

The Things That Make for Peace

Resources for A Time of War





Seeking Common Ground, Working for the Common Good

Rooted in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, our mission is to inspire congregations and persons of faith to unite in good works that build a culture of justice, compassion and peace.

The nine members of the Maine Council of Churches are:

Episcopal Diocese of Maine
Maine Association of the Church of the New Jerusalem
Maine Conference – United Church of Christ
New England Conference – United Methodist Church
New England Synod – Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
New England Yearly Meeting – Religious Society of Friends
Northern New England District – Unitarian Universalist Association
Northern New England Presbytery – Presbyterian Church (USA)
Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland

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Introduction

On March 19, 2008, in the midst of (Western) Christianity's observance of Holy Week, the United States will enter the sixth year of war in Iraq. The war in Afghanistan continues in its seventh year. Major wars, civil conflicts, insurgencies, terrorism, and other forms of violence continue around the world in more than two dozen countries. In the modern era, most casualties in armed conflicts are civilians.¹ Meanwhile, at least 12 million human beings are refugees and another 21 million are "internally displaced persons."² No region of the globe is unaffected.

As with global climate change, war and its consequences touch all of us wherever we live in the vast interconnected "neighborhood" of planet Earth. But in every place, those consequences are more devastating for the poor, the hungry and the very young.

In the midst of these grim facts of life on Planet Earth in March, 2008 – and in the midst of Lent, the Christian season of repentance and reflection on our need for renewal and resurrection – the Maine Council of Churches offers this new resource: ***The Things That Make For Peace***.

As persons of faith, perhaps the most important question we can ask, in any era, is: *how am I called me to be a peacemaker here and now?* Such a question leads quickly to other questions: what are the things that make for war and the things that make for peace?

¹During World War I, civilians made up fewer than 5 percent of all casualties. Today, 75 percent or more of those killed or wounded in wars are non-combatants. See, www.globalsecurity.org.

² World Refugee Survey of the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, www.refugee.org.

Where do they come from and what am I contributing to either war or peace by how I live my life? What is, and what should be, the role of my faith community in this time and place?

What follows is a modest collection. In it, you will find prayers by religious leaders in Maine, a litany for use in worship and a compendium of study guides, based mostly on resources from our nine member denominations. It is meant to offer hope and food for thought. It is meant to inspire your own prayers, sermons, study groups, research into the issues and participation in the public debate, as persons of faith and as citizens.

While we include a recent statement on the Iraq War by the Council, we do not presume to offer a set of "answers" to the complex spiritual, economic, environmental, social, political and military challenges of our time. Many other organizations in Maine and beyond offer additional resources and activities that could be used to engage with these issues. But we hope this collection helps your own exploration of "the things that make for peace" today.

The resources that follow are offered in the spirit of the Council's work throughout its 70 years. That is, we hope it will help persons of faith who wish to engage the most serious issues of our day, not only in our personal ponderings, but in conversation within and among our faith communities and in the public square. In the words of the Maine Council of Churches' current Mission Statement: we offer this resource in order "to inspire congregations and persons of faith to unite in good works that build a culture of justice, compassion and peace."

שלום, ειρήνη, سلام, Peace,

The Rev. Jill Job Saxby,
Executive Director

Prayers from Maine

God of many names, you have set before us your vision of the shalom community where all of creation will live together in peace and we humans just never seem to get it. We find the mindset of power more familiar and less demanding than the heartset of love; we convince ourselves that control over others will move us all along the path to shalom without considering the poisonous assumptions of status and entitlement such domination establishes.

We acknowledge before you and your creation our arrogance, our insensitivity, our disdain for insights not our own, our fear of those who appear different from us, and the destruction and suffering which we have allowed these feelings to cause. We ask pardon from all we have harmed and promise with humble dedication and help from you and all creation to try with all our hearts, minds, and strength to follow the ways of love.

Amen.

Silver Moore-Leamon
United Church of Christ
President of the Board of Directors,
Maine Council of Churches (2007-2009)

*As he came near and saw the city,
he wept over it, saying,
'If you, even you,
had only recognized on this day
the things that make for peace!
But now they are hidden
from your eyes.*

Luke 19: 41-42 NRSV

God of perfect peace,
Violence and cruelty can have no part with you.
May those who are at peace with one another
Hold fast to the good that unites them;
May those who are enemies forget their hatred and be healed.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ,
your Son
Who lives and reigns with you and the holy spirit,
One God, for ever and ever.

from the Roman Missal, offered by
Bishop Richard J. Malone
Roman Catholic
Diocese of Portland

When we speak of peace, the words must come from our hearts. There cannot be any peace declaration with reservations attached. The essence of peace is the grandeur of compromise and mediation. I must be willing to accept you in an integrous way. When I trust you and you trust me, we can negotiate and travel from the horrors of broken relationships to the heavenly moment of reconciliation. It is being asked of us these days. For as scripture tells us the creator of this universe isn't its destroyer. Let us pray in the hope that we can give up the limiting mode of the one who sees him or herself as the bearer of the sole truth of this universe and accept the mode of the one who says, "You too are my brother and sister.

Rabbi Harry Sky
Rabbi Emeritus of Temple Beth El, Portland

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

There is no doubt we live in one of the most difficult times in the history of the world. A lot of things are different, we don't love our neighbors any more, hatred has taking over compassion, we are losing the balance that set us apart from the rest of God's creations, we are killing each other, we are turning the hand of time back into the dark ages...

But thank Allah in the mist of all these chaos. There are those who are seeking and pursuing peace; who are creating common ground so as to share and celebrate their similarities with each other. They are the ones that are giving 'humankind' a human face.

Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) once said to his companions "shall I inform you of an act better than fasting, alms and prayers? Making peace between one another: enmity and malice tear up heavenly rewards by their roots"

Islam denounces preemptive wars in any form, the holy Quran (5:32) says 'whoever kills a soul-without right or justification, is as if he has killed the whole of humanity.'

Let us take a solemn pledge today: that we will resist and put aside the differences that extremists use to tear us aside. We should echo the principle nucleus of our various faiths: The Quran says 'we created you into people and tribes so as you know one another. And the most noble amongst you is the one that fears Allah the most (49:13)

I pray that what ever we share here goes far and beyond and helps make our world a better place for all. Salaam Alaikum.

Abdullah Pious Ali
Maine Interfaith Youth Alliance

O loving God, who promises the realm of peace in your wondrous world and calls us to be your servants in bringing that realm, we come before you with the sorrows we feel for the absence of peace in our own lives, for our failure to make peace with our own enemies, and for the fears we harbor that we can do nothing to foster peace among earthly principalities and powers. Restore our minds and remake our hearts, that we may join in walking the paths that make for peace. Strengthen us with Holy Spirit, and according to your will use us as agents of reconciliation in every place and time where we find ourselves. We pray in the name of the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Rev. Dr. Edward Campbell
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Member of the Board of Directors
Maine Council of Churches

Lord God,
Set our gaze squarely on horror,
While holding our hearts fast to the
possibility
of what is better.
From "famished field and blackened tree"
Bear flowers in us that Eden never knew.

(A prayer written in gratitude for the words and thoughts of Theodor Adorno and Edwin Muir)

Rev. Elaine Hewes
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Redeemer Lutheran Church, Bangor
Member of the Board of Directors,
Maine Council of Churches

O Holy One, You who create and order all that is, we pray that You will pour out Your Spirit upon all of Your children everywhere.

May every human being on the planet Earth hear You saying "You are my Beloved."

May Your deep peace fill each of us with healing and hope, with consolation and strength.

We pray that Your Spirit will bring us all into the unity which is ours because we belong to You.

Rooted in that unity may we offer to one another that honor and respect, care and concern which we seek to offer You as we strive to follow You.

Help us to do justice and show mercy in all of our dealings; with families and neighbors at work and play and worship.

May neighborly love be at the heart of all our national relationships with one another and with all the peoples and nations of this Your world.

We humbly ask for these blessings in Your Holy Name. Amen.

Rev. William Imes
United Church of Christ
President, Bangor Theological Seminary

Pace is at hand,
in my hand that I extend to you.
The same blood that my heart pumps to my hand your heart pumps to your hand.
In this moment - all and everything we have - I look at my hand.
Look at yours.
From my heart I place peace in my hand and give it to you.

Rev. Jacob Watson
Abbot
Chaplaincy Institute of Maine, Portland

God, we have come to believe that our way is the only right way to live. Help us to let go of our narrow views and our arrogant ways, and find instead humility. Help us as a nation to learn to say that we made a mistake, and to change our goals and our direction in world affairs. Help us, as well, to take responsibility for the damage we have caused by our wrongheaded policies, and do what we can to make things right for all the victims of the war we have created. And above all, help us to learn to live in love, as we have been taught, and as we know in our hearts that we should. Amen.

Cushman Anthony
Unitarian Universalist
Allen Avenue Unitarian Universalist Church, Portland

*He shall judge between the nations,
and shall arbitrate for many peoples;
they shall beat their swords into ploughshares,
and their spears into pruning-hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war any more.*

Isaiah 2:4 NRSV

Dear God of all people and all nations, strengthen, we pray, the universal instinctive desire for peace, inspiring us to deeds of service, moving us back from the reliance on violence as an answer to the problems we face.

With gratitude for your presence, Amen.

Paul Cates
Religious Society of Friends
Member of the Board of Directors,
Maine Council of Churches' Board of Directors

I pray for Iraq when I wake in the morning and hear the birds sing and remember the thud of mortar fire or the sound of shattering glass from the percussion of a bomb exploding.

I pray for Iraq when I turn on a light or cook a meal or take a shower and remember long hours and days without electricity, no fuel for heat or cooking, children sick and dying from contaminated water.

I pray for Iraq when I watch children playing in a school yard and remember the lost childhood and future of children unable to go to school, kidnapped, living on the streets.

I pray for Iraq when I gather with family and remember the desperation of relatives as they search for a father or son who has disappeared, been imprisoned or been picked up by the military or militias.

I pray for Iraq when I drive down the street and remember military convoys running over anything in their way, friends and neighbors shot at and killed when they drove too close to a convoy or failed to stop at checkpoint.

I pray for Iraq when I clean my house and remember the pleas for help from friends driven from their homes and neighborhoods, families living as squatters in bombed out buildings, friends separated from their families and living as unwelcome refugees in foreign lands.

I pray for Iraq when I go to bed at night and remember the faces of friends who have been killed, whose children have died as soldiers, who have disappeared.

And in the middle of the night when I cannot sleep I remember the pleas of my friends and neighbors in Iraq that as we pray together to end this war and occupation, we must also work together to attain peace.

As I pray for Iraq, I pray that we have the strength and courage to continue the struggle here in our country that will bring peace with justice to the people of Iraq.

Mary Trotochaud
Religious Society of Friends

God of Grace and Hope:

Stir within us a longing for a fuller measure of the peace of Christ in our hearts, in our homes, in our communities and throughout the world. Let that longing tug us toward a life of compassion that will bring peace wherever we go. Give us the courage to stand against the people and practices that encourage war and profit from it, and give us the strength to show the world a different way of life. We pray for you to shape us and use us as your witnesses to the peace that is always possible for those who live in your love. Amen.

Bishop Margaret G. Payne
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
New England Synod

Dear Lord and God,
Creator of heaven and earth,
Source of all love and wisdom,
Parent of all the children of earth,

We give thanks for the gift of life and for the Divine love and wisdom that is life itself.

Even as we remember that you have promised suffering and the sword of death to all who forsake your ways, let us never forget that your ways are love, wisdom, compassion, forgiveness, healing, charity and peace-making.

Lord, we ask that you fill us with the understanding, courage and strength to live and walk in Your ways that our words and actions may be the spirit of heavenly peace made known on earth. In all things, let us turn to You for guidance that we may persevere in the face of all obstacles.

May each one of us live the way of peace so that, in your good time, all may know the healing peace of your heavenly realm.

Amen.

Rev. Ken Turley
Church of the New Jerusalem (Swedenborgian)
Fryeburg
Member of the Board of Directors,
Maine Council of Churches

A Litany for Peace

L: Lord, when I rise in the morning and see a difficult day stretched before me,

R: Dawn, peace, dawn.

L: When the demands seem overwhelming and the needs more than I can meet,

R: Dawn, peace, dawn.

L: When my soul feels wounded and your presence, Lord, seems far away,

R: Dawn, peace, dawn.

L: When violence erupts in its cruelty and splashes its blood on the world,

R: Dawn, peace, dawn.

L: In your mercy, in your tenderness, with your promises of hope,

R: Dawn, peace, dawn.

L: Be our desire, be our work, be our commitment, be our confidence,

R: Dawn, peace, dawn.

L: In all your beauty, radiance, and gentle strength,

R: Dawn, peace, dawn.

Amen.

Rev. Dr. D. Elizabeth Mauro
Rockland Congregational Church

*May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy.
Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy,
carrying their sheaves.*

Psalm 126: 5-6 NRSV

Gracious God,

We come to you in humility, contrition and lamentation for the invasion and occupation of Iraq done in our name. Forgive us.

May we come to redeem this tragedy by forever remembering the futility, immorality, and destructiveness of war, and this war in particular. First and foremost is the direct cost of the loss of life, broken bodies and minds, disrupted families, property and precious artifacts lost and destroyed, and the disheartened spirits that will revisit their trauma for generations to come. But may we also remember the terrible indirect cost to our moral leadership, the national indebtedness that will be passed on to future generations, and the services denied to all, the poor especially as we squandered our national wealth on arms and the logistics of war. And finally may we never forget our sadness and regret for our complicity in the violation of human and civil rights, especially our use of torture.

Help us remember that war is not the answer. And may we instead foster good will, preventative diplomacy, and counter all that contributes to the occasion of wars. May we seek and contribute to a culture of peace in our own hearts, in all our personal, social and political relationships, and in the world.

Amen.

Tom Ewell
Religious Society of Friends
Former Executive Director (1986-2005)
Maine Council of Churches

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

Matthew 5:9 NRSV

O God, give us this day what we most need: the things that make for Peace.

Give us *honesty and humility* to realize how habits of fear and violence distort our souls and the fullness of life you intend for us.

Give us *strength* to say 'no' to the temptation of grounding our lives in fear – and to say 'yes' to lives rooted in love.

Give us *hope* that sees beyond the confines of present grief and confusion. Help us to find within ourselves the largeness of spirit fully to grieve, to remember, to confess and finally, fully, to forgive and move forward in a new freedom.

Give us the *courage* to lay down the sword of domination and the shield of self-righteousness, to become a people mighty in justice, blessed in the riches of compassion, powerful in our love of neighbor and of your creation.

Give us the *vision of your Shalom* within us and among us, so that we might recognize the possibilities and accept these gifts as you hold them out to us, in ways large and small, to each of us and to our nation, each day.

O God, help us to read this day what you have written on our hearts – to look within and to embrace our inmost longings for reconciliation and renewal -- for this is your Presence in our midst, our manna in the wilderness, our daily bread.

O God, give us this day the things that make for peace, because we need them.

Amen.

Rev. Jill Job Saxby
Unitarian Universalist
Executive Director, Maine Council of Churches

Prayers for Holy Week

Rev. Elsa Peters
United Church of Christ
First Congregational Church UCC, South Portland
Member of the Board of Directors,
Maine Council of Churches

Litany for Palm Sunday

Based on Matthew 21:1-11

One: "The Lord needs them," Jesus reminded us.

All: God of Peace, make a way through the chaos of our times.

One: The disciples did just as he had directed them.

All: God of Peace, untie our fears that there is no other way.

One: Immediately, they were sent to make a way for him.

All: God of Peace, offer your words of peace to anyone that asks.

One: The crowd spread their cloaks of the road to welcome him.

All: God of Peace, sing with us of the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest heaven!

Prayer for Passion Sunday

Based on Matthew 26:14-27

Adapted from the United Church of Christ's Prayer for the Grieving

Gracious God, our time is near. We have made all of the preparations we can make. We can no longer point fingers at the Betrayer. We can no longer concern ourselves with idleness. We must prepare for the peace of our time. Gracious, God, our time is near.

And yet, we are fearful as the question still lingers on our lips: Surely not I, Lord? Surely we have not betrayed the possibility of peace. Surely we have not offered the sword instead of your peace. Surely we have not failed to find peace in ourselves. Gracious God, surely our time must be near so that we no longer need to cover the sorrow of our hearts with folded hands.

Surely the time must be near that we no longer have to feel this pain because you suffered it. You grieved before this sorrow darkened our hearts. You share our burden and your strength will lift it. Walk with us into this darkest valley. Lead us toward the resurrected hope of peace. Gracious God, our time is near. Hear our prayers for those that we love and those that we lost.

Pastor invites prayers and petitions from the gathered.

Though the pain deepens, our time for peace is near. Keep us in your way and guide us past every danger through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Prayer for Good Friday

Based on Psalm 22

Our God, Our God, why are you so far from helping us, from the words of our groaning? Our ancestors cried trusted in you, and you delivered them. They cried into the night, and you answered them. We call to you by day and you do not answer our pleas for peace. Our God, Our God, hear our prayers in the night.

Silent prayer.

Our God, Our God, there is no rest to the violence of our world. Your ways are not our ways. Your thoughts are not our thoughts. Our God, Our God, your way is peace. Your thoughts are compassionate. You will not put us to shame when our hearts are heavy with sorrow as violence tears new wounds in your creation. Our God, Our God, hear our prayers in the night.

Silent prayer.

Our God, Our God, do not be far from us for trouble is near. We fear that there is no one to help. We are tired and thirsty. We are hungry and expectant. We are scared and we are lonely. Our sighs are too deep for human words. Our longing is too great to grasp. Our God, Our God, you are holy. You know our loss and our lament. Our God, Our God, hear our prayers in the night.

Silent prayer.

Our God, Our God, you are our hope to bring peace to a violent world, comfort to the dying and bereaved, satisfaction to the poor and hungry and safety to the tortured and afflicted. You are the hope that we cling to when evildoers encircle us with violence and war. You do not hide your face in times of fear and times of war. You reveal your wounds and your words to us. Our God, Our God, hear our prayers in the night.

Silent prayer.

Our God, Our God, we shall live for you. Hear these prayers on this darkest night as we draw nearer to you in certain and expectant hope. Be near us in all of our troubles and our joys. In the name of Jesus Christ our Savior and our Hope, we pray, Amen.

*They shall not labor in vain,
or bear children for calamity;
for they shall be offspring blessed by the Lord—
and their descendants as well.
Before they call I will answer,
while they are yet speaking I will hear.*

*The wolf and the lamb shall feed together,
the lion shall eat straw like the ox;
but the serpent—its food shall be dust!
They shall not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain,
says the Lord.*

Isaiah 65: 24-25 NRSV

Prayers from Away

The following are examples of resources available online at websites related to our member denominations. Links are provided for the full resources, which are also available by contacting the Maine Council of Churches office.

Prayers In a Time of War *Episcopal Church*

Prayer in Grief for War

Blessed One, I cry out to you in grief that our human wisdom has failed and we have fallen into the sin of war and many lives are being lost; the evil we would not do, we do; the good we would do, we fail to do; and we dwell in this body of death despite your will to deliver us. Let me not push away depression and sorrow, but cherish them as signs of the knitting together of my heart with yours, through your boundless grace, through which alone, may I and the world be healed. I pray with Jesus, your Beloved, who also wept. Amen.

- ✝ *Prayer in our Fear and Anxiety,*
- ✝ *Prayer for those in Military Service,*
- ✝ *Prayer for our enemies*
and more are available at

www.ecusa.anglican.org/1834_7475_ENG_HTM.htm

Prayers for Peace in the Middle East

Prayers of different faiths and scriptures from the Hebrew Bible, the Christian Scriptures and the Holy Quran, distributed by National Council of Churches USA, produced by U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East.

www.nccusa.org/2003peaceprayers.html

Prayers in a Time of War *Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

Prayers and resources for worship, including:

O Lord, grant that we may be one in your love. Send emissaries of your peace to this troubled world. Help us recognize and repent of the terror we invoke, even as we ask for your protection. Still the hands of those who seek to do violence, support and protect those who seek understanding, grant us the mercy of forgiveness. Help us to break down the walls of division, to talk and argue and negotiate rather than fight, and to recognize in one another your image. Reconcile all warring groups to you, in one body through the cross, and put to death the hostility which too often rules our hearts and actions. For you are our peace, from now until the end of this age. Amen.

Paul Bellan-Boye

www.elca.org/peaceandwar/prayers.html

Service of Word and Prayer for Peace Worship Resources for Peace including those of other denominations and ecumenical bodies

www.elca.org/worship/peace/elca_service_of_word.html

A collection of Prayers for Peace from the World Council of Churches' Decade to Overcome Violence, including:

- ✝ Prayer for when there are disagreements
- ✝ Prayer for the rights of People
- ✝ Give me a Heart
- ✝ Where is Our Earth Going?
and more at

<http://overcomingviolence.org/en/about-dov/international-day-of-prayer-for-peace/a-collection-of-prayers-for-peace-2005.html>

Prayers and resources from the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program

For and End to War

O God,
Speed the day when bows are broken,
spears are shattered,
weapons are dismantled,
war is no more and peace prevails
throughout your world.
Speed the day.
Guide us to work for that day.
In Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

- ✝ Prayer for a Hot Desert Afternoon
 - ✝ Prayer from the Chaplain
 - ✝ A Prayer for Healing
 - ✝ For Those Who were Killed
 - ✝ For Those Who were Wounded
 - ✝ For the People of Iraq
 - ✝ Litany for World Peace
- and more available at

www.pcusa.org/peacemaking/iraq/prayers.htm

A variety of prayers and other worship resources for days and seasons of the Christian year as well as days with particular significance for peace and justice concerns, including hymns, prayers for special days such as

- ✝ Hiroshima
 - ✝ International Day of Peace
 - ✝ United Nations Day
 - ✝ World Communion Sunday
- and more are available at

www.pcusa.org/peacemaking/worship/worship.htm#how

How to Preach Peace (Without Being Tuned Out)

“Preaching peace does not seem all that controversial. After all, who is against peace? But what if a preacher tries to get specific about Jesus’ call for us to be not only peace lovers but also peacemakers? What if one’s commitment to peace in Christ leads to asking if the “war on terror” is best waged not by military action but by doing justice?”

www.pcusa.org/peacemaking/worship/pr eachpeace.htm

Prayers for peace from the Book of Common Prayer of the Episcopal Church *compiled by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*
Worship Resources for Peace

For Peace Among the Nations

Almighty God our heavenly Father,
guide the nations of the world
into the way of justice and truth,
and establish among them that peace
which is the fruit of righteousness,
that they may become the kingdom of
our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

- ✝ For Peace
 - ✝ For the Future of the Human Race
 - ✝ For those in the Armed Forces of our Country
 - ✝ For the President of the United States and all in Civil Authority
 - ✝ For Guidance
 - ✝ A Prayer attributed to St. Francis
- and more are available at

www.elca.org/worship/peace

Service of Word and Prayer for Peace

"The elusive quest to build earthly peace is multifaceted, and for us belongs in a context that extends far beyond our own efforts and time. Our faith active for peace begins and ends with God, the alpha and omega of peace. Living still in a time when hate, injustice, war, and suffering seem often to have the upper hand, we call on God to fulfill the divine promise of final peace."

http://www.elca.org/worship/peace/PDF/Service_of_Word.pdf

Worship Services In a Time of War

United Methodist Church

- ✚ Service of Hope and Remembrance
- ✚ Brief Service of Worship in Time of War
- ✚ Service of Prayer and Meditation in Time of War

http://www.gbod.org/worship/default.asp?a=reader&item_id=7578&loc_id=739,111

Service for Peace in a Time of War

included in the resource

"Patriotism, Nationalism, and the Christian Life"

United Church of Christ

"In these times, the church is especially called on to proclaim its own message for the world and not necessarily to reiterate the passions of secular society. The service that follows is an effort to remind us that it is in God alone that we can place our trust, even in the most desperate of times."

www.ucc.org/justice/advocacy_resources/pdfs/justice/peace/patriotism-nationalism-and-the-christian-life.pdf

Iraq: The Way to Peace

Prayer, Liturgy and Homily Resources from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

For Government Leaders

God of power and might,
wisdom and justice,
through you authority
is rightly administered,
laws are enacted,
and judgment is decreed.
Assist with your spirit
of counsel and fortitude
the President and other government
leaders of these United States.
May they always seek
the ways of righteousness,
justice and mercy.
Grant that they may be enabled
by your powerful protection
to lead our country
with honesty and integrity.
We ask this through Christ our Lord

For the innocent victims of war

Lord God,
your own Son was delivered
into the hands of the wicked,
yet he prayed for his persecutors
and overcame hatred
with the blood of the Cross.
Relieve the sufferings of the innocent
victims of war;
grant them peace of mind,
healing of body,
and a renewed faith
in your protection and care.
Grant this through Christ our Lord.

These and more available at
www.usccb.org/sdwp/peace/index.shtml

Activity Resources

Children's Reflection on Iraq:

Turning the "Stranger" into the "Neighbor"
from the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program

AGE GROUP: For children in grades 2-5
THEME: Children continue hearing the discussions about a possible war with Iraq. In our call as peacemakers, we are taught to be good Samaritans to all God's people. This reflection is to encourage children to see our brothers and sisters in Iraq as neighbors and members of God's family and to seek peaceful alternatives to war with them.

<http://www.pcusa.org/peacemaking/iraq/children.htm>

The War in Iraq: What Can I Do?

Resources for Youth Action by the
Unitarian Universalist Association

- ✚ Use the media
- ✚ Call your representatives
- ✚ Organize a vigil
- ✚ Help our soldiers
- ✚ Help Iraqis

<http://www.uua.org/members/youth/resources/46949.shtml>

Fold Paper Cranes for Peace

*Common Global Ministries of the
United Church of Christ and the
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*

Instructions on how to send your cranes to
Hiroshima

http://www.globalministries.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1733&Itemid=

Discussing Tough Issues: A Resources to Help Congregations Discuss Issues Around the Conflict with Iraq, January 2007

In times of crisis, war, or threat of war people often feel more vulnerable and have an increased need for security and safety. During such times, many people also need a caring environment where they can express their concerns, fears, and opinions. This resource has been designed to assist congregations as they seek to be a supportive environment for wrestling with tough questions related to the conflict in Iraq and sharing different opinions in light of our faith.

<http://www.pcusa.org/peacemaking/iraq/toughissues.pdf>

Supporting Families With Members in the Area of Conflict

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The length of the war in Iraq has put financial and emotional strains on military families, especially National Guard and Reserve families. How can congregations support their members and neighbors?

<http://www.elca.org/peaceandwar/families.html>

Statements on the War

Maine Council of Churches and many of our member denominations issued statements in opposition to the war in Iraq before it began. Since that time we have struggled with how best to engage our communities in faithful dialogue and discernment in the midst of war. The statements below are examples of those efforts.

**Maine Council of Churches
Statement on the War in Iraq**
March 2007

We recognize and share the desire of people of faith around the world that violence and human suffering end as soon as possible. We believe that the public debate must now focus just as much on our moral responsibility as a nation to address the long-term humanitarian and environmental devastations caused by the Iraq war. The process of healing the wounds of war will take a long-term commitment that must begin even now.

**United Methodist Council of Bishops
Resolution on the Iraq War**

November 2007

<http://www.umc.org/site/apps/nl/content3.asp?c=lwL4KnN1LtH&b=2429869&ct=4624993>

**United States Conference
of Catholic Bishops**

<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/international/iraq.shtml>

**A Pastoral Letter on the Iraq War from
the Collegium of Officers
of the United Church of Christ**

June 2007

<http://www.ucc.org/news/significant-speeches/a-pastoral-letter-on-the-iraq.html>

For more information, or additional copies of this resource, contact

**Maine Council of Churches
19 Pleasant Avenue
Portland, Maine 04103**

207.772.1918
www.maineCouncilofChurches.org