

Blessing Every Effort for Peace



The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness — on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

- Isaiah 9:2-7 (NRSV)

In their [Christmas message this year](#) the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem praised God’s desire, shown through the birth of Christ, for the heavenly light of peace to prevail on Earth over the darkness of sin. They see the role of the Church as encouraging all people to build bridges of understanding, not walls of separation. Just as we seek to break down walls that separate us from God, so we must work to take down the walls of fear that separate us from each other in our daily lives.

A passive desire for peace in the Holy Land cannot be effective. The faithful hope for peace requires active participation from each of us. The Churches in Jerusalem and Christians across our country are working together with a diversity of faith groups and ethnicities. Strong bridges are being built to overcome the darkness of indifference, despair and conflict.

Strong leadership is essential. Both good people and good institutions are needed to break down walls of distrust and develop better ways of cooperation. Heads of state and government need support from churches and civil society organizations if they are to succeed. As one step toward this goal of cooperation and trust, the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem are now participating in the Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land, which includes Jewish and Muslim leaders in Jerusalem. This is a blessing. May God bless every effort for peace.

- Warren Clark
Executive Director, Churches for Middle East Peace

For Meditation

What are the blessings of peace in your life? What are the blessings for which you pray that you may receive and for which you pray that others may receive? What are the differences between the two?

Prayer

Lord, help me to work for the blessing of your peace.
Lord, help me to recognize your peace when it is in me and around me.
Lord, help me to desire peace for my neighbor as much as for myself.
And, for all the help I know you give.
Thank you.