

PRAYER FOR PEACE

from Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

God of light we praise you for the wonder and glory of this world and the many blessings we have received. Still, at times the darkness is like a night and it feels you have hidden your face from your people. The most vulnerable and innocent among us seem to be hemmed in by violence and conflict. This week we realized that no place is safe—not home, not a 2,000-mile trek through rainforests and deserts, not 30,000 feet up. Yet, we profess that you know all things, count the hair on our heads, and know our rising and our sitting. How can this be?

God we are saddened by the news reports of people taken too soon from this world and we shake our head with disbelief when we see the bodies of children carrying the ravages of war. It seems as though the only ones in the crosshairs of violence are those with no power, little to gain, and much to lose. They pay with the thing you hold most precious, the very breath you breathed into our lungs.

May your Spirit of peace and wisdom descend on the Middle East. May the words and actions of Abram haunt the leaders of Palestine and Israel. May they rescue one another, become great nations, and bless all peoples on earth. Protect the innocent and send prophets among them and their leaders to find a just resolution.

Grant this through Christ our Lord

Wars rage on the ground, the sea, and in the air in the Ukraine, Somalia, Syria, Iraq, and many other places. Families mourn the loss of loved ones and are robbed of hope for a future for their children. Help us see the painful reality that conflict zones cannot be contained. Comfort the grieving and burden the rest of us with this senseless loss of life. Open the way for aid agencies and those offering relief, give them courage and resources to ease the immediate suffering they encounter.

Grant this through Christ our Lord

Walk with children fleeing homes terrorized by gang violence, crushing poverty, and drug wars. We know they carry a singular hope, to have abundant life that you have promised us. The journey is fraught with danger and uncertainty. Hold them in your arms and nurture the hope planted in them by their families and your Spirit and do not allow it to be crushed by hatred and racism.

Grant this through Christ our Lord

Break our hearts Holy God by the reality that faces so many of your people. Let the scales fall from our eyes so that we may see how our own choices and passive acceptance of U.S. policy contribute to unrest and injustice.

Grant this through Christ our Lord

God grant us the grace and courage to work for all these things that we pray. Help turn sadness into righteous anger and action. May we know your ways, and beat our weapons of destruction into instruments of reconciliation and creation. It is an honor to be agents of your peace so that this world will know and confess your name.