each other’s festivals; Christians reached out to non-Christians with programmes teaching handicraft skills, or offering free education to Muslim as well as to Christian children.

- **A determination that life must continue in as ‘normal’ a way as possible.** Families must be built; patterns of work must be maintained; sports must continue. Christians gather for worship, even when the church is a high risk target, and to get there may mean walking for several kilometres.

Through crises, faith can be built as the power and the presence of God is seen. Jesus did not promise to save us from trouble but he did promise to be with us in the trouble.

**PRAYER**

Almighty God, you sent into the world your Son, the Prince of Peace, to save us from the power of sin and evil. May we know his presence even in the midst of suffering; may violence cease, and may his justice and peace prevail. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen

**ACTION**

Pray for those who have lost families, homes, possessions and whose lives have been shattered. Go and talk to five church members and five non-church goers whom you do not know.
**HARD WORK OF MAKING PEACE**

If peace comes easily, if peace comes without hard work, is it truly peace? Sow, reap, harvest. The agricultural metaphor at the heart of this verse on peace implies hard work, faithfulness, a toiling in and out of season. All peace-making is hard work. Whether this is the peace we make in our families and communities or peace-building between nations. It requires time, energy, attentiveness and patience, but James’ promise is that those who do the hard work will reap a harvest of righteousness. In the words of the Iona community, true peace is: not an easy peace; not an insignificant peace; not a half-hearted peace... but the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**PRAYER**

God of Peace, grant us the energy, passion and determination to do the work of peace. May we be those who sow in peace and reap a harvest of righteousness. Not an easy peace, not an insignificant peace, not a half-hearted peace, but the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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**HE HIMSELF IS OUR PEACE**

If you’ve ever sat with a human being as they grieve desperate loss, you may find that words fail as you try to bring peace. But if a deeply trusted friend comes close, then very often peace begins to return without the need for words. When the depth of pain in a fresh wound is met by a greater depth of love, peace becomes possible. When God wanted to bring peace to the most troubled city in the history of our planet, he didn’t send words or ideas. He stepped through its gates with tears in his eyes. The Bible tells us that ‘he himself is our peace’. His desire is to come close enough to touch our troubled lives.

**PRAYER**

Lord Jesus, Prince of Peace, where there is pain, please come close. Where I need you, please come close. Where my people need you, please come close. Where my world needs you, please come close. Please open our eyes to ‘the things which make for peace’.
I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

John 15:5 (ESV)

PRACTISING PEACE

Jesus, the Prince of Peace, invites us to stay close and connected to him. Before his death, he spoke to his followers in the Upper Room. Using the metaphor of a vine and branches, Jesus explains that we can receive his life of love, joy and peace, just like branches that bear fruit because they receive sap from the vine. Without the sap, they will dry up and die. Even in the midst of life’s challenges, pressures, anxieties and fears, it is possible to know confidence and security.

If we abide in Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit we can experience what the apostle Paul calls the ‘fruit’ of peace, joy and love (Galatians 5:22-24).

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, amongst the many distractions challenges and fears in our lives, help us to draw near and stay connected to you so that we may receive your peace, joy and love. May these fruits grow and increase in our life.

Let peace start with me

Ever been overwhelmed by images of violence and war on TV, and prayed for peace, not knowing what else to do? Jesus calls us to find rest in him from such sorrows and take up his yoke. Following the bombing of Manchester arena, we witnessed people of all faiths and none standing together arm in arm, refusing to be manipulated into hate. Manchester’s rich tradition of people reaching out, smashing boundaries and building community, created a platform for peace. When we take up the yoke Jesus offered, we participate in the often mysterious work of the kingdom. Jesus teaches us to do what we can, where we are, and suddenly small acts of community become a peace imperative.

PRAYER

God of community, let peace start with me. As I pick up your yoke, clothe me in gentleness and humility, tempered with a little righteous anger. Give me rest from feeling inadequate, so that your peace flows through me, infecting all of my relationships, and building a platform for hope.
**100 DAYS OF PEACE + HOPE**

**17 AUGUST 87 DAYS**

_Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God._

Matthew 5:9 (NIV)

**PEACEMAKERS**

I notice more and more how my two young kids imitate what I do. They imitate some of my facial expressions and my mannerisms but more importantly they imitate some of my values. The good news of the gospel is that Jesus entered into the mess of human history to make peace between humanity and our heavenly Father. His life and death and resurrection enable us to know our true identity as children of God. And as we discover our true identity, we discover that we are invited to continue the mission of Jesus, bringing peace to the world - between warring family members, colleagues and communities. Ultimately, discovering our true identity means discovering we are entrusted with the gospel message to invite others to know God’s peace in their lives. As I watch my kids imitate me, let's look to how we can imitate the love and the grace of our Father in heaven.

**PRAYER**

_Father, remind me of my true identity as your child. Jesus, Prince of Peace, thank you for the peace you freely give me through your life, death and resurrection. Spirit of God, empower me to be a peacemaker in the world today._ Amen

**18 AUGUST 86 DAYS**

_For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not evil, to give you a future and a hope._

Jeremiah 29:11 (NKJV)

**THOUGHTS OF PEACE**

The Kingdom of God is righteousness and peace. True wisdom is never argumentative or quarrelsome. It does not strive. It maintains harmonious relationships with everyone, as far as possible. It is impossible to quarrel with man who is filled with divine wisdom, for such a man is peaceable man. Zac Poonen

**PRAYER**

_Thank you Lord for what I am going through in life; the ups and the downs. I trust that your Word will prevail in my life, as you have said that the thoughts you have for me are of peace and not evil, so I will abide in your abundant mercy all the days of my life through Christ Jesus._

**Andy Frost**
is the Director of Share Jesus International.

**Latifah Forrest**
works for the Peace Alliance, a charity that works in partnership with the police, government agencies, the corporate sector, and faith and voluntary organisations.
As Pakistani Christians we have faced persecution a number of times. One such example is the double suicide attack that took place at All Saints Church in Peshawar in September 2013 killing around 100 and injuring around 150. It is a lesser known fact that when the blasts took place, Muslim women living around the church, and shopkeepers from the surrounding cloth market, rushed to the site to help the injured taking them in cars, taxis ... whatever they could find, to the hospital.

Others took the mutilated bodies to graveyards, helping to dig the graves, and bury them. If the world has terrorists, it also has a greater number of good and noble people. The ordinary people of Pakistan are peace loving. During the past two decades they have also lost loved ones in the terrorist attacks, and most of them feel our pain when we as Christians go through persecution.

1 Corinthians 13:13 says, ‘And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.’ Even though we belong to different beliefs or communities, we can work harmoniously for a better and peaceful world. And when hatred tries to blind us, let the gift of love that God has placed in our hearts help us see more clearly.

PRAYER
Lord God, our heavenly Father, bless us as we come before you and hear our prayer. We pray to you for peace in our country, for tolerance in our hearts, and for wisdom to see the good in others. All this we ask in your Son’s Name. Amen

ACTION
Reach out to the people from other faiths in your community, especially the youth. Arrange an interfaith sports event or a weekend camp, make groups consisting of people from different faiths and give the groups tasks to perform together.
[Pray] ... for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity.
1 Timothy 2:2 (NIV)

PRAY FOR THOSE IN AUTHORITY

he soldier above all others prays for peace, for it is the soldier who must suffer and bear the deepest wounds and scars of war,’ said U.S. Army General Douglas MacArthur. Tasked with overseeing the occupation of Japan after World War II, General MacArthur understood that the fledgling peace had a spiritual element as well as a political element – that there was a ‘spiritual vacuum’ that only Christ could fill. He realised that in war, there were deep wounds that must be healed on both sides. In the midst of any war in our lives, we must go to the cross. Christ’s sacrifice gives us hope that no matter the conflict – we can be rescued; we can find salvation.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, bless our leaders and give them a spirit of peace. Protect our soldiers, physically and mentally, and give them strength to carry out their duties. Heal those who carry the ‘deepest wounds and scars of war’ and bring them closer to you. Amen

GREATER LOVE

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.
John 15:13 (AKJV)

Dr John Hargreaves is a Methodist Local Preacher, General Secretary of the Wesley Historical Society and Chairman of Halifax Civic Trust.

Horace Sykes sang in the choir of Salterhebble United Methodist Free Church, Halifax. He enlisted and served as a private in France. He sang to his fellow soldiers and the townspeople where he was stationed. He was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for conspicuous gallantry during a German gas attack for standing by a man who had become incapacitated under heavy fire and carrying him to a place of safety, and for helping carry the wounded from the trenches under shellfire. After returning from the war to Halifax, he died one week later aged 27 from Spanish Flu.

PRAYER

Gracious Father we thank you for the sacrifice of your Son Jesus Christ for all humanity and for all who have selflessly followed his example. Help each one of us to know his peace in our hearts and in our world today for his sacrifice is entirely sufficient. Amen
100 DAYS OF PEACE + HOPE

22 AUGUST
82 DAYS

...and it was a river that I could not pass through, for the water had risen. It was deep enough to swim in, a river that could not be passed through

Ezekiel 47:5 (ESV)

Roy and Daphne Godwin lead the work of Ffald y Brenin, a retreat, conference and missions base in southwest Wales.

WALES RELEASING BLESSING

Ezekiel paints a picture of a supernatural river of blessing flowing from the Temple which grows deeper as it travels. Similarly, a stream of blessing has been flowing from Ffald y Brenin in Wales which has resulted in hope, healing and peace for many. What started as a small local ministry has turned into a movement which now embraces the world. Networks are forming across the nations to pronounce blessings in the name of Jesus, and to be a blessing. As a result, we have seen feuds end; broken relationships healed; communities transformed; those who despair finding hope; the sick healed, and captives released. Blessing breaks curses, heals history (with repentance) and exalts Jesus.

PRAYER

Father, your heart and purpose is that peace may come. You have revealed Jesus as the Prince of Peace. We offer to you the areas of conflict in the world and ask you to raise up the peacemakers in the nations. We bless your purposes on the earth. In Jesus’ name. Amen

23 AUGUST
81 DAYS

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:7 (NIV)

Annika Mathews is a young adult exploring Christian vocation.

PEACE THE WORLD CANNOT GIVE

Although life inevitably has its ups and downs, we can rest assured that God is always there, journeying alongside us. I find it helpful when I have a really busy schedule to spend some time each day reading God’s Word, as well as constantly talking to Jesus throughout my day. Whenever things seem a bit overwhelming, I look to the ‘things above’, away from earthly concerns (Colossians 3:2), in order to give me a better sense of perspective of God’s great plans for us. I take heart from the fact that he freely gives us his peace, which is incomparable to anything we can experience here on earth.

PRAYER

Dear Lord, amidst the troubles of this world, we pray that your inner peace will be present in all those who believe in you. We pray that those currently living in strife will experience peace and seek comfort in the confident hope you inspire for the future. Amen
One of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.’ He said to them, ‘When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name...’


ABBA FATHER

Harry Goslin was the Bolton Wanderers FC Captain in 1939 at outbreak of World War II. Influenced by those who sacrificed in the Great War he made a passionate speech to the players and crowd at the end of a game calling on them to join him in serving his country. Every player signed up to the Bolton Royal Artillery. Serving in Italy, Harry was the only one who didn’t return. Bill his son, now in his 80s, lost his dad at an early age. Two years ago I went out to Italy with the Bolton Royal Artillery as we re-traced the steps of the Wanderers at War. I conducted a service at the war grave of Harry Goslin. Bill was present, seeing his father’s grave for the first time. Bill, full of emotion, told me that now re-united with his own dad he could pray ‘Our Father’ for the first time and know what it meant. Out of the pain of loss had come a new hope and peace as he knew the Father’s love.

PRAYER

Abba, Father we thank you for your love that surrounds us and supports us even when we are unaware. Help us to recognise we are your children and that you hold us in times of trauma, turmoil and tears and well as times of joy. Amen

Phil Mason
is Bolton Wanderers’ chaplain and heads the charity arm of the Club Bolton Wanderers Community Trust.

GOD IS LOVE, EVEN IN WAR

April 5, 1918. Church Times. ‘The Church Army’s place as a hut provider in the very closest possible neighbourhood to the front trenches has been proved by the loss of fifty-two of its recreation huts, tents, and centres in the German advance, and almost certain loss of five more, under heavy shelling at the time of information. The loss includes all the stores and equipment. The staffs of these huts and tents are all safe as far as known, with the exception of those who stopped behind to help the stretcher bearers’. Prominent in Church Army work was a sign, ‘God is Love’. In the front-line God’s love was shared. It was love from the cross of Jesus, for all.

PRAYER

Father, help me to show your love to those around me. Amen

Captain Jim Currin
is a responsible for Evangelisation, Mission and Media for Churches Together in England and is commissioned in the Church Army of the Church of England.
So many of us have been left shocked as we have seen numerous newspaper reports of teenagers stabbed or shot in London since the beginning of 2018. In the midst of this horror I am reminded of something that happened in South America many years ago. A Christian pastor disturbed by the number of local killings gathered Christians to pray in a stadium in Cali, Colombia. That night there were no murders - unheard of in many years. What followed was a Christian revival that remains strong to this day. George Otis produced the Transformations videos in the late nineties, detailing this story. If God can transform a whole community through prayer in South America, he can do it in London or in your local streets as well.

In response to violence, local churches and individual Christians are prayer-walking the streets, bringing God’s light to the shadow being cast as violence spreads. Join in prayer-walking with people from your church. As we walk together, may we see London, our local streets, and the whole of the UK changed.

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**PRAYER**

Lord, we pray that your teaching about loving our enemies, will be made famous across the streets of London, changing hearts and minds away from violence and despair. Help divided communities find common ground and heal divisions. Bring profound friendships between people from different cultures and backgrounds, and let love reign! Amen

**ACTION**

Choose a place in your local area where there has been some trouble recently. As a group, make a plan to prayer-walk this area. Wear a t-shirt with a saying of Jesus on the back. Hand out Christian literature that shows people how much God loves them.
I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.
John 10:10 (ESV)

Rev Dr Michael Jagessar is responsible for Global and Intercultural Ministries of the United Reformed Church.

LOVE IS STRONGER

‘P’ eace on earth, good will to all people’, were words located in the context of occupation. People were desperate for a ‘saviour-liberator’. The ‘good news’ offer of full life for all does not mean that our walls and our updated defence capability will insulate us from the evils of war. The allure of war still inhabits the imagination of whole nations. The good news, though, is that love is strong enough to come in weakness, neutralising fears and offering openings towards greater understanding of each other. In offering love as antidote to the culture of death and hate, God gives rather than rob or steal. There lies our hope. This hope is grounded on God’s faithfulness. It is based on the possibilities of God irrespective of how things are. It thrives even in situations that can elicit utter hopelessness – for it is based upon God breaking into our midst to transform. Remember well!

PRAYER
Lover-of-justice-and-peace, shape our consciences and hearts according to your way of just, peaceful and loving lives. Move us beyond fear to speak with compassionate courage and to act with both conviction and humility. Give us ears, eyes, hearts and voices to discern, respond and embody hope through our actions, in private and in public. Bless us with wholeness, and through your Spirit continue to sustain us in the face of powerful forces bent on denying life.

Great peace have those who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble.
Psalm 119:165 (NIV)

Jadesola Ayoola works for the Peace Alliance, a national crime reduction charity founded as a response to the rise in knife crime across London.

SOLID FOUNDATION

H ope is called the anchor of the soul (Hebrews 6:19) because it gives us the ability and stability as Christians to ‘wish’ for something (I wish that such-and-such would take place). It is that which latches on the certainty of the promise of the future, which God has made for you and me.

PRAYER
Dear heavenly Father, thank you for another day of grace. I humbly ask that my hope in you remains the foundation of my faith, giving me the ability and capability to ask for anything through your Son Jesus Christ.
Peace I leave with you... I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.
John 14:27 (NIV)

Sophie Jelley is Canon Missioner at Durham Cathedral and Director of Mission, Discipleship & Ministry for the Diocese of Durham.

**OUT OF THIS WORLD**

Sometimes we need peace from another place: a really busy day, a tough set of circumstances or some unexpected news. Maybe this is true for you just now or perhaps for someone you know. The Bible tells us that God loves to give good gifts to his children as a kind and loving Father. We may not always recognise his gift when it comes but he wants us to know his peace. Peace is ‘shalom’ it means wholeness, life and wellbeing. Ask God to give you the gift of his peace, his shalom today in your home, work, friendships and among those you meet. Gifts do not always come as we expect but be open to receive his peace today.

**PRAYER**

Loving God, grant me your peace this day: Speak peace over my home. Speak peace over my work. Speak peace over all I love and those who love me. Grant patience in times of waiting - that the world may know your gift of peace, through Jesus, Prince of Peace. Amen

**REMEMBER THE ELEPHANT**

On my first trip to Asia we visited projects and schools, hospitals and churches. There was only one thing left to do: ride an elephant. Although situated in the heart of a vast city an elephant was located, we clambered on his back. Up there it was possible to look down on the traffic: here a motorbike with a family of five, mum side-saddle on the back carrying the baby; there a bicycle with a chest of drawers on the handlebars.

I could see that a police officer on the junction would soon sort all the hooting and commotion. Then I remembered, it was me that was sitting on the elephant!

**PRAYER**

Help me, Creator God to climb off the mighty elephant of my own opinions. Let humility transform the way I meet others, so that, through listening and learning the world will be changed from the inside out.

Happy are those who find wisdom...
Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.
Proverbs 3:13-18 (NRSV)

Rev Dr Barbara Glasson is Deputy Chair of the Yorkshire West Methodist District and Team Leader at Touchstone, an interfaith project in Bradford.
But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 (NRSV)

HOPE IN GRIEF

The Thessalonian Christians believed in the speedy return of our Lord Jesus Christ. They appeared to believe that death was the end, and that only those who are alive when Jesus returns would go to heaven. Paul wrote to let them, and now us, know that there is coming a day when even the dead will rise again. Our loving God who moved in power to create the world and all that is in it, is the same one who will raise the bodies of the dead.

This should comfort our hearts as it did the hearts of those first followers of Christ.

PRAYER
Our God of love and truth, we bring before you on this day those who have gone before us and those whose names we will continue to remember. Help us to lift our eyes above this world’s troubles and let us find hope in you alone. Through Jesus Christ our Lord and Redeemer. Amen

A CITY OF PEACE

The fullness of peace is not just the cessation of violence and threat, but the fullness of God’s kingdom and his presence. As we pray for the peace of God to be evident in our cities and the places we live, let us not limit the effects of his peace at work in and through us. Let us see its fullness as we look to him for the wisdom, understanding and knowledge to build our cities as he would have them built, where all are loved, cared for and honoured.

PRAYER
Father, may your peace be evident in our cities. We ask that in your peace we may know your wisdom, understanding and knowledge. Father, may we be made one in you through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen
At one time you were far away from God. But now you belong to Christ Jesus. He spilled his blood for you. This has brought you near to God. Christ himself is our peace.

Ephesians 2:11-18 (NIV)

CHRIST OUR PEACE

Around the world God is working through his children who, as advocates for peace, bring healing to those whose lives have been damaged by war. Some wounds are still raw and sensitive since the conflicts may be recent or continuing. In those cultures, without a Christian world-view, the call for revenge has to be replaced with a desire to forgive. The process begins with those who are willing to take a first step towards forgiveness.

One of my friends conducts ‘Healing the wounds of ethnic conflict’ workshops in war-torn areas. Another is writing reconciliation songs in culturally-sensitive ways and training young people from such areas to sing them. Another has had to be moved out of a war-torn zone for her own safety. Another is bringing aid to refugees and orphans in war-torn Iraq and seeking to disciple them. Some address the historical nature of continuing antagonism in order to dismantle ongoing prejudice and foster reconciliation. Others are seeking to follow God’s leading in restorative justice, in dealing with past genocides, as in Rwanda.

As we pray today for the victims from the various wars, let us pray particularly for women and girls. They are the ones who face the trauma of losing their fathers, husbands, brothers, sons. They are the innocent victims. Their grief is seldom recognised, but God sees, knows, and empathises. Can they learn to forgive also?

PRAYER

Father, thank you that forgiveness is always available from you. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Please help all those who need to forgive their enemies to do so with grace and love, and to embrace all that is involved, with Christ’s help. Amen

ACTION

Fill a shoe-box with children’s goodies and take it to a refugee family who have fled a conflict zone. Listen to their story, and respond with love and understanding.
I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid.
John 14:27 (NLT)

A MAN OF PEACE?
As a young Christian, this promise from Jesus of inner peace became precious. Recently married, living in a new area, teaching in secondary school, was not conducive to such peace. But this gift was transformational. My inner life changed from ‘jagged black and white’ into a blend of beautiful colours. Since then this ‘inner peace’ has served me well. When I have lost it, it has been time to take stock of my life and sort out some issues. If big decisions have been required, the peace or lack of it has guided me. Faced with scary new challenges, this verse has set me on a calmer path, reminding me that I never face the future alone. What a gift!

PRAYER
Heavenly Father, Thank you that into a turbulent world you sent Jesus, the Prince of Peace, through whom we may have peace with you. Grant again today to your servant the gift of peace in mind and heart, through the power of your Holy Spirit. Amen

LOVE AND HOPE
The flow of love from God the Father, through his Son is as the life giving sap flowing through the vine in Jesus’ parable. The same love flows through us, in the power of the Holy Spirit, bringing the possibility of the fruit of hope and peace in those we meet. For Jesus it showed itself in sacrificial commitment. We give thanks for those who have made sacrificial commitments for us over the years and hope and pray that we may be channels of the same love today. May a needy and desperate world know the same depth of healing love.

PRAYER
God of Peace, may the world know more of your love. May we all learn to show sacrificial love to those who we meet each day. God of Love, may the healing fruits of your Holy Spirit bring peace to your world. God of Hope, please use us as fruitful channels of your love today. Amen
**Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**

Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV)

**PEACE PRESENCE**

As a parent, I often think of peace as the absence of noise, and as a soldier, the absence of fighting. But as a Christian I have come to realise that peace isn’t the absence of anything, rather the presence. It comes from a strong inner trust or hope that things will turn out OK; that we need not fear or be anxious. Whilst ‘Don’t worry’ is easier said than done, God has made it simple for anyone to be filled with peace: trust in him, pray and ask with a thankful heart. I cannot think of anyone better qualified to handle my problems (or yours) or anyone more worthy of our trust, than the creator of heaven and earth.

**PRAYER**

Lord God, thank you that you offer each of us your peace, which surpasses all understanding. I am sorry for the times when I have not trusted you. I place my worries, and leave them, at the cross, and receive your peace. In the power of your Holy Spirit, Amen

**JESUS CALMER OF STORMS**

‘What kind of man is this?’ He is the one whom winds and waves obey. Jesus, the one with power to calm every storm. He is the one to calm storms of nature, storms within us and storms between us. Jesus, the shalom of God, who brings peace and wholeness into our damaged and fragmented lives.

Lord have mercy upon us and bring peace and make us peacemakers.

**PRAYER**

Lord Jesus, bringer of peace, hope, and reconciliation. We pray for those of us facing storms in our lives - may you calm them in your victorious love. We pray for the war torn places of our world that you would pour out words that bring healing and restoration. Through your death and resurrection we have peace. Through your risen life we have hope. In Jesus name. Amen
WAR AND HUMAN CHOICES

The student of international relations may be tempted to search through history for the causes of past wars and then form the impression that at some point war became inevitable. In fact nothing is inevitable. Only the One who stands outside time and space can see the whole picture. We merely impose patterns on events and forget that events are shaped by what humankind chooses to do or not do. Wars break out when we lose faith in our ability to create our own futures; we convince ourselves that diplomacy has failed and that war is the only way to prevent war; and so we have wars and we absolve ourselves of blame by saying that they had become inevitable.

PRAYER

Lord teach us to have faith in your strength, and give us the courage to continue the struggle for peace and right relations at all times, especially when all seems lost. We believe you have already won for us the victory.

OVERFLOWING JOY

During World War I posters declared, ‘Your King and country need you, enlist now!’ We honour those who responded, going to war and sacrificing their lives in the hope that we would live in peace. Sadly that peace did not last long as World War II followed soon after. Jesus came as the Prince of Peace and said, ‘I leave the gift of peace with you—my peace. Not the kind of fragile peace given by the world, but my perfect peace.’ When we choose to walk with Jesus, his peace and hope are there for us exactly when we need it. He empowers us to live our lives today full of hope, uncontainable joy and perfect peace sometimes despite our circumstances.

PRAYER

Father God, help us to walk with Jesus that we may be filled to overflowing with your hope, uncontainable joy and perfect peace trusting you, no matter our circumstances. Like Jesus let us be vessels of blessing and peace to all those we meet. Amen
...one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear. But Jesus answered, ‘No more of this!’ And he touched the man’s ear and healed him.

Luke 22:49-51 (NIV)

Rev Dr Peter Howson is a Methodist Minister who served for 25 years as an army chaplain who is Secretary of the Society for Army Historical research and writer of books on army chaplaincy.

WHEN FIGHTING STOPS

The work of the Religious Affairs Branch of the British Element of the Control Commission Germany between 1945 and 1950, helped to involve the German and British churches in the establishment of a society where human dignity was to be respected. Its work helped the German churches to recognise that they had something to offer to the new state. Its work helped the British churches understand that the light of Christ’s love had never been fully extinguished during the dreadful years of the Nazi era. It helped both to understand that change was needed to achieve reconciliation.

The man of war may raise the sword during conflict but once it is over there is a new task. The disciples could not have healed the High Priest’s severed ear, but Jesus could and did. In doing so he gave an example for all those who would follow him. We need to recognise that the need to feed the hungry, heal the sick, and give freedom to prisoners of war, has a particular urgency in the aftermath of conflict.

PRAYER

O God, when we have destroyed infrastructure to win a war so that others are hungry and homeless, help us to move swiftly to ensure that the vulnerable do not continue to suffer once the fighting has finished, that we may become peacemakers, for we ask in Jesus’ name. Amen

ACTION

In any current conflict think what is the first thing that will need to be done once the fighting stops and then consider how that might be achieved.
The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.
Numbers 6:24-26 (NIV)

BLESS YOUR ENEMIES

Jesus challenges us to love our enemies. Craftivist Sarah Corbett suggests how to do this as part of gentle activism to make the world more peaceable and beautiful. Identify someone with influence over an issue you feel strongly about, who you see as part of the problem. Find out as much about them as you can (who their heroes are, what they enjoy, even what they wear) and try to understand the pressures they are under. Take time to make a personalised gift or card for them to show them support, to build them up as they take difficult decisions, encouraging them to remember the impact they can have for good. Whilst you are making this, and after you have sent it, pray the priestly blessing (Numbers 6:24-26) for them.

PRAYER
Father of all, help me to move from hate to love; from them to us; from against, to with. Give me compassion for my enemies. Inspire me to pray for them and seek to bless them.

Finding Peace

Following the loss of a serviceman in World War I, it was the custom to send a letter of condolence, written by the soldier’s commanding officer. An elderly church member once showed me the note received on the death of her uncle. It testified to his bravery and related that he had ‘passed away peacefully after smoking a last cigarette’. Her uncle had asthma and had never been able to smoke. The kindly intended letter merely increased the pain and sense of loss for the family. It disguised the horror of a more violent death. When the guns of war fall silent, the physical and mental scars remain. The peace of God is a precious gift in our darkest suffering.

PRAYER
Loving God, we come to you in our human frailty and seek your peace. When all feels lost, encircle us in your loving arms, give us the strength to carry on. Settle our troubled hearts and help us to trust that, in your endless love, we need never be afraid. Amen
**GOD – THE PLACE OF PEACE**

We all want to know the peace of God in our lives, especially when life is hard. In 2010, my two sons were serving with the Royal Anglian Regiment. As a mother, it was one of the hardest times to feel at peace. Being alongside families whose loved ones were serving, and supporting one another through difficult times made such a difference. Yet nothing could actually change our circumstances or remove our fears. How important it was to remember then and now, that the peace of God isn’t about changing circumstances, avoiding reality or removing negative thoughts. The peace of God is the presence of God himself, triumphing over the facts and lifting us over and through them.

**PRAYER**

Thank you, Father God, for your peace that passes all understanding and for your constant presence with us, holding and sustaining us through difficult times. We ask you to bring comfort and hope to those who mourn the loss of loved ones, and to surround with your peace the families of those currently serving.

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**PEACE AT HOME**

Friends. Family. Colleagues. Spouses. Kids. Depending on the day you’ve had, the words of the psalm might be resonating strongly! Because, if we’re honest, sometimes the hardest places to find peace are those closest to home. But what a difference it makes to be at peace with people, and to know we are right with those we see day-in, day-out. The psalmist celebrates the joy of being in unity. It’s not just the absence of conflict but the joy of being united; the feeling that we are on the same team. So, what can you do to build peace in your life today, not by keeping quiet but by truly being united with one another?

**PRAYER**

Lord, help us to live in peace with those closest to us today, and all days.
Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

John 14:27 (ESV)

Michael Cooper is CVM’s National Director for England & Scotland.

PEACE BEYOND UNDERSTANDING

History has recorded many statements and quotations relating to peace. As we meditate on the events of 100 years ago we might recall those promises and commitments made to building a world that lives in peace. Ronald Reagan said, ‘A people free to choose will always choose peace’ and that is surely so. Each of us who enjoy freedom can choose a peace that passes all understanding. When we accept Jesus into our lives we receive God’s Holy Spirit; he brings a deep and lasting peace. Unlike worldly peace, defined as the absence of conflict, this peace is confident assurance in any circumstance. With Christ’s peace, we need not fear the present nor the future. In commemoration, choose that peace.

PRAYER

Father, thank you for your gift of peace, freely given. Help us to trust wholly in you and your will for our lives. May our actions be rooted in love. Amen

Justice will rule in the wilderness and righteousness in the fertile field. And this righteousness will bring peace.

Isaiah 32:16-17 (NLT)

Simeon Mitchell is Secretary for Church and Society for the United Reformed Church.

QUIETNESS AND TRUST

When civil rights leader Martin Luther King was accused of ‘disturbing the peace’ by supporting Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955, he responded, ‘True peace is not merely the absence of tension: it is the presence of justice.’ Later, he added, ‘Without justice, there can be no peace.’

His words find echoes in the wisdom of Isaiah. For society to flourish and be fruitful, peace needs to be built on a foundation of justice and righteousness. Injustice is often a root cause of conflict, both in local communities and between nations. Only by listening to the experiences of the marginalised, and addressing injustices such as discrimination and poverty, will we be able to build a truly peaceful world.

PRAYER

We ask for the honest peace of struggles acknowledged, the demanding peace of forgiveness, the longed-for peace of justice established. Lord, grant us peace.
The psalmist’s cry resonates: ‘O Lord! How long?’ Over the 25 years I have been a pastor I have prayed this prayer with many people crying out to God for breakthrough. It must also have been the cry of those who prayed for peace during the First World War. Waiting takes its toll. We hold on to a word or a promise from God, but as time passes, and there is no manifestation of the promise, we grow weary. I am certain the prophet Elijah was there too when he prayed for rain after three years of drought. Six times his hopes were dashed. Six times he was invited to question whether he had indeed heard God. Six times he would have had to quell the doubts rising in his heart. He stayed on his knees.

He refused to let hope die. He continued to pray. He asked the servant to go back and check for the seventh time. And the seventh time was different. There was a change in the natural circumstances that signalled that the answer was on its way. A cloud as small as a man’s hand was rising out of the sea. I can almost hear the prophet’s voice strong and resolute as he gave his instructions: ‘Go down before the rain stops you’ (1 Kings 18:44).

Heavenly Father, as we pray for revival in our nation we cry out to you, ‘O Lord! How long?’ Pour out your love on our land, and help us to persevere in prayer, we pray in the mighty name of Jesus. Amen

Giving activates spiritual breakthroughs. Be very open to the leading of the Holy Spirit. He will lead you to sow your time, talent and treasure.
100 DAYS OF PEACE + HOPE

17 SEPTEMBER
56 DAYS

But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.

2 Corinthians 4:7 (NIV)

Kiera Phyo is Director of the Reconciling Leaders Network, based at Lambeth Palace, London.

BIG DREAMS

When we think about reconciliation, we’re dreaming of a big picture. We’re imagining how we can be involved in the renewal of this world, making the earth a kinder, fairer, more equal home. We’re galvanising the activist within us, the pursuers of peace and changemakers. But sometimes life is much more ordinary than that sounds. The reality of our life is that we’re just hoping the long list of jobs won’t overwhelm us. The risk of talking about changing the world and being a force for good could make us end up feeling more guilty and creating an even longer to-do list. But God is reconciling the world to himself, that all of creation may find freedom, liberation and peace within him. We are the ordinary people - the jars of clay - that he uses to make it happen. Even in our mundane every day lives, he is working to make his big picture our reality.

PRAYER
We pray that God would work powerfully through us, showing the treasure of his peace through our chipped, broken and ordinary lives.

18 SEPTEMBER
55 DAYS

My hand will be against the prophets who see false visions... Because they lead my people astray, saying, ‘Peace,’ when there is no peace, and because, when a flimsy wall is built, they cover it with whitewash.

Ezekiel 13:9-10 (NIV)

Peter Amos is a retired Baptist Minister who has served Barnsley FC since 1996.

LASTING PEACE

Peace would do wrong to our undying dead. The sons we offered might regret they died if we got nothing lasting in their stead.

Written by Wilfred Owen, 23 September 1918, in his poem Smile, Smile, Smile *. He was killed in action on 4 November 1918 at the age of 25, one week before the Armistice.

* Wilfred Owen: The War Poems edited by Jon Stallworthy (Chatto & Windus, 1994)

PRAYER
God of peace we thank you for those who sacrificed their lives so that we could live in peace. We pray for nations where peace is the polar opposite of their daily reality. We pray also for those whose peace is shattered within the nations that benefit from peace that was bought at such a high price. Oh that the price that was paid would be worth it: that all may live with peace without and peace within now and always. Through Jesus Christ. Amen
100 DAYS OF PEACE + HOPE

Then I heard a voice from heaven say, ‘Write this: blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘they will rest from their labour, for their deeds will follow them.’
Revelation 14:13 (ESV)

WASTED LIVES?

The shocking waste of lives cut short. How can these dead be ‘blessed’? What comfort is it for those barely begun to ‘rest from their labour’? Who knows what fruit might have grown from these fledgling lives? God seeks not for our faults, but for signs of his life in us. Each act of kindness, sacrifice, or love – however small – he sees, nurtures, and grows. The smallest deed of grace is a seed he cultivates. It follows us not just as a memory, but as a gathering maturity of God’s nature sowed in others.

What astonishment when we turn and see what he has made of our lives. ‘In the Lord,’ their labour – and ours – will not be in vain.

PRAYER
Lord Jesus Christ, who completes every good work, may we rest from our striving to make a name for ourselves, for it leads only to strife; may we know the peace that comes from serving you; and may we hope in the fruitfulness that only you can bring forth.
Amen

FORGIVENESS IS NOT EASY

Don’t repay evil for evil; that is a hard lesson. I have seen some extraordinary examples of this on the battlefield where colleagues have been killed or injured yet the soldiers hold the line. Or the wife of one of the pilots in the 9/11 attacks who publicly forgave the terrorist who killed so many on that day. The gymnast who, after being abused by her doctor, was able to say in court that she forgave him so that he might come to know grace, to ‘find grace where none should be’. How can these people offer forgiveness? At least in the last two accounts it is because they know the peace that comes from knowing Jesus; they can seek peace and pursue it.

PRAYER
Lord, in a world which often seems so evil, let us hold on to your Word, to seek peace and pursue it.
**DO NOT BE AFRAID**

For as long as we manufacture fear, we will look for warrior heroes. Not only heroes, but machinery of war and order, and the everyday safeguards of privatised living, ringfenced land and water, property and fuel stocks, gated homes and borders, nest-eggs and reputations...

But blessed are those who consider birds and lilies, risk persecution and peace-making, and despite being hurt, refuse (more courageously than any warrior) the temptation to harden defences. If you love me you will keep my commandments, he said. And then the strange commandment, unreasonable imperative: Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

PRAYER

Teach us, Peaceful Prince, the art of living without harmful defences, so we might bear the mystery of your passion in resurrection hope.

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**PEACE IN OUR CHURCH FAMILY**

It can often be a challenge to ensure each person in our church family has space both to be heard and cared for. Having opportunities to meet in small groups – for adults, young people and children – helps us all to journey together well. But we will all know of other occasions, whether in the leadership team or within our congregations, when different stances on issues can cause tensions. Whatever the size of our church, misunderstandings do happen and hasty actions/words can result in a breakdown of trust and relationships. How important it is for us to oil the wheels with our prayers and so ensure that our church family stands firm to be a beacon of light, peace and hope in our communities.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, we ask you to help each person in our church family (name those in your small group) to be completely humble and gentle in our life with each other; and to be patient, learning to bear with one another’s faults in love. Help us Lord, to keep the unity of the Spirit. Bind us together in peace. Amen
Let a little water be brought, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree. Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed...

Genesis 18:4-5 (NIV)

This story of Abraham and Sarah’s welcome is a model of hospitality. When he notices three strangers on the horizon, Abraham is recovering from his recent circumcision, resting in the midday sun. Yet he runs to greet these unknown travellers, welcoming them to stay for refreshment. He orders the fattest calf to be slaughtered. Sarah bakes cakes, and together they prepare a feast for their guests. Abraham stands by to serve and converse with them, and before long he and Sarah discover they are not the hosts after all. It is their guests who came to deliver a gift – the message of a long awaited son.

The hosts are now guests – the tables are turned. And this is a model for our own hospitality to strangers today. Do we welcome those who are far off – unknown or unnoticed visitors to our homes and churches? Are we willing to be their guests also – to sit and eat in their places? When we reach across a divide in a moment of radical hospitality, we can find ourselves welcoming not only the stranger, but Christ himself.

PRAYER
Father God, we know that you are the great reconciler of all things. We pray that we would see with your eyes, notice your image in unlikely people and reach out to them with your hospitality. Ask God to show you, then take action.

ACTION
What does radical hospitality look like in your context? This week, who could you welcome to your home or your church?
WE WILL REMEMBER

We must always remember. But remember what? History is not just written by winners, everyone has their own history. In John, Jesus says, ‘There will be one flock, one shepherd’ and many feel that was what we were fighting for, allied with Russia, in World War I. Yet, Bulgaria and Romania, on opposite sides in World War I fought together in World War II. Ukraine fought Poland for independence in 1918, yet in 1945 one of the first people to open the gate at Auschwitz and free many Polish prisoners was the Ukrainian, Ihor Pobirchenko. Jesus calls us to bring all sheep into his fold, yet we are constantly being separated by the corruption of politics, business and lust for power. Can brotherhood be so cheaply traded?

PRAYER

As I walk with friends Lord, they will hold my hand. As I walk among strangers Lord, help me hold their hand. As I walk with you Lord, you will hold my hand, Amen

GIVE ME YOUR HAND

The key text for John Wesley’s famous sermon on catholic spirit might appear at first to be a strange choice for Wesley’s sweeping account of Christian love, its generosity, and, as he puts it, ‘unspeakable tenderness’. He argues that diversity of opinion or belief need not prevent our walking together peaceably; ‘though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike?’ The joined hands of Jehu and Jehonadab provide a glimpse of ‘tenderness’ amidst an otherwise brutal catalogue of massacre and judgement. In a context of stark enmity in the house of Israel, Wesley identifies a moment of kinship, and its wider resonance for universal love. A truly catholic spirit, Wesley writes, is a heart ‘enlarged toward’ all humanity.

PRAYER

Loving God, you urge us to the way of peace and kinship. Enlarge our hearts towards those we find difficult to love. May your unspeakable tenderness be known in the world.
How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity! ...For there the LORD bestows his blessing, even life for evermore.  
Psalm 133:1-3 (NIV)

Clive Langmead works with the armed forces in disaster response. After a career at sea he joined the BBC for 20 years and has written seven biographies.

SEA CHANGE

In 1982 I was First Officer of an 8,000 ton ocean liner sailing South American waters: 300 volunteers from 35 nationalities, including 25 Brits and about 30 Argentine. The Bos’n was the senior Argentinian; I the British. In April came the Falklands crisis. Warm fellowship cooled. Familiar friendly greetings turned to embarrassed silence. Departmental organisation suffered. I met the Bos’n on deck. ‘Roberto’ I said. ‘Can we pray for some solution?’ So all the Argentine and British volunteers met to pray that afternoon. And peace, with some tears, returned to us. And us to our calling.

PRAYER

Lord, help me to take a deliberate and provocative step for peace this week by speaking caringly to someone I know is offended by me, and to apologise to them even if the offence is not real, or meant, or my fault. I do this in Jesus name. Amen

Enid Gordon is a Methodist Minister who has served as a human rights observer with the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Accompanier programme.

PEACE AND JUSTICE

Peace is not the absence of war. True peace involves seeing ‘the other’ through the eyes of God as someone loved and cherished, even worth dying for. By standing alongside people who are oppressed, meeting their need for clean water to drink, nourishing food to eat and shelter to protect them from freezing cold or scorching heat, we are offering hope in what appears to be a hopeless situation. By offering friendship, we are continuing the work that Jesus began. Spending money on making or buying weapons that kill and maim and poison our environment does not contribute to peace or justice, but causes even more deprivation and suffering.

PRAYER

Loving and generous God, we thank you for all your goodness to us. Strengthen our resolve to listen to you, to discern how you can best use us to share in your work of answering the prayers of those who long for justice, peace and reconciliation. Amen
Jesus said, ’My kingdom is not of this world.’
John 18:33-38 (NIV)

Robert Jackson joined the Navy from school, got kicked out, became a Christian, got ordained, and was a school chaplain for a couple of decades before returning to the Navy as a chaplain.

WHOSE KINGDOM?

 Pilate, as an agent of Rome, has, in his hands, the ultimate sanction of any human authority - the power over life and death. Earthly kingdoms, ultimately, rely on their ability to inflict suffering and death in order to prevail. The Kingdom of Heaven, that Jesus inaugurates, overcomes death and ushers in a new age where suffering and death are no more. I have recently started working at Faslane, where the ability of the British Government to inflict suffering and death has its ultimate and most terrible expression.

PRAYER
Lord Jesus, we look forward to your return in glory with keen anticipation, but in this current age, we pray wisdom and grace for those who hold the reins of power. May they recognise you as the source of all authority and seek to govern in Truth and in Love.

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you!’
John 20:19 (NIV)

Tim Lucas is church liaison officer at Saltbox, a charity based in Stoke-on-Trent.

RESURRECTION PEACE

The disciples had witnessed the death of Christ. Fearful of the land in which they lived, what might happen to them, the authorities that ruled in the city, and the uncertainty of their situation, they had locked themselves away. Similar fear can grip many of us in a number of countries and communities: where war grips the land, where safety cannot be ensured, where corrupt governments or the mob rule, and where the future is certainly unclear. Yet to all Christ says the same: ‘Peace be with you.’

Peace is the message of the risen Christ, and it is for peace that he is now revealed to us, just as he was to those first disciples.

PRAYER
Risen Christ, remembering your resurrection, and the message of peace that accompanies it, we pray for peace to be with us. May the peace of Christ rule in our hearts, as we hear the call to live in peace through unity. May we see you, and know peace here. Amen
Dear Grandpa,

I’m shortly to set off for the Somme to meet a German, retracing the journey you took just over 100 years ago to face the Germans. I’m taking your identity tag inscribed with your name and military number, and scanty memories of what you experienced. My uncle, your youngest son, told me that your service included collecting those injured and the bodies of those killed from no man’s land.

The German I’m meeting is named Martin, a personal friend from a partnership between the churches we served. We discovered that we each had grandfathers who served at the Somme. Like you, his grandfather was a Christian. You share Christian names too, you being Frederick and he was Friedrich.

As we meet, Martin will remember his grandfather and I’ll remember you, and we’ll both reflect on the folly of war.

I wonder if in another 100 years, other friends may meet to remember the folly of conflicts fought in our lifetime, for we have not yet learned to live in peace.

Yours in love, sorrow and hope,
David

PRAYER
Dear God, Thank you for our names, Frederick or Friedrich, Fresa or Frida, engraved on identity tags in conflict, inscribed on the palms of your hands in eternity. Help us to forget ‘sides’, recognise the child of God in each person, and draw closer to living as sisters and brothers in peace.

ACTION
Write a letter either to someone from the other ‘side’ seeking reconciliation and peace. What would you say to them? If you could meet, what gift might you take?
So we say with confidence, ‘The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?’
Hebrews 13:6 (NIV)

Mike Forsyth is a trainee vicar at Ridley Hall in Cambridge. Prior to training he served in the RAF as a Logistics Officer.

GOD IS ON YOUR SIDE

When deployed on exercises with the RAF Mobile Catering Squadron I learnt never to worry about being fed. Though food ran out on the servery in the mess tent, freshly cooked food always appeared. Deploying with the chefs, the creators of food, meant I need not fear going hungry! God is the creator of the universe and he is our helper; we have no need to fear. We have peace because of who we are with. God is with us whatever the circumstances; even when life is not going as intended. (Who hopes for conflict at work, or to see family unwell?) He is our helper who we can trust. He has not brought us this far to forsake us.

PRAYER
Heavenly Father, you are the creator of the world and your love for us endures forever. Wherever we go and whatever we do, you are there. Help us to know your presence with us so that we will not be afraid. Make us messengers of your peace. Amen

Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.
Hebrews 12:14-15 (NIV)

Latifah Forrest works for the Peace Alliance, a charity that works in partnership with the police, government agencies, the corporate sector, and faith and voluntary organisations.

INNER PEACE

Peace comes from within; it comes when there is no cloud between us and God. Peace is the consequence of forgiveness and the hope that nothing will obscure his face and break union with him.

PRAYER
Father forgive us our sins as we forgive those who have sinned against us, so that we are able to live together in peace and harmony, releasing all our fears, woes and pain to you for your divine healing. Thank you Lord for your saving grace, through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen
Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.

Jeremiah 29:7 (NIV)

FOR THE PEACE OF THE CITY

On the Sunday after 9/11 I was at a service in Westminster Central Hall in London and remember being moved to tears as we cried out for our city and nation. Since then we have seen terrorist attacks in cities around the world including Manchester and London. Jeremiah was calling the Jewish people to pray for the peace and prosperity of the city where they were to be exiled. As Christians with a heavenly home that awaits, we are exiles - strangers and aliens wherever we live. Whether we face acts of terrorism, the increase of gun and knife crime on our streets, or an uncertain political climate, we are called to pray for our city.

PRAYER
Father we pray for the peace and prosperity of our cities, whatever situations of enmity and aggression they face. Stir our hearts to be agents for peace and hope in the knowledge that as our cities, towns and villages prosper, so we your Church will prosper too.

PAST AND PRESENT

My grandfather was 15 when World War I was declared. He lied about his age in order to sign up. The first his mother knew about it was when a friend told her how smart Bernard looked in his uniform. He had to wait another year before he saw action as a gunner in the Royal Medical Corps. Unlike so many young soldiers, he returned to live a long life. In the Old Testament, there is a constant encouragement to remember the past without living in it. It’s important that I remember the sacrifices of those, like my grandfather, who fought in the war, whilst, at the same time, remembering that I am called to live life faithfully with God in my day. Getting this balance right should mean I fight evil wherever I encounter it and work for peace.

PRAYER
Lord, as I remember your action in history and the actions of those who took part in World War I, help me to live my life as Jesus would live it if he were me - in this day. Amen.
PEACE DURING WAR

The world is often troubled and during war it is as if the mountains are shaken, the seas roar and all around is in turmoil. Yet those who know the steadfast love of God and the promise of his peace can stand firm. As a former soldier, who has seen the realities of war, I hold fast to God’s peace, knowing that God indeed cares for my circumstances, and has made a way for me to have peace with God, through the death and resurrection of his Son, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER
There is a time for war and time for peace yet Lord you command all who belong to you to pursue peace. Lord help us stand in your peace when trouble comes even war. In your Son’s name. Amen

A FRAGILE PEACE

In times of conflict, our choices are equally daunting. Do we stay in enemy occupied territory and remain a victim of war? Do we stay close to our roots and all that is familiar, surviving rather than living? Or, do we leave everything behind and head for somewhere, anywhere, in the hope of a better life? Even when a cease-fire is declared, it’s a fragile peace and experience suggests it will not last, and there will be yet more suffering. Sometimes, our hearts feel like that enemy occupied land - battle weary, battered and bruised, desperately wanting peace. Yet, in our darkest hour, God offers us new hope and courage to keep going.

PRAYER
Father God, we remember with compassion those caught up in the chaos and devastation caused by conflict. Help them not to lose heart. Shine your light into their darkness. Bring your peace which passes understanding. Give them hope for the future as they re-build their broken world.
CONFLICT RAGED IN MOZAMBIQUE FOR THREE DECADES, STARTING WITH A WAR OF INDEPENDENCE FROM PORTUGAL (1962-1975), IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWED BY A CIVIL WAR (1975-1992). BY THE END OF THE CONFLICTS, MILLIONS OF WEAPONS REMAINED IN THE HANDS OF PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS. TO ENSURE THAT PEACE WOULD LAST THERE WERE SEVERAL ATTEMPTS TO CONVINCE INDIVIDUALS TO SURRENDER THEIR WEAPONS. ONE PROJECT, STARTED BY BISHOP SENGULANE, OFFERED INSTRUMENTS OF PRODUCTION (BUILDING MATERIALS, FARMING TOOLS) IN RETURN FOR THE ANONYMOUS SURRENDER OF WEAPONRY. THE WEAPONS WERE THEN DECOMMISSIONED AND SOME WERE TURNED INTO WORKS OF ART AIMED AT ENCOURAGING PEACE.

SPEAKING TO THE EARLY CHURCH, PETER’S WORDS REMIND US THAT PEACE IS NEVER EASY TO ATTAIN. IT INVOLVES REPENTANCE: TURN FROM EVIL AND DO GOOD. PETER REMINDS US THAT IT DOES NOT HAPPEN BY ACCIDENT, WE MUST ACTIVELY LOOK FOR WAYS OF MAKING PEACE, AND ONCE WE FIND THE PATH TO PEACE, IT MUST BE ‘PURSUED’. THE HATreds, SUSPICIONS AND JEALOUSIES WHICH INSPIRE CONFLICT MUST NOT MERELY BE PAPERED OVER. FOR PEACE TO ENDURE WE MUST DOGGEDLY STAY ON THE PATHWAY TO PEACE, HOWEVER HARD OR SACRIFICIAL IT MIGHT BE FOR US INDIVIDUALLY. WE MIGHT WORRY THAT THERE IS SO LITTLE WE CAN DO ON OUR OWN TO BRING PEACE TO THOSE AROUND US, BUT JUST AS CONFLICT STARTS IN THE HEARTS OF INDIVIDUALS AND SPREADS TO ENCOMPASS NATIONS, SO CAN PEACE.

PRAYER
God of Peace, where evil abounds, may I do good; when conflict tears us apart, give me the eyes to find your path to peace, and grant me the endurance to stay on that path until the very end. Amen

ACTION
Build peace this weekend by endeavouring to stop conflict escalating. Peace begins between individuals, so avoid insulting or sarcastic words; use your words to build up rather than tear down.
God’s peace will watch over your hearts and your minds. He will do this because you belong to Christ Jesus. God’s peace can never be completely understood.

Philippians 4:6-7 (NIRV)

**HOLD ON TO HOPE**

Paul’s letter to the Philippians was written to the church in Macedonia. In it he urges them not to worry about anything but to ask God for what they need with a thankful heart and God’s peace will keep them safe. Having recently visited the Middle East where in many places there is conflict and oppression this is a hard message. However, the importance of holding on to hope became really clear to me in conversations with those that are caught up in such challenging situations. We must therefore take Paul’s urging seriously by putting our complete trust in God’s peace to surround and keep us safe in all we do and say.

**PRAYER**

Dear Lord we commit ourselves anew to live in peace and harmony with one another in response to your commandment to love one another. Help us we pray to find ways of living out this commitment day by day wherever we are and whatever we are doing. Amen

I leave my peace with you. I give my peace to you. I do not give it to you as the world does. Do not let your hearts be troubled. And do not be afraid.

John 14:27 (NIRV)

**WHAT DOES PEACE FEEL LIKE?**

‘What makes you feel afraid?’ I asked a group of sixth-formers. Some answered ‘Exams!’ ‘All the decisions I have to make about my future!’ ‘The ways I know I need to change what I look like’. We then read the Bible verse. We pondered what Jesus meant by ‘his peace’ and how that might be received as a gift. One person said ‘Maybe peace is like being given a hug by someone you really trust; like a long hug where you stay hugged long enough for your shoulders to relax.’ This image captured something of Jesus’ gift of peace to the world. What images come to your mind as you reflect on Christ’s gift of peace to you? How might you carry that image with you today?

**PRAYER**

Lord Jesus, thank you that your presence brings us peace. Help us to let you come close to us. Amen
I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.

John 16:33 (ESV)

PEACE IN SYRIA

A colleague, who runs Bible Society in Syria, shared this message and verse with us. ‘Our part of Aleppo had been under a merciless siege for almost three years. We were used to shells and barrel-bombs, and the endless screaming of people who had been injured or lost loved ones. But one afternoon when I was standing on the balcony of our home, there was an incredible bang. The whole building shook violently and I was shaking along with it as I sobbed convulsively. Then I suddenly felt still, as Jesus was speaking to me in his consoling and encouraging way with this verse. At that moment I knew that God is good and that he doesn’t leave us alone. Jesus is there to give us peace in a world of struggle and war and he has overcome the whole world!’

PRAYER
Loving Heavenly Father, in our fractured world please bring your peace. We lift up our brothers and sisters around the world who live and work in war torn countries, that they will shine as beacons of your peace to everyone around them. Protect and surround them with your love, we pray.

The LORD gives strength to his people; the LORD blesses his people with peace.

Psalm 29:11 (NIV)

His Blessing of Peace

‘If God be our God, he will give us peace in trouble. When there is a storm without, he will make peace within. The world can create trouble in peace, but God can create peace in trouble.’

Tom Watson

PRAYER
Father God, we thank you for your many gifts, including that of peace. We pray that we would know that blessing upon our lives in all that we do. We remember it is a gift, and we pray to receive it. Amen
**RECONCILIATION WITH CREATION**

People in my country treat what nature has given them as a gift. They know when fish will be plentiful, so they fish at that time. They know when fruit will ripen, so they pick it in season. For thousands of years we have lived like this – reconciled with the environment, stewards of creation. But things are changing. Hurricanes come later and disrupt the fruit season. The seas are rising and the currents moving, so the fish behave differently. Many of our islands are now completely submerged. The balance of our way of life is shifting. This is not your problem or mine. This is our problem, that we will work on together. Through God we can transform what is disfigured into what is beautiful. In Jesus’ resurrection we catch a glimpse of the new creation. God is reconciling this world to himself so that all will be made new.

**PRAYER**

We pray that God would show us how to live in balance with creation and how to begin transforming what is broken or disfigured.

**BE STRONG**

Within a year of becoming a military spouse my husband was sent to Iraq. With much better communication than they would have enjoyed 100 years ago, we were able to email, phone and even Skype. But one day in 2003, all contact stopped for two weeks. Life seemed to stand still. My Mother-in-law would call. We’d switch on the news and sit in silence, watching the black skies flash with green, alone but together! We prayed and waited. We took peace from Joshua 1:9 and had hope as we knew God was with us and with ‘Our Boy’. How must it have been for the families that went for months, sometimes years without hearing anything from their loved one?

**PRAYER**

Father, thank you for the families that love and support those that serve their countries. Give them peace, perseverance and patience as they stay at home, while their loved ones go to far off places, and hope for their safe return. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen
This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!
2 Corinthians 5:17 (NLT)

BEAUTY NOT BROKENNESS

During World War II, Eva Kor aged 10, was sent to Auschwitz death camp with her twin sister, Miriam. On arrival, they were immediately taken to the Nazi’s laboratory. Over time, both girls underwent numerous injections as part of a greater experiment carried out on twins by Dr Mengele.

Eva survived, grew up, got married and had children. The experience of Auschwitz never left her. She carried it with her throughout life. However, after 50 years of bitterness, she finally came to forgive the perpetrators, especially Mengele.

The act of forgiveness can be a difficult process and can take time. Jesus commanded that we do it repeatedly. Why? Because it opens the gateway to receive God’s healing, restoration and completeness. It clears a way to experience a deep sense of peace.

‘I felt such freedom,’ Eva said. ‘I was no longer a tragic prisoner. I was free of Auschwitz and I was free of Mengele. Forgiveness is the seed of peace.’

Kintsukuroi is a process of repairing pottery using a gold lacquer. It is understood that the pot is then even more beautiful for having been broken. This is a great visual illustration for how forgiveness can be gold in a broken life. Like Eva, it makes us at peace with the many pieces.

PRAYER
Father God. I am inspired by Eva’s act of forgiveness. Show me whom, what and where I need to forgive, so I may have peace in my own life. Strengthen me where I am weak and soften me where I have grown hard. Make me whole once again. Amen

ACTION
To be an agent of reconciliation. Look up Eva’s story online. Following her example, who or what is the one person or thing you need to forgive today to receive peace? How can you do this? Who can help you?

1. miamiherald.com/news/local/article142764569.html
HOPE IN DESPAIR

Hope comes in the early hours of the morning when I creep into my little boy’s room and watch him sleeping. His face is utterly at peace and, to me, he is utterly beautiful. I remember the despair over lost babies and the days when all hope failed. I remember too lying in a hospital bed at 24 weeks – somehow knowing that, despite the fear and uncertainty, he was meant to be. Then I remember Hannah – her prayer and the weeping; and Sarah – her despair and the laughter. Hope does remain in the midst of despair: it is a gift from God – it tells us that despite our own fears, he never lets go and he hears us. Hope is still here, breathing softly and snuffling next to a teddy. Thank you for my son, Tanoa Isaac – my ‘vessel of laughter’ – whose name reminds me, every day, of that promise.

PRAYER

Dear Lord, thank you for the gift of hope. Thank you too that however much we may despair, you never let go. Amen

GOD’S POWER IN OUR WEAKNESS

One of the times I felt weakest in my life was when I had two babies and my husband was in Afghanistan. Sleepless nights and non-stop days left me feeling broken, physically and emotionally. Strangely, it was a time punctuated by happy moments. A postman promising to get my Christmas present to Afghanistan when I stood crying at the till, the children unwrapping Sellotape by my feet. A nanny scooping the children up for a day at her farm. A rat-catcher making it his mission to expel the rats from our garden. The same Bible verse appeared repeatedly. During that time, God showed me that his grace is sufficient, sending rays of peace and hope to shine through the clouds.

PRAYER

We pray for all military families during times of separation. We pray for marriages that are tested and children who may encounter uncomfortable emotions. May they know your grace and peace especially in times of weakness. Amen
100 DAYS OF PEACE + HOPE

17 OCTOBER 26 DAYS

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility.
Ephesians 2:14 (NIV)

Rebecca – a wife, a mother, and a member of the Mothers’ Union in South Sudan.

PAIN TURNED TO BEAUTY

About four years ago, 22 of my friends were raped and murdered in my church compound. We buried them in the church and two years ago we planted mango trees over their graves. That place of pain has become a place of beauty. We have worked to forgive the perpetrators. After more than half a century of war, I still believe peace is possible in South Sudan, because I have my own testimony of peace. If God can change my situation, he can change a nation. It took time for me to come to know Jesus and it took even longer for my husband. I prayed for him for nine years before anything happened. But Jesus has changed us both and brought peace into our home. It’s not a perfect peace, but it makes a powerful difference.

PRAYER
This week, Father, we pray that you would show us where we can restore hope for peace – in our families, communities, nations and in our relationships with you.

18 OCTOBER 25 DAYS

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4:7 (GNT)

Ricky Bain works for CVM, a Christian men’s movement. His is married to Joanne and a father of five.

ULTIMATE PEACE

The Charter of the United Nations was signed in 1945. It states: ‘We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind … and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security … have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims.’

As we look around us, we see the world is still a battleground. Mankind still seeks power, money and control; the enemy of our souls is out to destroy the human race. Only through our relationship with Jesus, having the mind of Christ, will we have peace that the world does not understand.

PRAYER
Blessed are the peacemakers: I pray for unity in the Church, that we will all be peacemakers who look for the gold in each other.
And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4:7 (NIV)

Lance Corporal Patrick Steen is a serving soldier in the Queen’s Royal Hussars. He joined the army in 2011 and became a Christian in 2012.

WHEN HOPE FINDS YOU

Whilst on exercise halfway through my time in basic training at ATFC Winchester, I had a tangible and very real experience of the peace of God. I was finding the exercise rather challenging: it was cold and wet, and I was wondering whether I had made the correct decision in joining the Army. One night, whilst on sentry duty, I found myself alone thinking these thoughts. Yet in an instant, I felt a calming and reassuring presence that brought peace to my situation. In that moment I felt I was not alone. It was only later when I became a Christian and began to read God’s Word that I came to understand that it was his ‘peace which transcends all understanding’ which I had experienced in a very real and personal way.

PRAYER
Pray for all those who are weary and burdened that they may find rest and peace. For those who carry loads that seem too great for them that their load will be lightened.

Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.
Proverbs 3:17 (KJV)

Rev Ian Kemp is an Army Chaplain who is currently serving with The Second Battalion, The Princess of Wales’s Royal Regiment.

A FORETASTE OF PEACE

God’s promised future for our world is the subject of Cecil Spring-Rice’s second verse in his hymn: ‘I Vow To Thee My County’. Written ten years after the original in 1918 and in response to a world transformed through war, it contrasts the hardness of war with the gentleness of peace - the Christian hope for the future. Peace had been won at great cost but Spring-Rice knew that true peace could not be won through the violence of humanity and would not come in its fullness in this world. That peace was a taste of what is to come and a sign that God’s kingdom is near. War had ruled for four long years but peace would win out in the end. So too God has won.

PRAYER
Heavenly Father, we thank you for your promise of true peace. Give to us, your servants, that peace which the world cannot give; that we may offer a foretaste of your peace to those we meet in both our words and actions. Amen
Yet this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope...
Lamentations 3:1-24 (NIV)

WHERE DOES MY HOPE COME FROM?

My family was caught up in the partition struggle between India and Pakistan 70 years ago during which more than a million people died and 14 million were displaced. My aunt took a terrifying train journey at the time: a young lady wearing six sets of clothes, carrying one suitcase with all her belongings. Many didn’t arrive.

We see world conflicts today which are deeply established, between strong minded opponents, resourced by powerful nations, that affect millions of innocent people. Many of us wonder how these situations can change. But wars do end; conflicts do cease.

In the Bible, the author of Lamentations – traditionally thought to be Jeremiah – describes a person who faced God’s anger. It was a hopeless situation. There was nothing he could do. Yet he called to mind God’s love, and so had hope. Picture Jesus facing God’s anger on our behalf.

We may not understand why God allows great conflicts in our world. There are no easy answers. But we can choose to focus on God’s mercy and love, and have hope.

My aunt died a few years ago, living in her own home, having enjoyed many years with her children as well as four grandchildren. Starting that train journey 70 years earlier she wouldn’t have imagined that one day she’d enjoy summer afternoons with her grandchildren. And yet in time she did.

**PRAYER**
Heavenly Father, in ourselves we are not able to bring peace or hope to this world. But thank you that you have not forgotten us. We pray for your mercy on our world, our cities and our towns. Give us peace we pray. In Jesus’ name.

**ACTION**
Visit older neighbours or relations and ask them to share memories where they’ve been caught up in conflict situations. If appropriate, offer to pray with them, asking Jesus to give them peace, and soothe any painful memories. Remember to pray for them afterwards.
Forgiveness Can Lead to Peace

One obstacle to peace can be a lack of forgiveness. In the Bible (John 21) we read of Jesus’ forgiveness of Peter. The back story is that Peter, whilst under pressure had sinned, he had denied three times that he knew Jesus. After Jesus died, Peter felt awful, it could have destroyed him. But now Jesus offered forgiveness. Three times Jesus asked him if he loved him, in some ways to cancel his three denials. Peter now could ‘take care of my sheep’; history tells us that he did do this and he brought peace and joy with the good news of Jesus. This path is still available to us, to know forgiveness, to forgive and so to bring peace.

**PRAYER**

Lord God, we thank you for the example of the reinstatement of Peter and the effect that he had. We pray this path for ourselves, those that we know and those on our minds from the news. As we are forgiven we pray that we will forgive and bring peace.

Never Again

As we look back on tragic events which have long been confined to the history books, how many times have we heard those two words, ‘never again’? Never again, indeed, yet each time we switch on the news channels on our TVs, or pick up a newspaper, all we see is conflict: conflict between countries from across the globe. It’s a far too familiar story, with history constantly repeating itself. Countries at war may seem far away, and yet, time and time again, we see similar conflicts on our own streets, with young men losing their lives … still. What have we really learned? So, this year, more than ever, let us remember that ‘never again’ starts with me.

**PRAYER**

Lord, we remember those lives lost in all those world conflicts of yesteryear. We pray for all those families who are caught up in similar conflicts both at home and abroad today. We lift our world leaders to you and pray for your peace to be sovereign over all. Amen
**BUILDING PEACE**

In 1917 at least in part for short term gain, the Balfour Declaration was signed. What became the conflict in Israel Palestine was in part shaped in the closing years of World War I. Today there are many people from different lands all trying to play their part in building peace. Courageous Palestinians having been denied their human rights for generations yet refuse to turn to violence. Israeli peace activists facing hostility from their own communities bravely work to bring people together and understand each other, though these actions seldom get reported in the news. We believe in a God who cares for all his children, and for whom justice and peace are qualities of his being. Jesus said ‘blessed are the peacemakers’.

**PRAYER**

Loving God, we pray for peace-makers from every land working in Israel Palestine, especially Israelis and Palestinians. May their efforts be blessed and the path to peace be found for all your children of the land called Holy. Amen.

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**PEACE IN CRISIS**

As a Christian, when I am in the midst of crisis, either personally or supporting others going through real trials, uncertainty, disaster or fear, this verse always seems to come to the forefront of my mind. It reminds me that Jesus is the source of peace that it so different, lasting, powerful, pure and secure from anything the world could ever offer. It always carries me through. Furthermore, in the midst of other people’s crises, it reminds me of who fills me, who lives in me, who works through me, and whose power and wisdom I can rely on to bring a sense of peace and perspective to others.

**PRAYER**

Father, I thank you that you offer a peace that goes beyond everything the world could ever offer and you are always there to help in times of need. Thank you that we can rely on your peace to strengthen us in our weakness and carry us through every fear.
No one is really willing to die for an honest person, though someone might be willing to die for a truly good person. But God showed how much he loved us by having Christ die for us, even though we were sinful.

Romans 5:7-8 (CEV)

FORGIVENESS

Edith Cavell was a Christian who served as a nurse and matron in enemy-occupied Belgium during the First World War. She was executed in 1915 for enabling around 200 Allied soldiers to escape to neutral territory. The night before her execution she told the chaplain who shared communion with her: ‘Standing as I do in view of God and eternity: I realise that patriotism is not enough. I must have no hated or bitterness towards anyone.’ Edith understood that Jesus’ greater love commands us to love our enemies as well as our neighbours and friends.

PRAYER

Father God, help me to love and forgive as you love and forgive me. Amen

FIRM CONVICTIONS

In the First World War there were about 15,000 men who were conscientious objectors, the vast majority of whom were Christians. Some served as non-combatant troops, others were exempt on grounds that their jobs were of national importance, but others were arrested and court marshalled for their refusal to fight. One of those who was court marshalled described his beliefs as follows: ‘My firm rooted conviction is: War is contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ; therefore I respectfully, but absolutely refuse to take part in that which is so deep rooted in my mind as wrong.’ Among the conscientious objectors in Dartmoor serving their sentences in hard labour were some of the early leaders of the Pentecostal movement in England. They held weekly Bible studies, praise and prayer meetings and were joined by Christians from other denominations which had a positive impact on the spread of the Pentecostal movement.

PRAYER

Father, we look forward with hope to the day when Isaiah’s vision of peace becomes a reality worldwide. Amen
And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4:7 (NIV)

Ben Hampshire is a freelance journalist who works with Sports Chaplaincy UK.

PEACE PERSPECTIVE

In scripture peace is less an emotion, than it is a perspective - a state of mind proclaiming any trauma in life is subject to the triumphant victory of Jesus Christ, who works all things together for the good of those who love him. Jesus’ death and resurrection means we no longer fight for victory, but live from the victory he has won for us, offering up a perspective of peace.

Corrie Ten Boom, the Dutch activist who aided many Jews in fleeing Nazi Concentration Camps in World War II, allowed her perspective of peace to influence her experience when she stood face-to-face with a former Nazi SS guard from Ravensbruck.

Ten Boom, who lost her sister Betsie in the very same camp, recalls the moment the officer held out a hand requesting forgiveness, saying, ‘Jesus, help me! I can lift my hand. I can do that much. You supply the feeling.’ And she went on, ‘I forgive you, brother, with all my heart!’ In one moment of radical grace, Ten Boom allowed her trauma to be subject to the triumph of Jesus, and it became a moment where the love of God overflowed in the most profound and beautiful way. Will you allow your grievances to be set aside to pick up the perspective of peace Jesus offers to you today?

PRAYER
Father God, would you give us the courage today to set aside our emotions and allow any trauma we have experienced become subject to your triumph and flood our perspective with your peace, that it may overflow into the lives of all around us. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

ACTION
Corrie Ten Boom’s example is a clear indicator that peace-making is not an emotional act, but a willing choice. Today, write an email, a text message or even a letter to someone you need to make peace with. Maybe you could even include a gift. After all, love gives.
PEACE AND LAND

In this vision of peace, tools of war are turned into the means to produce food. The hope is for settled communities where all may feed themselves and flourish. One of the first casualties of war can be the land itself as fields become battle grounds and the rhythm of agriculture is interrupted. Communities move to avoid conflict and food becomes scarce. We see that today as refugees flee war torn countries. A vision like Micah’s where communities are settled and can provide for themselves, is one we should all strive for. These words of Jesus, ‘I was hungry. And you gave me something to eat … I was a stranger. And you invited me in’ (Matthew 25:35) can challenge us afresh as we look at the world today.

PRAYER
Loving God, we pray for those who are uprooted by war and who seek refuge in another country, or a place that is strange to them. When they feel rootless and alien help them to find refuge in you. May we all value and care for our communities. In Jesus’ name. Amen

UNITED IN CHRIST

When I close my eyes and listen, in my imagination I can hear them marching: a whole generation of men going to war; my grandfather; your relatives. Marching out of duty: scared, brave … all emotions. We remember what they did. Their hope for peace; love of family. In all conditions they marched: mud, sun, danger; many never to return. Their hope: peace, unity, a better world. That’s our hope, that through Jesus who said ‘I am the way,’ we could find a way of unity and peace by living in his way.

PRAYER
Father God, we join with Jesus as we pray that your people may be brought to complete unity so the world will know that you sent Jesus and you love them. Amen
For a child has been born—for us! ... He’ll take over the running of the world ... His ruling authority will grow, and there’ll be no limits to the wholeness he brings.
Isaiah 9:6-7 (MSG)

Canon Yemi Adedeji is associate Director of HOPE and director of the One People Commission.

LIMITLESS

Jesus took on the limits of our humanity. God became flesh! A suffering servant, who experienced pain, exhaustion and grief just as we do. He was broken, so we can be made whole. His blood poured out, so we can be forgiven. He was there one hundred years ago in the agonies of the trenches, and he is with us today. God with us, the Prince of Peace. What a Saviour!

PRAYER
We praise you Father God for all you have done for us in Christ. May his Kingdom come. May his rule extend across our nation. May his peace reign. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen

Michaela Youngson is President of the Methodist Conference.

NOT STRANGERS BUT CITIZENS

A short walk from the Syrian/Jordanian border, there is a farm on some of the most arid land imaginable. The Jordanian farmer who tends the land has struggled to produce sufficient crops to support his family. Methodist charity All We Can works in partnership with the Lutheran World Federation to support people fleeing the Syrian war, and has been able to fund water capture systems for the farmer. The ability to keep water has increased his yield and this has meant he has been able to employ four Syrian refugees as farm workers, supporting four other families as well as his own.

One of the ways of bringing peace into the world is to support refugees, not just in the short-term with emergency aid, but in long-term projects that are sustainable and respect the needs of host and guest alike.

PRAYER
Prince of Peace, to those who are frightened, bring reassurance; to those who are lost, bring hope; to those with no shelter, be a home and a resting place. Help us to welcome the stranger and to recognise Christ in each other, that peace will flow out into our broken world and that love will bring healing. Amen

The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself...
Leviticus 19:33-34 (NIV)
**PEACE FOR DAYS TO COME**

God can work peace through us only if he has worked peace in us. Those who are in the best circumstances but without God can never find peace, but those in the worst of circumstances, with God need never lack peace.

John MacArthur

**PRAYER**

Thank you Lord for strength for another day. May I continue to know your strength and peace in the days to come. Bless those who need it most with peace of mind. In the name of Christ Jesus, I pray.

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**B EFORE DAWN, 100 YEARS AGO TOMORROW**

The commander of a Manchester Regiment was helping his brigade in bringing up duck boards from the Sambre & Oise canal. He was killed by machine gun fire, just one of endless such anniversaries, lives passing like wild flowers. Yet we have reason to remember this death for the commander was the poet Wilfred Owen. His death was only reported to his family as the Armistice Bells were ringing on 11 November, but his words live on: moving, brave, tragic, ever urging us to seek peace. Peter urges his readers to remember of whom they are born and that while ‘grass withers, and the flowers fall, the word of the Lord remains forever’.

**PRAYER**

Immortal Father have mercy on us. May your eternal word live in our hearts, and bring healing to the wounds of nations. May our lives be always in your everlasting care, and by our lives and words may we reflect your love. Through Christ our Lord. Amen
A frail elderly black woman sits in a South African courtroom. Close by is a white policeman who’s been found guilty of murdering her son and husband. He’d come to her home and shot her son dead before returning to take her husband too. Eventually he came back for her. She was taken to where her husband lay on a pile of wood. The last words from him as petrol was poured over his body and he was set aflame were, ‘Father forgive them…’

Now the woman’s here listening to the man’s confession. She’s asked, ‘What do you want? How should justice be done to this man who destroyed your family?’

‘I want three things’ she says. ‘Firstly, to collect my husband’s ashes and give them a decent burial.’ She continues: ‘Secondly, I now have no family so I want him to become my son. To come and visit me at home so I can pour out on him whatever love I still have remaining in me.’ ‘Finally,’ she says, ‘I’d ask someone to come to me and lead me across the courtroom so I can take him in my arms and let him know that he’s truly forgiven.’

The man faints. Those in the courtroom, many victims of oppression and injustice begin singing, ‘amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me’.

PRAYER
Lord please help us to be people of peace. Where we need to forgive give us strength to do so. Where we need to make things right, give us grace to make this possible. Help us to be peacemakers and give us all we need to do so. Amen

ACTION
Think of those in your community who seem unloved or who are marginalised. Every place has people on the outside. Do all you can to reach out to these people and make peace in your community with those who would otherwise be ostracised.
He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.’

Luke 22:19 (NIV)

On this day in the UK we are reminded to remember a treasonous plot to blow up Parliament. In a few days’ time we will be remembering the sacrifice made by so many in war. Remembering is part of our DNA. As people made in God’s image, we remember, just as God remembers. Throughout scripture, we are encouraged to remember what God has done for us – and particularly what was achieved on the cross. Just as men die for their country in war, Jesus died for us.

But because of his death, God chooses not to remember our sin when we ask his forgiveness. That is worth remembering!

PRAYER
Father God we are so grateful for all you have done for us in Christ. Help us to remember your love and grace in every situation we face, and help us to extend that love and grace to others. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen

I will bring my people Israel back from exile. They will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit.

Amos 9:14 (NIV)

The Lochnagar Crater sits now in the quiet, rolling countryside of Picardie in northern France. The people live in peace. Visit in July and you can see the crops ripening in the sunshine. The crater is huge – 98 feet deep; 330 feet across. It was created on a very different July morning – 1 July 1916 – the first day of the Battle of the Somme, when British forces detonated explosives under German army positions. The carnage of the Somme battlefield is unimaginable. Lochnagar’s sheer scale is a reminder of what happened. But the setting now is a sign of how God can restore peace to places of unimaginable horror.

PRAYER
Loving Father, thank you that you are in the business of restoration – of peace and reconciliation. Thank you that nothing, and no-one, is too far gone that you cannot rescue and restore and bring peace, hope and even prosperity where there was once none.
Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.

Jeremiah 29:7 (NIV)

SEEK THE PEACE OF YOUR CITY

As London has been confronted with the challenge of escalated violence on our streets, the Church has come together from different denomination and across all ages to pray and seek the peace of its city. For four consecutive Sundays in 2018, more than 1000 people walked the streets of Haringey, Croydon, Brixton, Peckham, Lewisham and Hackney, praying for the rise of violence to be abated. In some cases, community weapons sweeps were carried out with the police, and in one instance two knives were recovered.

PRAYER

Our heavenly Father, we pray that you would grant us wisdom and insight into how we might bring peace to our cities. May the cry of violence not be heard on our streets and homes. May your peace reign in the hearts of our youth as you stir up a revival.

TIME FOR PEACE

The whole passage from Ecclesiastes 3 gives the contrast between what often is, and what we would hope it to be. A soldier associated with Scunthorpe United died on 10 November 1918, one day before the Armistice. For him, time had run out. A day later and he may have lived. How do we use our time? Is it spent in moaning or complaining, or is it spent in a positive way, perhaps to the benefit of others? Are our energies used in the right way? Are we focussed on the inward, rather than the outward? All these things, used correctly, can bring hope to other people, and therefore hope for the world – for everything there is a season.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, in this year of anniversary and commemoration, we give thanks for those who have perished in war; grant that their deaths may not have been in vain, and that the peoples of the world will have the hope of a better future. Amen.
NOT STRANGERS BUT CITIZENS

Retribution or reconciliation? When Peter met Jesus on the lakeshore after the resurrection what was he expecting? Possibly not the question, ‘Do you love me?’ If Christians are to love their enemies then they need to ask them the same question that Jesus asked Peter.

Christians need to remember that slogans such as ‘squeeze the German lemon until the pips squeak,’ which followed the Armistice in 1918, helped to lead to a flawed peace treaty that contributed to another and even more terrible war only 20 years later. The military can win a war, but society can lose the peace. Christians need the help of Holy Spirit to discover what the peace of Christ is in any given post-war situation. They also need it to make sense of what it is to love one’s former enemies.

PRAYER

O God, may the times that we have to take up arms in defence of what we believe to be right never blind us to the continuing need to search for a better peace, that all may live in peace promised us by Jesus our Lord. Amen

SERVING OTHERS

In serving others, we find out ‘Who am I?’ and ‘Why am I here?’ Once that was established in my relationship with God, I followed what I call the ‘four Fs’. I needed to find my place in God’s scheme of things; fit into that place appropriately; function well in that place; and bear fruit in the way in which I functioned. It was the same for young men serving their country a century ago, as well as men and women of all ages today. Establishing a relationship with God comes first. Then setting out to serve others, drawing on God’s strength to do what he has called us to do.

PRAYER

Father God, your yoke is easy and your burden is light. Thank you for giving us your grace and strength as we accept your calling. Amen
To conclude the 100 days of peace and hope the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby has written the following Six Rs of Reconciliation to reflect on as we pray for peace, hope and reconciliation in our time.

**The Archbishop of Canterbury’s Six Rs of Reconciliation**

**Researching**

...and they will call him Immanuel, which means ‘God with us’.
Matthew 1:23

Pursuing reconciliation requires research. Research is there to demythologise a conflict and say what the real problem is. Very often it’s a complicated problem that needs to deal with the hard questions of justice and inequality. That can only be done by being present with those who are suffering. We have to listen to what they are saying without judgement. We have to be in the middle, sharing their pain and anguish. We have to be caught up emotionally, to weep, protest and lament. Because that is what Jesus Christ did with us. The reconciliation between God and human beings came through God sovereignly becoming human. He moved from God ‘out there’ to God ‘with us’.

**Relating**

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.
John 3:16

Reconciliation is not a mechanistic process; it’s relational. If you find yourself involved in reconciliation as a method, it won’t work. In John 3, we read that God sent Jesus because he loved the world, not because he’d worked it all out and thought it would be a good thing to do. Reconciliation is affective: our affections have to be involved. That means you build relationships with some pretty odd people. But, equally, you build relationships with the most amazing people. There is a sense of deep emotion. We have to love those in the conflict – the bad and the good – for that is the pattern of God to us.
### Relief

Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

James 2:15-17

I remember walking around Nembe, in the Niger Delta, with a warlord who was deciding whether or not to keep me captive. I looked up and saw an oil company production facility about three miles away with enough electric power to supply most of that region, with helicopters coming in and out, fresh water, food, and a doctor. Then I looked back at the warlord’s town where there was sewage running down the street and children playing in it. And I thought: ‘If I had grown up here, I would be like this man,’ because it was a mixture of horror and cruelty and inequality. What the people in that town needed most was water, electricity and hope. Relief is essential in the process of reconciliation.

Jesus, when he came, brought hope, life and healing. And he did not leave us to work alone: he created the Church, so that through partnerships, systems and imagination, we might be able to offer relief and hope for the long-term, not just today.

### Risk

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

Philippians 2:5-7

The risk of the incarnation was huge. If we take seriously the humanity of Christ, we take seriously his vulnerability: the vulnerability of a baby, the vulnerability of a man on a cross. Jesus himself took the risk of crucifixion and we know from Gethsemane the cost, pain and fear of that.

There is an obvious risk in reconciliation: you can easily get caught up in fighting. But that’s not the primary risk. The primary risk is failure. Reconciliation always involves bringing people together and when that goes wrong the outcome is often worse than before you tried. But behind that risk is the hope of something great – of restored relationships and the flourishing of whole societies. After all, it is through the risk of the incarnation that we see the glory of the resurrection.
RECONCILING

My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

John 17:20-21

Even with the best research, the strongest relationships and the most worthwhile risk-taking, there will still be deep resistance to genuine reconciliation. That’s because genuine reconciliation requires a completely changed attitude to those who have been our enemies; a total transformation that is difficult for all of us. So why should we bother? Because in the Beatitudes, God promises that peacemakers – those who bring the true peace of reconciled relationships and flourishing of life – will be blessed.

Peter tells Christians in what is now Turkey that when the Church is reconciled, it will be a witness to the world. As we journey towards reconciliation, we can begin to handle diversity creatively and sincerely. We learn collectively to approach difference with curiosity and compassion, rather than fear. We begin to flourish together in previously unthinkable ways. Reconciliation transforms alienation into a new creation, not only restored but reinvigorated. I think that one of the greatest challenges of our time is whether we have the courage to seek such a remaking of our world.

RESOURCING

Carry each other’s burdens.
Galatians 6:2

outsiders can’t do reconciliation: it has to be people who are doing the fighting. They are the ones who can bring ongoing transformation and the daily renewal of relationships. But outsiders can resource others, strengthening them and building their capacity.

After the ascension, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to resource the Church. Reconciliation is never something done by one hero. It is something done by whole groups of people working together, in the knowledge that God’s Spirit is with us as we seek to support each other on the journey towards reconciliation.

PRAYER

Let us remember those who have died for their country in war; those we knew, and all who have given their lives for freedom, justice and the hope of peace.

As we look forward and seek the way of peace and reconciliation, you might like to say this prayer:

Lord, strengthen our hearts, hands, and minds, to work together for peace; to see you in one another, and to seek your kingdom above all things; that your will may be seen to be done, and your Kingdom come, through Jesus Christ, the Lord of lords and King of kings.
Amen.


Published by HOPE www.hopetogther.org.uk
Registered Charity 1116005
Partners in the Remembrance 100 project
Armed Forces Christian Union, Bible Society, Christian Vision for Men, Church of England, Churches Together in England, Deo Gloria Trust, HOPE, Lifewords, Methodist Church in Britain, United Reformed Church, Scripture Union, Sports Chaplaincy UK, World Prayer Centre.

Photos
iStock, Alamy,

Design
S2 Design & Advertising Ltd. 020 8771 9108

Words
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