## Commemoration of 75 Years since Hiroshima and Nagasaki Sunday 9 August

## Leader: Welcome to this Commemoration and Acknowledgement of Country:

We gather to commemorate the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, 75 years ago.

## Call to Worship:

Response: Blessed is our God, now and unto the end of the ages

 Blessed is our God, who grants us peace and is the source of all peace.
 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.

Prayer of Confession:

Loving God, you create and sustain all that is good and beautiful;

You give life to the earth and all living things;

You have called us to wholeness; to fullness of life.
But, as we gather here, we are conscious of our brokenness,

as individuals, as communities, and as nations.

We have heard the cries for justice and peace from all the corners of the earth.

We are moved by the tears, the pain and the agony of millions around the world.

We sense the dark clouds of war in many countries, where innocent women

and children lose their humanity, as they are described as collateral damage.
We stand here in the shadow of death of millions of innocent people, confessing that despite decades of efforts to achieve disarmament,

weapons are still being produced in even greater quantities.

We acknowledge that our own country is complicit in the ongoing expansion of the international arms race, which has no boundaries;

We are aware that both our major political parties support the use of our taxes

to encourage local arms producers to develop new weapons for export.

We know they are sold to warring nations for use in ongoing conflicts, especially in

the Middle East, with no scrutiny of the human rights record of the customer nations;

We regret that many countries, including ours, still refuse to sign international agreements to ban the production of nuclear weapons, and we believe Australia must now ratify the United Nations Treaty to Abolish Nuclear Weapons.

It is time for Australia to develop an independent policy on matters of arms control, and reject the madness of unlimited weapons manufacture and distribution.

*We say together:*

Loving God, help us to admit to our failure

to cry out for a vision of unity of all humankind,

without which we will inevitably perish.

Teach us to refuse to deal with others falsely,
saying “peace,” when there is no peace.

Grant us grace that we may walk with our

neighbours in the paths of righteousness.

God of peace, bring us closer to you,

so that our hearts and minds may learn

the way of peace shown by your Son, Jesus Christ.

For you have been our help in ages past,
and you are our shelter in the years ahead. Amen

-2-

**We sing: Put peace into each other’s hands**: Tune: St Columba (TiS 523)

Put peace into each other’s hands

and like a treasure hold it;

protect it like a candle flame,

with tenderness enfold it.

Put peace into each other’s hands

with loving expectation;

be gentle in your words and ways,

in touch with God’s creation.

Give thanks for strong yet tender hands,

held out in trust and blessing.

Where words fall short, let hands speak out,

the heights of love expressing.

Put peace into each other’s hands

he is love’s deepest measure;

in love make peace, give peace a chance

and share it like a treasure.

Reach out in friendship, stay with faith

in touch with those around you.

Put peace into each other’s hands;

the peace which sought and found you. Words: **©** Fred Kaan 1989

**Narrative: Reader 1**

Hiroshima Day commemorates 6 August 1945, the day when an atomic bomb was dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima, followed on 9 August, by one dropped on Nagasaki.

The bombings effectively ended World War II by bringing about the surrender of Japan, but at a terrible price: the two cities were destroyed, and casualties, mostly civilians, were estimated at around 200,000, with many more people dying later from injuries and illness. We gather to stand in solidarity with the living Japanese victims, some of whom still suffer from the injuries sustained in those two acts of destructive force, which may have ended the war in the Pacific.

We now confess that those acts of violence also had lasting consequences for all the residents of those two cities. Since then, wars have continued in and between many nations, and Hiroshima Day has become a day of prayer for world peace. The day is observed in Japan, and many other countries. In Newcastle, the prayers of remembrance have been led each year for 34 yrs, by Christians for Peace

**Prayer: Reader 1**

Loving God, you create and sustain all that is good and beautiful. You give life to the earth and all living things. You have called us to wholeness; to fullness of life.
But, as we gather here, we are conscious of our brokenness, both as persons and communities

We have heard the cries for justice and peace from all the corners of the earth.

We are moved by the tears, the pain and the agonies of millions around the world.

We sense the dark clouds of war which envelop so much of humanity.
We stand here in the shadow of death.

We say together:

**Response: Give us the courage to transform those parts of ourselves and our world that divide and create enmity. Help us to take steps to stop the cycle of violence in our homes, in our workplaces, in our neighbourhoods, in our country, and in our world. Let peace reign in all our lives. Amen**

**-3-**

**Song: We listen to Sadako from Hiroshima, by Robin Mann**

**SADAKO FROM HIROSHIMA**

1. She saw the Thunderbolt in the sky

like a million suns, it prickled her eyes;

she saw the Thunderbolt in the sky -

two years old, it prickled her eyes.

But now she sits making paper cranes,

paper cranes, paper cranes.

Now she sits making paper cranes -

Sadako from Hiroshima.

2. She was a runner, swift and strong,

she was tall and slim and her legs were long;

she was a runner, swift and strong -

ten years old and her legs were long.

3. She went to hospital tired and weak,

it was hard to laugh, it was hard to speak.

she went to hospital tired and weak,

eleven years old, it was hard to speak.

And now she sits making paper cranes...

4. She lost the race that she wanted to win -

paper cranes couldn't cover her with their wings,

cranes couldn't cover her with their wings -

twelve years old and she wanted to win.

And now she lies with her paper cranes

5. This is our cry, this is our prayer,

"May the crane of peace fly everywhere!"

This is our cry, this is our prayer,

"Crane of peace fly everywhere!"

*Statue of Sadako in the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park*  © 1984 Robin Mann

**Please listen to the song on YouTube: enter “Sadako from Hiroshima” into your search engine to bring up a performance of the song by an Adelaide children’s choir. It is amazing!**

**Her Story:** On August 6th, 1945, the first atomic bomb was dropped, on the Japanese city of Hiroshima.

 ‘Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes’, a book by Eleanor Coerr, tells the story of a 2 year old girl called Sadako, who survived the bomb, apparently unscathed, along with her family. When she was 11 years old, however, she became ill with a form of radiation illness. She had to go to hospital. Her best friend came to visit her with a gift. She brought Sadako a folded paper crane, and reminded her of an old Japanese belief: if a sick person made a thousand paper cranes and made a wish on each one, she would get better. Sadako

made 642 before she died, but her friends and classmates made the rest and she was buried with a thousand paper cranes. Her statue is in Hiroshima Peace Park — she stands holding an origami crane — and it is her story that has made the folded paper crane a symbol of peace the world over. The song was inspired particularly by a short prayer that Sadako's mother whispers one night as she leaves the hospital bed where her daughter is sleeping “O flock of heavenly cranes, cover my child with your wings"

**Reader 2: Australian Weapons Exports to Saudi Arabia & United Arab Emirates 2018**

In 2018 the Australian Government has approved the export of dozens of shipments of military items to the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, despite both countries being currently embroiled in the bloody Yemen war, a conflict dogged by accusations of war crimes and indiscriminate civilian killings. Canberra is attempting to ramp up Australia's arms exports by subsidising production as part of a new defence strategy. The four-year war in Yemen has killed tens of thousands and an air-and-sea embargo has led to [more than 85,000 Yemeni children under five dying from hunger, according to Save](https://www.savethechildren.org/us/about-us/media-and-news/2018-press-releases/yemen-85000-children-may-have-died-from-starvation) the Children fund.

**-4-**

Australia's burgeoning exports to the UAE and Saudi Arabia may be connected to [a plan announced by then Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull in January last year to drastically increase defence sales over the next decade](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-01-29/aid-groups-lash-coalition-plan-to-become-major-weapons-exporter/9369962). The plan is for Australia to spend $3.8 billion between now and 2028 in order to make Australia the 10th largest arms exporter in the world. The strategy states [the Middle East is a "priority market" for defence exports](http://www.defence.gov.au/Export/Strategy/GlobalMarkets.asp).

Save the Children reports that since March 2015, the situation in Yemen has deteriorated into a living nightmare where children starve to death daily, and are shelled and bombed in their homes and schools. Prior to the conflict, Yemen was already the poorest country in the Arab world – 850,000 children under five were already chronically malnourished. An estimated 4.5 million children were unable to go back to school at the start of the last school year, depriving them of their right to an education and putting their futures in jeopardy

**Reader Introduces the Gospel Reading**

We hear the words of Jesus and recall his actions as he reacts to the desecration of the temple:

**Jesus clears the temple –John 2: 12 –17**

**Modern interpretation: Christ driving out the money changers by Louis Duffy** on screen



The scene is a graveyard where sixteen men in business suits are in confrontation with Jesus who is holding a baton. The men are arms dealers trading their weapons on the graves of the dead – the ultimate profiteers in suffering! So Jesus continues to turn things upside down, in a world that frequently rejects his message of peace on earth. While many feel uncomfortable at an angry Jesus there would be greater concern if he remained silent in the face of acts of violence, oppression and injustice.

**Leader: We reflect on the words of Wendell Berry**

“The earth is all we have in common. It is what we have and where we live, and we cannot damage it without damaging those with whom we share it. There is an uncanny resemblance between our behaviour toward each other and our behaviour toward the earth. By some connection which we do not recognise, the willingness to exploit one becomes the willingness to exploit the other. It is impossible to care for each other if we fail to care for the earth.”

**Song:** **God, as with silent hearts we bring to mind** (TiS 680) Tune Bread of Life (TiS 429)

God! As with silent hearts we bring to mind
how hate and war diminish humankind,
we pause — and seek in worship to increase
our knowledge of the things that make for peace.

Hallow our will as humbly we recall
the lives of those who gave and give their all.
We thank you, God, for women, children, men
who seek to serve in love, today as then.

Give us deep faith to comfort those who mourn,
high hope to share with all the newly born,
strong love in our pursuit of human worth:
‘lest we forget’ the future of this earth.

So, Prince of Peace, disarm our trust in power,
teach us to coax the plant of peace to flower.
May we, impassioned by your living Word,
remember forward to a world restored.

Words **Fred Kaan**, Copyright © 1997 Stainer & Bell Limited, London: First sung on Remembrance Sunday in 1989

-5-

Readers 3 and 4 alternately:

Reader 3: We listen to the voices of wise women and men from all ages:

Pope Francis on Nuclear Weapons: Weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, create nothing but a false sense of security. We must listen to the voices of survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, together with other victims of nuclear testing. May their prophetic voice serve as a warning for coming generations.

**Reader 4: Helen Keller:** Strike against war, for without you no battles can be fought! Strike against manufacturing shrapnel and gas bombs and all other tools of murder! Strike against preparedness that means death and misery to millions of human beings! Be not dumb, obedient slaves in an army of destruction! Be heroes in an army of construction!

**Reader 3: John F Kennedy:** Human beings must put an end to war, or war will be the end of humanity; war will exist until the day when the conscientious objector enjoys the same reputation and prestige as the warrior does today.

Reader 4: Mother Teresa: If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.

Reader 3: Maiiread Corrigan-Maguire, Nobel Peace Prize: We frail humans are at the onetime capable of the greatest good, and the greatest evil. To change we must be more forgiving compassionate loving and above all else, joyful.

**Reader 4: Jimmy Carter, former US President:** We cannot be both the world's champion of peace and the world's leading supplier of the weapons of war.

**Silence for reflection**

**Reader 5: Intercessions**

We pray for those suffering war, violence and terror throughout the world.

All: God of peace, grant us your peace.

For children who are sexually exploited and those recruited for war, taught to hate others, or forced to wear explosive vests as suicide bombers.

All: God of peace, grant us your peace.

For all who inflict hatred and violence on others, and for those who make and encourage war. May they be turned to seek justice and harmony.

All: God of peace, grant us your peace.

For the plight of indigenous people throughout the world, remembering especially the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia.

All: God of peace, grant them justice.

For those who seek asylum and refuge from violence and persecution, especially those who are still detained by our government on Nauru and Manus Island.

All: God of peace, grant them your peace and our generosity.

We pray for all who agitate for peace and justice, and we pray that rulers and governments may lead all people to respect the earth and seek a just use of its resources.

All: God of peace, may your Kingdom come. Amen

Leader: As a conclusion to the time of prayer we say together a Franciscan blessing:

May God bless us with discomfort at easy answers,

half-truths, and superficial relationships,

so that we may live deep within our hearts.

May God bless us with righteous anger,

at injustice, oppression, and the exploitation of people,

so that we may persistently work for justice.

-6-

May God bless us with tears to shed for those

who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation and war,

so that we may reach out our hand to comfort them

and to turn their pain into joy.

May God bless us with enough foolishness to believe

that we can make a difference in this world,

so that we can do what others claim cannot be done. Amen

Leader: we sing together:

Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me bring your love.
Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord
And where there's doubt, true faith in you.

 Chorus: Oh, Master grant that I may never seek
 So much to be consoled as to console
 To be understood as to understand
 To be loved as to love with all my soul.

Make me a channel of your peace
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope
Where there is darkness, let me bring your light
And where there's sadness, ever joy.

 Chorus: O Master …….

Make me a channel of your peace
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned
In giving of ourselves that we receive
And in dying that we're born to eternal life

 Chorus: O Master ……

Blessing: Go in Peace to love and serve the Lord. In the name of Christ, Amen