

National Council of Churches in India - Unity and Mission  
**International Prayer Day for Peace in India (21st September 2018)**  
**Peace Sunday (23rd September 2018)**

Theme: Right to Peace: Celebrate... Affirm... Defend... Promote...

*Dear Fellow Pilgrims in the Faith Journey of Justice and Peace,*

*Our God, who is Life and Peace and who loved the World, has sent the Prince of Peace to 'Celebrate', 'Affirm', 'Defend' and 'Promote' Peace on Earth.*

*Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace said to the apostles, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you". This gives us courage to challenge the perpetrators of violence and to change their behavior on Earth.*

*God has used the United Nations Organizations to publish the Universal Declaration of the Human Rights (UDHR) as a gift for us to use and to uphold social justice based on the gospel values of Justice, Love and Peace. This year, the United Nations in celebrating and commemorating the 70th year anniversary of UDHR, by inviting the global communities to celebrate International Peace Day (21st September 2018). Alternately we could observe 26th September 2018 as Peace Sunday.*

*Joining hands with the UNO, the World Council of Churches calls global faith communities to observe the International Prayer Day for Peace. The World Council of Churches proposes that we observe a Week Prayer for Peace from 16th September to 23rd September 2018, especially remembering the peace-less context in the birth place of the Prince of Peace. The National Council of Churches in India joins the World Council of Churches in observing the International Prayer Day for Peace, particularly praying for peace in India as well as for peace in Palestine. Therefore, a worship resource has been prepared for you in this regard.*

### **Call to Worship**

We gather together  
in the name of the One who bids us come.

We gather together  
to hear the words of the One who is Love.

We gather together  
to sing praises of the One who teaches peace.  
Come, let us worship!

*(from The United Church of Canada/ **Worship Service—Peace in Community**, prepared by Miriam Spies)*

### **Opening Prayer**

God of Peace, we pray for the power to be gentle,  
the strength to be forgiving,  
the patience to be understanding, and the endurance to accept the consequences  
of holding to what we believe to be right.

May we put our trust in the power of good to overcome evil  
and the power of love to overcome hatred.  
We pray for the vision to see and the faith to believe  
in a world emancipated from violence.

Help us to devote our whole life, thought and energy  
to the task of making peace,  
praying always for the inspiration and the power  
to fulfil the destiny for which we were created.

*(from **The Week of Prayer for World Peace**, 1978)*

### **Congregational Hymn / Lyric / Song: (In Unison)**

### **Prayer of Thanks Giving:**

God of all blessings,  
source of all life,  
giver of all grace and Peace:  
We thank you for the gift of life  
for the breath that sustains life,  
for the food of this earth that nurtures life,  
for the love of family and friends without which there would be no life.

We thank you for this day:  
for life and one more day to love,  
for opportunity and one more day to work for justice and peace,  
for neighbors and one more person to love  
and by whom be loved, for your grace  
and one more experience of your presence,  
for your promise: to be with us, to be our God, and to give salvation.

We thank you for the United Declaration of Human Rights  
for the past 70 years:  
enabling nations and individuals to uphold social justice -  
to promote dignity and respect to all.

We thank you also for our Indian Constitution:  
that treats all citizens equal, irrespective of their faith, caste and economic background,  
by declaring and affirming  
the sovereign socialist, secular, democratic and republic status  
for the past 68 years.

For these, and all blessings,  
we give you thanks, eternal, loving God, through Jesus Christ we pray. **Amen.**

(Modified from - <http://www.beliefnet.com/prayers/christian/gratitude/prayer-of-thanksgiving.aspx#7LO80S5Yq1Sejl9Y.99>)

### **Responsive Reading:** (Adapted from Isaiah 56 and 58)

Leader: This is what the Lord says: "Maintain justice and do what is right,

People: **For my salvation is close at hand and my righteousness will soon be revealed**

Leader: Blessed are the people who do this and keep their hands from doing any evil,"

People: **So that no one will be excluded from the love of God**

Leader: If you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted

People: **Then our light shall break forth like the dawn.**

### **Suggested Scripture Reading:** Isaiah 11: 1 – 9

### **Suggested Sermon Outlines:**

1. Life of discipleship of the Messiah
  - Fellowship of the Spirit of God
  - Delivering prophetic justice
  - Cultivating righteousness
2. Life in harmony with diversity
  - In the Kin-dom of God, the righteous loving Creator respects diversity
  - The predators dwell in harmony with their prey.
  - Creatures with contradicting natures live together in oneness
3. Life in harmony with identity
  - The Kin-dom of God facilitates harmonious life with diverse identities
  - Defending the self identity without compromise
  - Smoothing the progress to discover the identity of the beings in identity crisis

## **Affirmation of faith:**

**We believe in God:  
a communion of three Persons,  
a communion of Life  
a communion of Love  
a communion of Peace**

**We believe in Jesus: God and human, Prince of Peace**

**We believe in his Gospel the Good News, God's message of peace.**

**We believe Jesus died, rose, and sent us the Holy Spirit so we could live in his peace.**

**We believe in Baptism, that makes us one family in Jesus,  
crucified and risen from the dead to lead us to eternal peace.**

**He is our hope.**

**Through him, we pray for peace; with him, we work for peace.**

**In him, we live for peace: the peace of God's children to the glory of God.**

**Amen**

*(<http://rccdsb.edu.on.ca/religiouseducation/school-prayer-2/monthlyseasonal-prayer/>)*

## **Confession**

Forgiving God, who surpasses all understanding, we confess that we have misled others and ourselves to pursue paths which reverted peace. Our greed, fear, self-centeredness make us to see the world from our perspective and choose the comfortable safest edge, remaining silent, ignoring the sufferings of the rest of creation. Our actions and inactions many a times support the abuse of democracy, freedom, human rights, justice, equality, labour power, eco environment and so on. We regret that we have let down the gifts of UDHR and the Indian Constitution. God of wholeness, forgive us the broken pieces, reconcile us, and once again construct us in your image so that we may be ever mindful of the vision of holistic peace and accomplish it with prudence.

## **Assurance of Pardon**

Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen**

## **Passing of Peace:**

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you!

People: **And also with you!**

Leader: Let us greet our neighbours in solidarity with the Prince of Peace!

## **Intercessory prayer**

God of guidance, let the minds of all Indians be filled with the knowledge of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the Indian Constitution. May we follow the provisions of the UDHR and the Indian Constitution to justice, equality and fraternity.

May God in your mercy,

**Hear our prayers**

We pray for all the authorities especially those who hold decision-making power. May they be given wisdom for just governance of the country. May the conscience of the Government, Legislature, Judiciary and the Media be stirred to fulfill their non-partisan societal responsibilities.

May God in your mercy,  
**Hear our prayers**

God of compassion we pray for all the individuals and communities of this country who are subjected to injustice and suffering. Grant them comfort and strength. Fill them with your reformatory spirit, lighting a burning spark in them to fight for justice and rights.

May God in your mercy,  
**Hear our prayers**

God of Life, we pray for the Church who is commissioned to participate in the development of the country. Revive the churches to be prophetic in their ministries of justice. Empower them to serve as peacemakers and facilitators of 'abundant life.'

May God in your mercy,  
**Hear our prayers**

### **Closing Song:**

### **Closing Prayer:**

*While holding lighted candles the following  
Peace prayer of St. Francis of Assisi could be recited as a pledge*

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
where there is sadness, joy;  
O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood as to understand;  
to be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive;  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen...

### **Benediction:**

Let us go with Jesus, the light who guides us on our way.  
May our hope be that the Sun of Justice will rise one morning  
on all humankind.

May the God of Peace, our constant companion,  
lead us along paths of solidarity and hope,  
and give us the joy of being united in God's love. **Amen.**

*(from **Glory to God and Peace on Earth**, published by the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation, 2011)*