

Faith Community Resource

International Day of Peace

21 September 2026



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA



Uniting Church in Australia
Western Australia



The International Day of Peace (“Peace Day”) is observed worldwide on 21 September each year. Established in 1981 by a unanimous United Nations resolution, Peace Day provides a globally shared date for all humanity to commit to Peace above all differences and contribute to building a Culture of Peace.

The theme for the International Day of Peace for 2026 is “Invest in Peace - For Everyone, Everywhere, Every Day”. The theme honours the ‘everyday architects of peace’—people driving local action, laying the groundwork for stability, and building a lasting peace from the ground up.

Remember, peace isn’t just built in conference rooms—it is shaped by everyone, everywhere, every day.

Everyone, everywhere can do their part for peace. Take one small step for peace every day:

- Give your time to help someone else.
- [Lend your voice](#) to drive positive change.

- Host a [Peace Circle](#) - an intergenerational youth-led conversation on solutions.
- Promote a cause or tell a story of peace and hope.

The following resource is for Uniting Church congregations and faith communities that wish to incorporate the International Day of Peace into their services on Sunday 20 September or 27 September. It includes prayers that could be used and some reflections on peace-building.

Peace in a broader sense requires addressing issues such as inequality, systems that encourage people to exploit and harm others and the legacy of the racist colonial period in human history.

Uniting Church commitments to being a peace-building church

The Uniting Church has long committed itself to supporting peace-building and rejecting the idea that the world can be made a better place by killing people.

In 1982, the National Assembly meeting passed a resolution with the following clauses:

82.56 It was resolved that the Assembly:

- (a) (i) *acknowledge that God came in the crucified and risen Christ to make peace; that he calls all Christians to be peacemakers, to save life, to heal and to love their neighbours. The call of Christ to make peace is the norm, and the onus of proof rests on any who resorts to military force as a means of solving international disputes;*
- (ii) *note that at this point in history, most governments support military priorities which cause valuable and limited resources to be diverted unproductively towards the purchase of armaments and the maintenance of large military forces; that nuclear weapons are a demonic method of killing and wounding people and poisoning God's creation; and that nuclear war would be catastrophic in terms of both human violence and environmental disaster;*
- (iii) *affirm that the Uniting Church is committed to be a peacemaking body, seeking to follow the Lord of the Church by encouraging political authorities to resolve political tensions by peaceful means.*
- (b) *call on the members of the Uniting Church in Australia to support and engage in peacemaking programs and resist reliance on military solutions to political problems.*

In 2003, the National Assembly meeting passed the Uniting through Peace resolution that included the following:

03.19.02 The Assembly resolved:

In response to the World Council of Churches' declaration of the Decade to Overcome Violence, to commit:

to work together for peace, justice, and reconciliation at all levels – local, regional, and global;

to embrace creative approaches to peacebuilding which are consonant with the spirit of the gospel;

to interact and collaborate with local communities, secular movements, and people of other living faiths towards cultivating a culture of peace;

to empower people who are systemically oppressed by violence, and to act in solidarity with all struggling for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation; and

to repent together for our complicity in violence, and to engage in theological reflection to overcome the spirit, logic, and practice of violence;

to call on all members, councils, agencies, congregations and groups of the Uniting Church to examine their own lives in order to overcome violence and to transform systems and structures of injustice;

to commit to work for peace through justice and genuine security, believing that:

true justice can only be achieved through means that do not consist of violence nor perpetuate the cycle of violence;

true security can only be achieved through non-violent means that seek to build trust and relationships of understanding and acceptance between nations and people.

World Council of Churches June 2026 statement on Just Peace

On 12 June 2026, the Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches issued a statement, “From the Proliferation of War to the Way of Just Peace: A renewed Ecumenical Appeal” (<https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/wcc-executive-committee-statement-from-the-proliferation-of-war-to-the-way-of-just-peace-a-renewed-ecumenical-appeal>).

The statement included the following:

The executive committee of the World Council of Churches:

Reaffirms the foundational ecumenical position that no war is holy, that no armed aggression can be theologically justified, and that the Way of Just Peace – not the resort to violence – is the true calling of Christians and of all people of good will.

Rejects the use of misleading and irresponsible theologies to sanctify war, to dehumanise adversaries, or to encourage religious nationalism and extremism.

Calls upon all states to end the spiralling escalation in military expenditures, to stop the unregulated and untransparent transfer of weapons to conflict zones, and to redirect resources from renewed arms races toward the elimination of poverty, the protection of the earth, the promotion of dignified livelihoods, and the realisation of universal human dignity and rights. The executive committee renews the call for an arms embargo in contexts where weapons are being used against civilian populations.

Affirms that peace without justice is unsustainable, and that the root causes of conflict – including political exclusion, spiralling economic inequality, discrimination, occupation, impunity, and the denial of peoples’ right to self-determination – must be addressed with equal urgency alongside the cessation of hostilities.

Calls on member churches to embrace and model of the Way of Just Peace in their own communities, ministries and public engagements; to resist the spirit, logic, and practice of violence in all its forms; to support conscientious objection as an inalienable human right and as sufficient grounds for granting asylum to those who are denied this right; and to champion active, nonviolent resistance to injustice, oppression, and militarism as a central expression of Christian witness.

Calls on all member churches and religious leaders to resist and repudiate the use of misleading and irresponsible theologies to justify war wherever they appear, including within their own traditions.

Urges churches, faith communities, and all people of good will to engage in sustained advocacy for diplomacy, dialogue, and conflict transformation – challenging political leaders and governments to choose the path of dialogue over the path of confrontation, and to invest in prevention rather than in the instruments of war. The executive committee **appeals** to all those driving current conflicts to choose peace, not war.

Commits the WCC to continuing to accompany member churches in all regions affected by conflict; to advocate on behalf of those who suffer; to work in solidarity with communities of peacemakers; and to promote, alongside its ecumenical, interfaith, and civil society partners, a culture of peace rooted in the recognition of our common humanity and the God-given dignity of every person.

Peace Worship Resources

Resources developed by Rev. Sandy Brodine:
Younger Generations Team.

Readings:

Many readings work well with the theme of peace. John 14:27 and Matthew 5:9 are two good places to start.

All-Age song suggestions:

May you find peace by Fischy Music

<https://www.fischy.com/fischy-music-online/songs/may-you-find-peace-with-re-collective-worship-resources/>

I've got Peace like a River 19

Peace will be with you 87 NCYC Songbook

For you, Deep Stillness (The Christmas Blessing)
Robin Mann and Julie Perrin

Make me a Channel of your Peace TiS 607

For congregations that are open to very contemporary music, Linkin Park's song "Catalyst" is a prayer against nuclear weapons ("the fire of a thousand suns").

Linkin Park's song "Hands Held High" is also a prayerful, contemporary anti-war song. Warning, there is one use of the 'F' word in the lyrics, so it is not suitable for children.

Tactile Prayer activities:

Including prayers that use bodily movement or involve other forms of prayer beyond just words helps people of all ages and brain types engage with God in prayer

Prayers of Hope with a Rope

You will need: A piece of thin rope or string for each member of your congregation.

Say: What are the circumstances that lead to war, fights, and disagreements between people or countries? Ask people to call them out, or share in pairs. As they do so, invite them to tie a knot in their rope or string.

Pause for a time of individual prayer.

Say: I wonder how does God bring about peace? How might we be peace builders?

Take your rope and spend some time slowly untying some of the knots. As you untie them, imagine God untangling the mess that led to conflicts and war. Ask God to bring about peace in the war-torn places. Ask God to help you be a peace builder in the places where you live, work, play and have influence.



Play-Doh Peace Prayers

You will need: Two small lumps of Play-Doh or plasticine in contrasting colours per person. You can find simple Play-Doh recipes online and make your own, or buy very cheap plasticine in multiple colours in two-dollar shops. Hand wipes for after the activity are a great idea.

Once everyone has two pieces of Play-Doh, say:

Take a moment to think about situations where two sides are fighting. This could be anywhere in the world. It might include places at war (name some places currently at war). Arguments and fighting can also happen closer to home, involving people you know or even yourself. We sometimes argue or fight with people at home, in the church, at work and at school. Take a moment to mould your Play-Doh, and as you do, talk to God about the conflicts that you know about, and that are on your mind.

Pause for a time of individual prayer.

Say: In the gospel of Matthew, we are reminded that: “God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God.” (Matthew 5:9)

Take your two pieces of Play-Doh and smoosh the colours together. Notice that when you do, the colours mix and form a new colour.

- I wonder what this says to you about peace?
- I wonder what God might be doing to bring two groups of people to create peace?
- I wonder what we might do to be peace builders?

Conclude with a prayer that God may help your congregation bring peace wherever they can. You may also like to pray for peace in the war-torn parts of our world.





Possible Prayers for a Service on Sunday 21 September

The Work of the People has beautiful visual liturgy versions of two prayers of St Francis:

- <https://www.theworkofthepeople.com/a-franciscan-benediction>
- <https://www.theworkofthepeople.com/prayer-of-saint-francis>

A prayer for the Holy Land from Archbishop Hosam Naoum of Jerusalem

Let us pray,

O God of all justice and peace, we cry out to you in the midst of the pain and trauma of violence and fear that prevails in the Holy Land.

Be with those who need you in these days of suffering; we pray for people of all faiths – Jews, Muslims and Christians and for all people of the land.

While we pray to you, O Lord, for an end to violence and the establishment of peace, we also call to you to bring justice and equity to the peoples.

Guide us into your kingdom where all people are treated with dignity and honour as your children, for to all of us you are our Heavenly Father.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

The Most Reverend Hosam Elias Naoum, the 15th Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem. Archbishop Hosam is the Chief Pastor of 28 parishes spread through the five political regions of Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. Since May of 2023, Archbishop Hosam has also become the Primate over the entire Province of Jerusalem & the Middle East, which includes not only the Diocese of Jerusalem, but also the [Diocese of Cyprus](#) and the Gulf and the Diocese of Iran.

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, our God, who is 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 and contained in the World Council of Churches, "Global Prayer for Peace in the Middle East", 26 March 2026).



Book Review – Maoz Inon and Aziz Abu Sarah, “The Future is Peace”, (2026)

Aziz Abu Sarah and Maoz Inon have developed an amazing friendship and partnership as they seek a socially just peace for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Aziz’s brother was arbitrarily arrested and tortured by Israeli security forces during the largely non-violent First Intifada when Aziz was ten. His brother died as a result of the torture.

Hamas militants murdered Maoz’s parents in the 7 October 2023 attack.

They say of their joint work:

Our mutual loss and pain, along with a shared vision of peace, brought us together at a time when the violence of war has pushed our people further apart than ever.

The book is based around a road trip that Aziz and Maoz take across Israel and Palestine, meeting with other peace activists and highlighting the ongoing suffering inflicted on Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

They highlight how hatred, fear and the desire for revenge has trapped Jews and Palestinians:

But today we are trapped in a hurricane of violence and vengeance that has led to more than a century of bloodshed. The scars of our generational trauma are deep. We are so divided by fear and anger, by extremism and tribalism, that we can no longer see each other’s humanity or feel empathy for one another’s suffering. We live the histories handed down to us, but if Israelis and Palestinians are to build a shared future – and we must, for the sake of both our people – the only way forward is to tear down the walls of ignorance and hatred that divide us.

We both know the agony of losing those we love most to this conflict. We understand that in the face of suffering and grief, when too many lives have been lost and families shattered,

talking about peace can feel too vulnerable – dangerous even. When each side believes that the other is a threat to its existence, talk of peace can feel like a betrayal of one's people. Wherever we look in the world, we find these growing divides. Siloed into a false mentality of us versus them, we perpetuate zero-sum arguments fed to us by the politics of fear. The biblical Book of Proverbs says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish."

Aziz writes of peace-building work:

It is not easy being a peacemaker, but even harder being a Palestinian peacemaker. On the one hand, we must endure the daily reality of

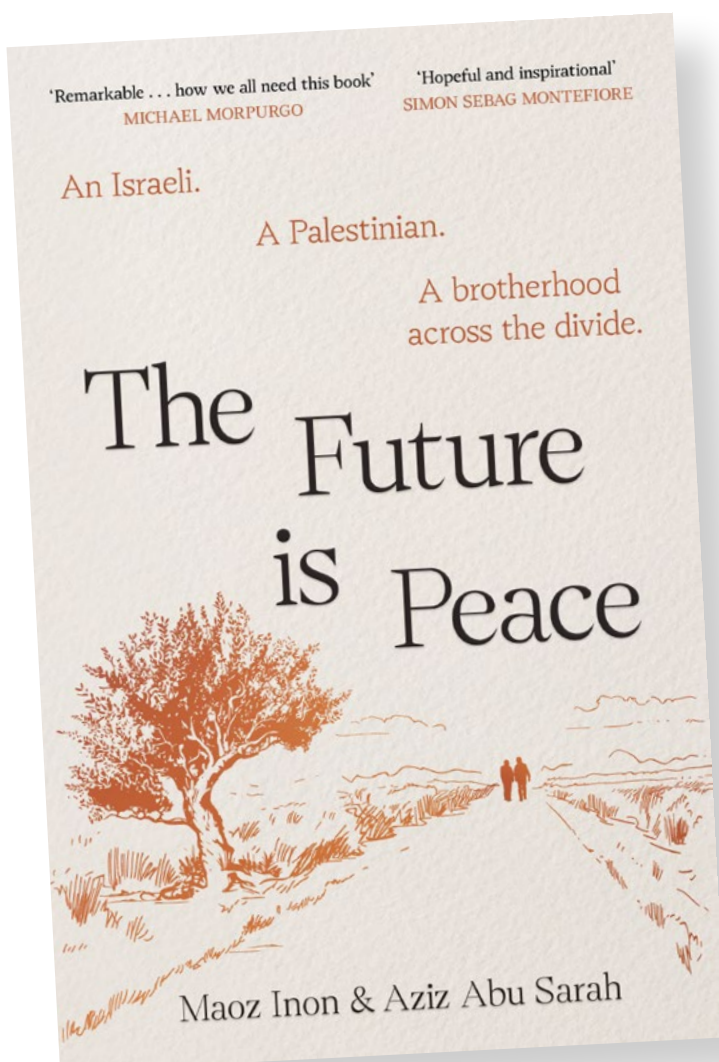
occupation, violence, and systemic oppression. On the other hand, we face suspicion from our own communities – people who do not see the results from our work and question whether it is useful, or even harmful. Some call us "normalisers", others brand us as traitors, accusing us of making the occupation more acceptable to Palestinians.

Palestinians engaging with Israelis is not normalisation. The real question is: What are we normalising? If our work ignores the reality of occupation, avoids difficult conversations about power, justice, and freedom, and creates a false image of equality where none exists, then yes, that is normalisation. But if we build partnerships that directly confront injustice, that put ending the occupation at the centre, that give equal voice to both Palestinians and Israelis committed to change – then that is not normalisation, it's co-resistance.

Aziz and Moaz further outline why they believe that non-violent peace building is the only path forward:

Peacebuilders have been marginalised, both at home and abroad, for far too long. We are not invited to sit at negotiation tables or included in international summits with those making decisions on behalf of our peoples. We are used to being dismissed as dreamers and mocked as being naïve. Yet we are realists. We know that bombs will not bring quiet, walls will not protect us, and war will not bring security to either side. What is truly naïve is imagining that fear and multigenerational trauma will lead to security, or that any strategy to end the horror of this conflict can succeed without dreamers and visionaries at the vanguard.

The book would be highly suitable for drawing on for services on peace-building or for discussion in small book groups.





Take Action - Australia's involvement in autonomous weapons

Artificial intelligence (AI) is accelerating warfare, increasing the speed at which targets for airstrikes and artillery fire can be selected. Such speed increases the likelihood that civilians will be killed in such attacks.

Autonomous weapons are those operated by AI and make decisions to kill people without any person reviewing or deciding to initiate the attack.

In April 2026, the Australian Government announced it was spending \$22 billion on drones and autonomous AI military technologies over the coming decade. The spending has been announced before having a robust public conversation on the role such systems should play, if any.

The Australian Government's policy on AI in the military requires that AI systems be able to explain their target-selection decisions to human decision-makers. However, the call for

explainability risks legitimising systems that are poorly understood by those who rely on them and are only superficially accountable.

AI corporation, Anthropic, has warned that "frontier AI systems are simply not reliable enough to power fully autonomous weapons. We will not knowingly provide a product that puts America's warfighters and civilians at risk."

On 27 April 2026, more than 560 Google employees signed an open letter to Google's CEO urging the corporation to refuse to let the US Administration use its AI technology in classified military operations.

The war between Russia and Ukraine has served as the testing ground for the race towards fully autonomous weapons. Ukraine Saker Scout drones use machine vision and onboard AI in the final phase of a strike. The AI is reported to be able to identify 64 categories of Russian military equipment and carry out attacks of its own after losing GPS or radio contact with its human operator. Ukraine is also using Hornet drones that use AI-targeting systems.

Russia has also developed the V2U AI autonomous drone, which can identify targets with no human operator in the loop once airborne. In a May 2025 drone strike, seven V2U drones reportedly broke away from the planned mission and conducted attacks of their own on vehicles and civilians.

In November 2025, in the UN General Assembly, 156 governments passed a resolution on lethal autonomous weapons. The resolution argued that autonomous weapon systems raised significant challenges from “humanitarian, legal, security, technological and ethical perspectives” by undermining meaningful human oversight in the use of armed force. However, the resolution was voted against by Russia, Israel, and the US. The Chinese regime abstained from the vote.



What you can do:

Please write polite and respectful letters to:

The Hon. Richard Marles MP

Minister for Defence

PO Box 6022

House of Representatives

Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2600

Salutation: Dear Minister

The Hon Anthony Albanese MP

Prime Minister

PO Box 6022

House of Representatives

Parliament House

Canberra, ACT, 2600

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Points to make in your letter:

- Express deep concern about the development of autonomous weapons systems and the involvement of the Australian Government.
- Seek assurance that the Australian Defence Force will not use weapons systems to kill people without a human making informed decisions and being accountable for those decisions.
- Seek assurance that the Australian Government will not allow the sale of weapons systems that can kill people, with no person being involved in the decision to do so.
- Urge the Australian Government to support negotiations for new international law on autonomy in weapons systems - to ensure human control in the use of force and to prohibit machines that target people, reducing us to objects, stereotypes, and data points.



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