



**World Council
of Churches**



Global Prayer for Peace in the Middle East

26 March 2026 15.00 CET



Global Ecumenical Prayer for Peace

♪ يا سيدي لما أرى نجومك (*O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder*)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=jtgO0M501x4

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder
Consider all the works thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
Thy pow'r throughout the universe displayed:

*Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee,
How great thou art, how great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee,
How great thou art, how great thou art!*

When through the woods and forest glades I wander
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees,
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur
And hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze:

And when I think that God, his Son not sparing,
Sent him to die, I scarce can take it in,
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin.

Words of Welcome

Professor Michel Abs, general secretary, Middle East Council of Churches

Greetings

Bishop Dr Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, moderator, World Council of Churches
His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem

Opening Prayer

O Lord Jesus Christ, our God, You are the Prince of Peace who has broken down the middle wall of separation, achieving through Your Cross the peace of reconciliation for all who believe in You and obey Your Gospel. We, Your chosen people who bear Your Name and belong to Your Body, called to be tireless seekers of peace, pray from the depths of our hearts that You enlighten the hearts of those who rule this world through strife and division, who are directing Your world to the shadows of death.

Grant us, O Lord, to continuously put off the carnal nature and walk the path of the Spirit, that we may manifest the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, long-suffering, and that peace which surpasses all

understanding. Yet, we behold with heavy hearts how the works of the flesh govern those who hold the destinies of nations. We see hearts hardened by greed, minds clouded by a darkened understanding and fanaticism, and a disposition that rejects dialogue and the pursuit of righteous agreements.

O Heavenly King, Comforter, and Spirit of Truth, come and abide in the hearts of those who make decisions in this world. Enlighten their understanding to perceive Your holy will and lead them into the ways of the Gospel of Peace. Soften the hearts of the powerful, protect the oppressed in the Middle East, and comfort those who mourn, so that all humanity may dwell in tranquillity, glorifying Your all-holy Name: of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

(Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East)

LAMENT

Responsive Psalm 42

As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for You, O God.

My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and behold the face of God?

My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me continually,
“Where is your God?”

**These things I remember, as I pour out my soul:
how I went with the throng and led them in procession to the house of God, with glad
shouts and songs of thanksgiving, a multitude keeping festival.**

Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me?

**Hope in God, for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.
My soul is cast down within me;**

Deep calls to deep at the thunder of your torrents;
all your waves and your billows have gone over me.

**By day the Lord commands his steadfast love,
and at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life.**

Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me?

Hope in God, for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.

*(Before each prayer, participants from a particular region will be invited to turn on their cameras
and light a candle as a symbol of solidarity)*

Prayer

O Almighty God and Heavenly Father, who rules over all nations and governs the hearts of rulers, we come before You in humility and repentance, confessing that we have not lived as Your people ought, and that the sins of the world bear bitter fruit in violence and war. Break the bow, shatter the spear, and silence the weapons that bring death to the innocent. We lift before You all who suffer in this present conflict, in lands torn by violence across the Middle East: families displaced, homes destroyed, the wounded, the grieving, and the fearful.

Govern, we ask You, the hearts of kings, leaders, and commanders, for their authority is from You alone. Turn them from pride, vengeance, and reckless ambition, and grant them wisdom, restraint, and a true desire for peace. Teach them that they are but Your servants, accountable to Your न्याय (justice), and called to preserve life, not destroy it.

Set limits to destruction, and in Your appointed time, grant a just and lasting peace among nations. For we know, O God, that all kingdoms of this world are passing, but Your kingdom alone endures forever, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is our peace. Amen.

(From the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon).

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, our God, who are the Source of life and peace in heaven and on earth, pour out the grace of Your peace on a world troubled by war and hatred.

Guide all the nations and their leaders in the ways of justice and peace. Calm the warriors and give them wisdom. Extinguish the differences and enmity between humans and pour into the hearts of all humility, peace, and goodness. Give help to the suffering, protection to the refugees or homeless, comfort to the alienated and sorrowful, and give us all the will and strength to help, with all our hearts, our brothers and sisters who suffer from war.

You said: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Teach us to seek to acquire peace of heart and peace among humans and nations, for, in the heart in which peace is found, there is no longer enmity, love of dominion or fear, but the consolation of the Holy Spirit, love of God and love of our neighbours.

For this we humbly pray to You, O Christ our God, for peace among humans in every country, for peace among peoples, and for the welfare of the whole world, that we may live in harmony and may work without hindrance deeds pleasing to You.

For You are our peace, and to You we send up glory, together with Your Father Who is without beginning, and Your Most-holy, Good and Lifegiving Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

(From the Church of Cyprus).

♪ **Psalm 41** (*Greek Byzantine Melody*)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJ23W-mOETk

PEACE

Responsive Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures;

He leads me beside still waters;

He restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths for His name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil,

for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

(Before each prayer, participants from a particular region will be invited to turn on their cameras and light a candle as a symbol of solidarity)

Prayer

O King of peace, grant us Your peace, render unto us Your peace, and forgive our sins.

Emmanuel our God, is now in our midst, with the glory of His Father, and the Holy Spirit.

May He bless us all and purify our hearts and heal the sicknesses of our souls and bodies.

We worship You, O Christ, with Your good Father, and the Holy Spirit, for You have come and saved us. Amen.

(From the Coptic Orthodox Church).

Prayer

Our Lord, may the peace You granted to Your disciples saying to them: “*My peace, I leave to You*”, be with us and among us. May it be a fortress for us and support us, may it deliver us from evil, day and night. May we joyfully celebrate the feasts of Your divine salvation for many years. May the churches, monasteries and the whole world celebrate Your peace while people rejoice in good health and enjoy Your grace and abundant mercies at all times, so we may offer You praise and thanksgiving, our Lord and God, forever and ever.

O Peace Who reconciled the supreme beings with His death. O Peace Who appeased the lower beings with His sacrifice. O Savior Who saved the nations with His cross. O Love Who united the divided with His resurrection. Appease, O Lord, the calamities of the world, protect us with Your cross from all evil deeds, so we may offer You praise and to Your Father and to Your Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen

(From the Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch and All the East).

♪ **Psalm 23** (*Maronite*)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=H4UNsUuXFV8&list=RDH4UNsUuXFV8&start_radio=1

COMFORT

Responsive Psalm 121

I lift up my eyes to the hills—from where will my help come?

My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

He will not let your foot be moved;

he who keeps you will not slumber.

The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade at your right hand.

The sun shall not strike you by day nor the moon by night.

The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life.

**The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in
from this time on and forevermore.**

*(Before each prayer, participants from a particular region will be invited to turn on their cameras
and light a candle as a symbol of solidarity)*

Prayer

Oh Christ, You are the hope of those in the heights, and the peace of those in the depths; make your tranquillity and peace to abound in the four corners of the earth, and especially more for Your holy, catholic, Church. Reconcile the priesthood together with the kingship. Abolish wars from the ends of the earth, and stir up among all the nations of the earth the desire for peace, instead of war; so that we may live a peaceful and tranquil life, in all chastity and the fear of God; Amen.

(From the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East).

Prayer

You alone are God, and Your divine might is clothed in holiness. You alone are immortal, and Your holy immortality embraced death on a cross for our sake.

We beseech You to have mercy on us, your beloved children. We pray on behalf of Your beloved creation, that You visit our battered and estranged world in Your almighty holiness, to put an end to the heartless injustices, genocides, wars, and brutality raging in hearts and minds and actions.

In Your bounteous mercy, enter the inner chambers of earthly power and direct the rulers and decision-makers to walk in the ways of peace, reconciliation, humility, and compassion. Remind them and us that You alone are holy, You alone are mighty, You alone are immortal.

In these times when nations wage cruel wars in pursuit of unobtainable peace, lift up Your cross, the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, to teach us that the path we all must walk, both the powerful and the expendable, teach us that the path of true and lasting peace is through self-giving and mercy, the path Your Son himself walked, through the cross and into the power of the resurrection. Amen.

(From the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East).

♪ **Psalm 121** (*Syriac Orthodox*) starting at 2:03
www.youtube.com/watch?v=LvTNKMq-n0w&t=123s

HOPE

Responsive Psalm 27

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

One thing I asked of the Lord; this I seek:
to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,
to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.

For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble;
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;

Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud; be gracious to me and answer me!
“Come,” my heart says, “seek his face!” Your face, Lord, do I seek.

Do not hide Your face from me. Do not turn Your servant away in anger,
You who have been my help.
Do not cast me off; do not forsake me, O God of my salvation!

I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.
Wait for the Lord;
be strong and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!

(Before each prayer, participants from a particular region will be invited to turn on their cameras and light a candle as a symbol of solidarity)

Prayer

O Lord, hope of all humanity, our faithful harbour, and giver of peace, we lift our prayers to You from a troubled world, and especially from the Holy Lands and the Middle East, where pain weighs heavily upon Your people, and hearts long for freedom, dignity, and peace.

Grant to the world love, peace, and unity. Silence wars and break the power of enmity. Let justice replace injustice, truth replace falsehood, and liberation overcome oppression. Send Your Holy Spirit and renew the face of our land. Break down the walls of fear and separation, remove the barriers that divide, and lead all people into the path of peace, that they may live side by side in dignity and harmony.

We pray for all who suffer—for the grieving, the displaced, the wounded, for all who live under fear and uncertainty, and for all those whose bodies and souls bear the lasting scars of war. Be their comfort, their strength, and their hope.

Draw us closer to You, O Lord, and root us in Your love, that we may become true peacemakers in our land and throughout the world. We pray in the name of the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

(From the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Lands).

Prayer

Merciful and Sovereign God, You are our refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble. We lift before You the people of Iran—those who suffer under oppression, those who live in fear, and those who long for justice and freedom.

Lord, have mercy. Strengthen Your Church in that land—those who worship in secret, who bear witness with courage, and who endure hardship for the sake of Christ. Be their shelter and their peace.

Restrain evil, O Lord, and uphold the cause of the oppressed. Comfort the grieving, protect the vulnerable, and bring light into every place of darkness. Grant us faithful hearts, that we may stand in prayer and solidarity, trusting in Your justice and unfailing love. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(From the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Iran)

♪ **Psalm 27** (*Greek Orthodox of Antioch*)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=u9W0TaaYjRg

Gospel Reading Matthew 5: 1–9

¹When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²And he began to speak and taught them, saying:

³“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

⁷“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

⁸“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Prayer

His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem

Prayers of Intercession (*Led by the Youth from the region*)

Prayer for peace

God, I come to You not as someone strong, but as a young person in a place that feels heavy. You know our fears, struggles, challenges; the fear from the sounds of planes and bombs, and the silent worries we carry. Lord, hold us close and remind us that we're not alone. Give us courage to keep hoping, to choose kindness over anger, patience over fear, and hope over despair. Let Your peace reign here in Lebanon, and from this small place, let it spread across the Middle East and the hurting world. Use us to be a light, a listener, and a bearer of Your peace. Amen

*(Prepared and led by **Maria Bzdigian**, Armenian Evangelical Church of Nor Marash - Christian Endeavor Movement)*

Prayer for the victims

O God of compassion, we come before You with much hope, lifting up the Middle East to Your loving care. We pray for all who have been injured. Grant them healing in body, mind, and spirit. We remember those who have died. Receive them into Your eternal peace, and console those who mourn their loss. We entrust to You all who suffer, the displaced, the fearful, the weary, the broken-hearted. Let Your justice rise, Your mercy flow, and Your peace take root in every land. Amen

*(Prepared and led by **Elia Nasrallah**, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East- Orthodox Youth Movement)*

Prayer for wisdom and righteous leadership

O Lord our God, Lover of mankind and Giver of all good things, we lift our hearts before You in this present time. Bestow, O Lord, Your grace upon the world. Build up Your people in truth and unity, guide those who rule countries and serve the nations. Adorn leaders and rulers with wisdom, justice, and humility. Teach everyone to love You and to fulfil Your holy will. Lead the presidents, armies and every decision maker in the path of righteousness and guide them to seek peace and pursue it.

For You are the source of wisdom and salvation, we ask with all the youth of this earth. Amen

(Prepared and led by Rita Asdikian, Armenian Apostolic Church (Holy See of Cilicia), Armenian Church University Students Association)

Prayer for the Church

Lord, we pray for peace for the Church in the Middle East and throughout the whole world. Fill every heart with love, hope, and unity, and bring comfort to those who are suffering. Make Your Church a true light in our lives, guiding us each day in truth, faith, and kindness. Help us remain united and strong in Your love. Bless the young people. Grant them a strong faith. Help them take an active role in the Church, serve others with joy, and be a living light in the world. Amen

(Prepared and led by Charbel Saikaly, Melkite Catholic Church - Melkite Youth Mission)

The Lord's Prayer *(in our many languages)*

Closing Prayer

O Christ, the giver of life and peace. Grant us Your peace, the peace that You gave to Your holy apostles by breathing on them Your life-giving and all-powerful Holy Spirit. O Lord, guide us that we may walk in Your paths of righteousness and in peace and reach the haven of life and salvation, through Your grace and mercy. Grant peace to the world and to all people. For every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from You, the Father of lights. And we give glory and thanksgiving to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and always and forever and ever. Amen.

(From the Armenian Apostolic Church Holy See of Cilicia)

Greetings

Rev. Prof. Dr Jerry Pillay, general secretary, World Council of Churches

Expression of Thanks

Professor Michel Abs, general secretary, Middle East Council of Churches

Benediction

May the unconditional love of the Triune God envelope all people in justice and peace, prospering the work of our hands, so that God's shalom may reign.

And may the blessings of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit abide and remain with us always. Amen



The Cross

www.youtube.com/watch?v=iwxoJ17BTp0

If you hold the fervour of worship,
The Lord will grant you wings—
That you may bear His boundless Power
Across the face of the earth.

If visions dwell within you,
He will grant you revelation,
That you may awaken His Will
And make it known upon the earth.

If you speak with Him from the heights,
He will give you a living voice,
That you may forever resound
His eternal Word upon the earth.

If you rise to Him in ecstasy,
He will place a tongue of fire within you,
That you may let His Spark from above
Flow out upon the earth.

If you enter into His cloud,
He will arm you with lightning,
That you may flash forth His unquenchable Wrath
Across the earth.

If you walk within His light,
He will place a torch in your hand,
That you may shine forth His stainless Glory
Upon the earth.

If you surrender to His tender embrace,
He will give you a song,
That you may make His heavenly Grace
Quiver through the earth.

If you kiss His wounds,
He will grant you life,
That you may breathe forth His precious Breath
Into the world.

If you rest beneath His shadow,
He will give you a ray of light—
A beam of Hope unextinguished
Against the void upon the earth.

And that Power, that Will, and Word,
That Spark and Wrath, that Glory,
That Grace, that Breath, that all-embracing Hope—
All of it is nothing but the Cross
Bestowed upon you.