

27th September 2026 – Morning Service

Peace Sunday

Jill Martin

Call to Worship

God of the universe, whose light shines in every culture and tradition, hold close to you today the many women, men and children who give of themselves in order to bring justice and peace on this earth. The bridgebuilders, the artists, the hidden saints, the risk takers, the intercessions, the campaigners and all those who will not lie down to injustice even at the cost of their lives. And may we be ourselves in their midst – alive to the possibilities of your justice-filled Spirit at the heart of creation. **Amen.**

Peter Millar, from *In the Gift of This New Day*. Praying with the Iona Community

StF 710 – Peace perfect peace

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|---|---|
| 1) Peace, perfect peace, is the gift of Christ our Lord.
Peace, perfect peace, is the gift of Christ our Lord.
Thus, says the Lord,
will the world know my friends.
Peace, perfect peace, is the gift of Christ our Lord. | 4) Hope, perfect hope, is the gift of Christ our Lord.
Hope, perfect hope, is the gift of Christ our Lord.
Thus, says the Lord,
will the world know my friends.
Hope, perfect hope, is the gift of Christ our Lord. |
| 2) Love, perfect love, is the gift of Christ our Lord.
Love, perfect love, is the gift of Christ our Lord.
Thus, says the Lord,
will the world know my friends.
Love, perfect love, is the gift of Christ our Lord. | 5) Joy, perfect joy, is the gift of Christ our Lord.
Joy, perfect joy, is the gift of Christ our Lord.
Thus, says the Lord,
will the world know my friends.
Joy, perfect joy, is the gift of Christ our Lord. |
| 3) Faith, perfect faith, is the gift of Christ our Lord.
Faith, perfect faith, is the gift of Christ our Lord.
Thus, says the Lord,
will the world know my friends.
Faith, perfect faith, is the gift of Christ our Lord. | |

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Prayer of Adoration

Lord God, before whom every knee shall bow and whom every tongue shall praise, we come to worship you. There is no light in our lives or in the life of the world that does not come from you. In your presence the morning stars first sang together, and the peoples of God shouted for joy, and in your hand is the destiny of life. You are the King and the Judge, but also our Saviour and friend. We bring you our adoration and praise, imperfect though it is, we ask that you accept our service of worship; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Prayer of Confession

Lord God, every good thing in our lives comes from you; and yet we confess with shame that we have not lived together as your children and shared the gifts that you have given us. So often our lives have reflected not your glory but our own selfishness.

Forgive us, Lord, if we have loved only those who have loved us, if we have sought our own pleasure and disregarded the needs of our fellows. Forgive us if we have been unkind in our judgements, quick to condemn and slow to forgive. And forgive us if we have given into our worst and made it difficult for others to live up to their best.

Lord God if we have come into your presence bitter and cynical, send us out rejoicing and full of gratitude; and make us men and women with pure and great hearts so that we might see our God. **Amen.**

Collect

Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many: help us to love others as he loved us, and make us responsible citizens of earth, as in Christ we are made citizens of heaven; for his sake. **Amen.**

StF 707 – Make me a channel of your peace

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| 1) 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: | 2) Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope;
where there is darkness, only light;
and where there's sadness, ever joy: |
| Ch) <i>O 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.</i> | 3) Make me a channel of your peace.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
in giving unto all that we receive,
and in dying that we're born to eternal life. |

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Reading: Micah 6: 1-8 (NIV)

Listen to what the LORD says:

'Stand up, plead my case before the mountains;
let the hills hear what you have to say.
'Hear, you mountains, the LORD's accusation;
listen, you everlasting foundations of the earth.
For the LORD has a case against his people;
he is lodging a charge against Israel.

'My people, what have I done to you?
How have I burdened you? Answer me.
I brought you up out of Egypt
and redeemed you from the land of slavery.
I sent Moses to lead you,
also Aaron and Miriam.
My people, remember
what Balak king of Moab plotted
and what Balaam son of Beor answered.
Remember your journey from Shittim to Gilgal,
that you may know the righteous acts of the LORD.'

With what shall I come before the LORD
and bow down before the exalted God?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?
Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousand rivers of oil?
Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the LORD require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.

Reflection

Micah came from the town of Moresheth Gath, which lay about 22 miles to the southwest of Jerusalem in the southern foothills of Judah. Like the prophet Amos, he came from a town in Judah, and showed particular concern for justice in society. Despite the warnings given by the prophet Hosea not to fall into the same godless ways as Israel, by this time Judah had become just as corrupt as the Northern kingdom in every respect. Dishonesty, bribery, immorality and pagan worship were widespread.

Micah was concerned about the plight of the poor, but also the middle classes, who were being reduced to poverty by the rich upper classes living in Jerusalem. Judah was in the process of changing from a rural to an urban society. Rich investors were exploiting the situation by buying up small family farms and creating big land holdings. Micah was angry about what was happening as he saw how the small towns and villages of Judah, such as his own, were being affected.

The rich and powerful were being supported in their oppression by corrupt magistrates and encouraged by false prophets and priests who ingratiated themselves by prophesying what the upper classes wanted to hear, rather than what God was saying.

It seems likely that Micah, along with Isaiah, belonged to this group of professional prophets who advised on political and religious matters. By contrast to what the false prophets were saying, Micah preached the truth about God's judgement on sin and his grace for those who repent. He pleaded for social justice and for a return to true worship of God and obeying his covenant.

This portion of Micah takes the form of a court case; God against his people. There was plenty of religious activity going on in Judah at this time, but it had become mere ritual with no reality. Micah's contemporary, Isaiah, described the nation as sinful and sick from head to foot. Their worship no longer came from the heart, but had become nothing more than 'trampling' the courts of the Temple.

As the people were in denial of this, Micah pictured God summoning them to a courtroom to hear the case against them and to prepare their defence. The mountains were called to take part because they had witnessed everything that had happened, including the covenant agreement being sealed and then broken by idol worship at the pagan altars and high places built on their hilltops.

God began by reminding the people that he had never burdened them, but had only ever shown them patience, care, love, and grace. He bought them out of Egypt, gave them leaders to guide them through the wilderness years, and his laws to live by, turned an attempt to curse them into a blessing, protected them and brought them across the River Jordan into the Promised Land. Rather than remembering these events and their significance, the people had soon forgotten them.

Micah pictured the people wondering aloud what they should bring to God. After all this time the people still didn't seem to know what was pleasing to God. They thought that if they bought enough gifts and sacrifices to God, He would accept them and forgive them. Their thinking had become so depraved and contaminated by the pagan nations around them they even believed that sacrificing their own children might work. Just as Amos had done in Israel, Micah reminded the people of Judah that God had already told them what he was looking for and it had nothing to do with rituals and sacrifices: "He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

StF 722 – When mountains that we thought secure

- 1) When mountains that we thought secure
lie crumbled where we stand
and pain and helplessness endure
– all from another’s hand –
help us to bear the prophet’s mark,
to stand apart from hate
and witness to the Father’s call
for justice in the land.
- 2) God is our strength and refuge still
though all the earth give way;
our help at every time of ill,
the light of our dark day.
And as his people in the world
we bear the scars of grief,
but echo faith’s resounding note
– and still for justice pray.
- 3) There is a place of holiness
where God makes warfare cease.
There is a day of hopefulness,
a promised time of peace.
So, here today, we bear the pain
of inhumanity,
but pledge our lives to live for truth
so justice may increase.

Gareth Hill © Gareth Hill Publishing

Reading: Luke 10: 1-11, 16-20 (NIV)

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

‘When you enter a house, first say, “Peace to this house.” If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.

‘When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. Heal those there who are ill and tell them, “The kingdom of God has come near to you.” But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, “Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you. Yet be sure of this: the kingdom of God has come near.”

‘Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever rejects you rejects me; but whoever rejects me rejects him who sent me.’

The seventy-two returned with joy and said, ‘Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.’

He replied, ‘I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.’

Reflection

There is a similarity in Luke’s account of sending out the apostles and the story of Moses in Deuteronomy. Moses sent out twelve men to scout out the land just as Jesus has recently done when he sent out the twelve disciples. Seventy elders accompanied Moses to the mountain top where the spirit rested on them and they prophesied; Jesus sends out the seventy to offer peace and to proclaim the nearness of the Kingdom of God.

In Deuteronomy the elect were those who obeyed the law, Deuteronomy promised blessings to the faithful, and Israelites interpreted blessings in a materialistic way – health and wealth. The people of Jesus day

believed that health and wealth validated their right standing with God and that poverty and illness indicated God's displeasure.

The commissioning of the seventy broadens Jesus' missionaries beyond the twelve chosen apostles who have already been sent out. Now with the commissioning of the seventy, the message of good news is the responsibility of all disciples not just the chosen few. The seventy are to go in pairs to neighbouring towns in an aggressive outreach. The mission is to reach Gentile communities. The talk of harvest shows there is a hurry about sharing the good news and gathering in people to hear and believe. The seventy returned with great joy, through the power of Jesus even the demons are subject to them. The world tuned upside down, a new Covenant with God, sin forgiven new life given.

Today, we are the apostles told to share the love of God to all nations. Not just to the lovable, but to make a point of sharing with those who may not be respectable because of their differences. We are living in a time of increased anxiety and poverty. People are in the UK relying on Foodbanks to survive even though many have more than one job. People are finding daily living harder as inflation hits us all. There are stories of carers having to leave their clients as they can no longer afford to put fuel in their cars to get to appointments. We are being told through the news that refugees are not welcome and as a country we must all do our best to condemn them, even if it means basic human rights are broken. The division in our society grows as we watch those with wealth find greater reward whilst those with little criminalised. We as the church should we raise our voices against immoral and illegal practices:

"He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

God guide and empower us to serve you. **Amen.**

StF 712 – Put peace into each other's hands

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| 1) Put peace into each other's hands
and like a treasure hold it,
protect it like a candle-flame,
with tenderness enfold it. | 4) As at Communion, shape your hands
into a waiting cradle;
the gift of Christ receive, revere,
united round the table. |
| 2) Put peace into each other's hands
with loving expectation;
be gentle in your words and ways,
in touch with God's creation. | 5) Put Christ 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. |
| 3) Put peace into each other's hands
like bread we break for sharing;
look people warmly in the eye:
our life is meant for caring. | |

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The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. **Amen.**

Prayers of Thanksgiving

God our Father, we thank you for creating our world and sending your Son to redeem us from our sin, by the way he lived and died to demonstrate the glorious power of love. By his resurrection and ascension, he has conquered sin and death. By sending your Holy Spirit on the Church, you empower us to live as Christ's disciples and to serve you in the Church and in the world. We thank you, Father, that you have called us together to build the city of God. In this great task, may no one in our fellowship feel useless or unloved, lonely or unwanted. Grant us a vision of your world as it might be, a world of justice, brotherhood and peace, founded not on force but on love. Lord, hear the prayers of our hearts as we pledge out time and our energy and our thought to make this world what you intend it to be. Send your Spirit into the dark places of the world, our nation, and our lives, carrying faith to the doubting, hope to the fearful and strength to the weak. Fill our lives with your love and help us to pass on that love to others. So let your kingdom come and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

We pray for those who long for freedom and justice.

For those suffering from oppression and those in abusive relationships

For those fleeing persecution and those with no safe place to live

For those whose lives are ruled by fear and the daily routine of war and violence

And we pray for all who work for justice in your world.

In our prayers and in our lives may we always seek your justice.

O God, you have shown us what is good and what you require;

to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with you.

We pray for those who live in need.

For those for whom poverty and unemployment is a daily struggle

For men, women and children who are homeless

For those suffering the effects of climate change

And we pray for all those offering support in our communities.

In our prayers and in our lives may we always seek your justice.

O God you have shown us what is good and what you require;

to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with you.

We pray for those who are lonely.

For those feeling neglected and alone

For those who are ill and those who struggle with mental health issues

For those who are bereaved

And we pray for all who stand alongside others

In our prayers and in our lives may we always seek your justice.

O God you have shown us what is good and what you require;

to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with you. Amen.

StF 687 – One human family God has made

1) One human family God has made,
and all for each to care.

One world, to be the home of all,
with all its wealth to share.

One Christ, to manifest on earth
Love's ultimate design.

One Church to know the mystery
of broken bread and wine.

2) One race, one world – yet torn apart,
we spurn the way of love.

But still ahead, the Christ leads on
and calls his Church to move

from love of power to power of love,
to give the word to all –

to trust the love that conquered death,
outside the city wall.

3) And are we brave enough to join
with that great company –
the cost not less than all we have
and are or hope to be –
the bitter cup of human sin
to drink with him who died,
and take his love outside the wall
to all the crucified?

Rosemary Wakelin © Rosemary Wakelin

4) Claim him who claims us for his own,
to share his pain and grief,
to bear the scars that stamp us his –
the hallmark of belief.
As partners of the living Christ,
who risk the path he trod,
with wondering love we find we share
the timeless joy of God.

Blessing

Go out into the world to meet people and find them no longer strangers but fellow travellers;
no longer aliens to be avoided but family to be welcomed;
no longer enemies to be feared but friends to be enjoyed.

Go out into the world to meet God's people!

Pat Bennet from Acorns and Archangels Praying with the Iona Community

May the God of freedom inspire us to do justice, set us free to love others with kindness and lead us by the spirit to walk humbly with God. And the blessing of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit remain with us all evermore. **Amen.**