

# PRAYER SERVICE FOR PEACE IN ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

- *This service is designed as an evening, outdoor prayer vigil using handheld candles. Feel free to modify the order of worship as needed, including for use as an indoor service.*
- *You're encouraged to use different readers to voice the various elements of the service.*
- *Prayers were collected from many sources and remain the work of their creators. Feel free to add and remove prayers as best suits your needs.*
- *Music was chosen that could be easily sung acapella. Feel free to modify the music choices.*

*As persons gather, offer them a way to express what they're feeling concerning the war between Israel and Hamas, and its potential to escalate. This could be on a notecard dropped into a basket or bowl, on a Post-it later attached to a poster board, or a word or two written on a whiteboard. etc.*

*After those gathered note their feelings, they're handed a candle. It will be lit later in the service.*

JOHN 1:1-5, NRSVUE

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

*Light a large candle.*

SOLO

*I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light, verses 1 – 2*

CCLI Song # 89848 by Kathleen Thomerson

*Candlelight is passed from person to person in silence until all the candles are lit.*

CALL TO PRAYER

[Vigil](http://www.unfoldinglight.net) by Steve Garnaas Holmes, [www.unfoldinglight.net](http://www.unfoldinglight.net)

As darkness descends  
you hold your candle,  
your frail light,  
but it is not little.  
It is the flame of "Let there be light,"  
the big bang of hope.  
Your light orbits through the darkness  
with all the other stars  
in a great galaxy of compassion.

You say your quiet prayer,  
a few words uttered on the wind,  
but they are not small,  
these words spun of a thread of love,  
a hardy strand that runs from heart to heart  
in a massive web of mercy.

You offer up your heart  
but it is not your heart,  
it is God's, beating in you,  
it is God's light shining in you,  
God's hope echoing through you,  
God's prayer sustaining the world.

Keep vigil with courage and confidence,  
for God keeps vigil in you;  
in us, in the hopeful and the helpless,  
in the traumatized and terrorized,  
in all of life  
God keeps vigil.

#### PRAYER

In the Light of God's Love by Lisa Degrenia, part 1. [www.revlisad.com](http://www.revlisad.com)

*Light another large candle.*

This candle represents our suffering and the suffering of the world.  
In the light of God's love, we claim God's gift of truth.  
There is no need to hide or deny the horror that is taking place or the feelings we have because of it.

Incline your ear, O Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and needy. - Psalm 86:1

*Light another large candle.*

This candle represents our suffering and the suffering of the world.  
In the light of God's love, we claim God's gift of lament.  
We cry out to God for generations of evil, hatred, and oppression in the Holy Land,  
We cry out to God for generations of murder, devastation, and terror.  
We accept God's invitation to express every feeling and question.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my  
groaning? O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest. - Psalm 22:1-2

#### PRAYER

[Show Up](#) by Jenny Gehman

O God,  
in all of the places where people are invoking your name,  
we implore you to show up!  
Show up in a 1,000 different ways.

Come as protector, as prince of peace.  
Come as deliverer and defender of the weak.  
Come as comforter, consoler, companion and cure.  
Come as shield. Come as shade.  
Come as miraculous multiplier of meals.

O God, come, and do not delay.  
Walk on water or ride wings of the dawn  
Rescuer, redeemer, mighty to save,  
How long before you show up? Come, and do not delay.  
Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us.

## PRAYER

A Prayer for Israeli-Palestinian Solidarity by Rabbi Hanan Schlesinger

*Rabbi Hanan Schlesinger is one of the founders of [Roots](#). Founded nearly ten years ago, Roots sponsors locations throughout the Holy Land to nurture understanding, non-violence, and transformation between Israelis and Palestinians.*

Our Father in heaven,  
Creator of all humanity,  
Whose mercies are upon all His creatures and whose love is withheld from none.

Who has sanctified the Holy Land from the River to the Sea  
and placed here both Palestinians and Israelis,  
Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

Let our unique and particular covenants with You never blind us to Your love of all Your creatures.  
May our love of You, of our nation and of the land,  
never prevent us from loving the other peoples of this land of Yours,  
and may it never prevent us from honoring their love of this land.

Help us to break free of the hubris of exclusivity  
that imprisons us in a narrow perspective and allows us to be concerned only about our own.  
Help us to heal our suspicions, fears, and hatreds and to aspire towards harmony and brotherhood.

Help us to fully see the humanity of all  
and to expand our concern, our identities, and the circles of our love  
to embrace all the peoples of this land.

Help us to remember that our fates are intertwined  
and that our destiny is to live together;  
that one people's pain, suffering, loss, or restriction will only bring the same for the other;  
and that the welfare and the happiness of one depends on the welfare and the happiness of the other.

Elevate our wills to desire for the other what we desire for our own people.  
Grant us the courage and the strength to join forces to search together  
and to dedicate ourselves to the implementation of the common good of all the peoples of this land of Yours.

In this way may we bring joy to Your land and gladness to Your city,  
and may You look favorably upon us and bless us all with peace.  
Amen.

## PRAYER

A Prayer for Gaza by Lisa Degrenia. [www.revlisad.com](http://www.revlisad.com)

Prince of Peace, hear our cry  
For your beloved in Gaza, Israel, and the Palestinian Territories  
It's complicated  
It's deadly  
It's been that way for far too long

We trust you weep with the injured and grieving  
We trust you companion the homeless and abducted  
We trust your healing, saving work continues

Bring freedom for all trapped in cycles of oppression and violence  
Bring understanding for all chained to manipulation and intolerance  
Bring new life from chaos and devastation  
despair and death

May streams flow with lasting justice and provision  
May deserts blossom with your shalom, salam, and grace  
May all involved, in this time, in this place, know the victory of your goodness

For you are the One True Living God  
Sovereign, Suffering, Savior  
Hope and Home, forever  
Amen

*Those gathered are invited to offer their own prayers.*

## PRAYER

In the Light of God's Love by Lisa Degrenia, part 2. [www.revlisad.com](http://www.revlisad.com)

*Light another large candle.*

This candle represents our suffering and the suffering of the world.  
In the light of God's love, we claim God's gift of courage.  
Courage to be honest, to offer help, to comfort one another.  
Courage to dare to live differently now.

The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts;  
so I am helped, and my heart exults,  
and with my song, I give thanks to him. - Psalm 28:7

*Light another large candle.*

This candle represents our suffering and the suffering of the world.  
In the light of God's love, we claim God's gift of hope.  
God is good. God is strong. God is near,  
leading us to a day without tears and pain, without sin and death.  
Healing and deliverance and peace are coming; if not now, then on that day.  
We will live this hope.

By awesome deeds you answer us with deliverance, O God of our salvation;  
you are the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas. - Psalm 65:5

#### CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

*The following prayer is often attributed to St. Francis of Assisi, but that cannot be confirmed.*

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.

#### SONG

*We are Marching in the Light of God*  
*CCLI Song # 320947 by Anders Nyberg and Andrew Maries*

#### CALL TO ACTION

[We Are Not Powerless](#) by Steve Garnaas Holmes

When evil falls like a hailstorm  
and cruelty pounds living beings into the Earth,  
when the cloud of ash descends  
with its broad wings and thoughtless talons,  
and we seem so small and feel so helpless,  
we are not.

We are remnants of the light of creation,  
little heavens in whom the mighty grace of God  
throbs like nuclear power.  
Frail and faulted as we are,  
we are vessels of the Spirit of Life,  
stewards of the peace of God.

In our hope burns a greater power.  
Our good will joins an energy field  
that moves mountains.  
We cannot gauge the quantum of hope  
that shimmers, unseeable, in our hope.  
We trust, and our hope  
defeats the powers that would have us despair.  
Radiant with love, even before the dawn,  
the victory is ours.

#### BENEDICTION

Go now in peace, to love and to serve.  
Go, with the blessing and power of our great and glorious Creator  
to share light and make peace. Amen

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