

Subject: Ceremonials – Memorials – World Peace Celebration, 9-11 Anniversary

Submitted by: Cindy Middendorf

We have invited our community to a World Peace Celebration in our Center here in St. Louis. What we are doing has been planned through visioning by our Peace Team and is probably more formal than you would want for your neighborhood or can do on short notice, but I will share it in the expectation that it may stimulate ideas for you.

Our intention is to create a feeling of unity in sacred ceremony. After an opening prayer, our introduction will be: "We remember those who made their transition from this life in the events of Sept 11, not with sorrow, but with celebration for who they were, for the many wonderful and ordinary things that they did. We remember them as loving children, mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, sisters, brothers, cousins, neighbors and friends. We remember that we are all part of a great and magnificent whole. We are part of them and they are part of us. We honor their memory by celebrating the peace we perceive in our world."

We will begin with a candle procession accompanied by Native American flute music, then the singing of "In This Very Room" (our choir will be peppered throughout the room). Then a dozen people will read world peace prayers (these are available on several websites - the versions we are using are below). Then we are having a slide show with photos submitted by volunteers of "what peace means to me" including photos of family members of those who died on Sept 11 visiting people in Afghanistan. A soloist will sing John Lennon's "Imagine." Then we will do a blessing ceremony using ideas I learned from Karyl Huntley at Asilomar (thank you, Karyl). Everyone dips their hands in a bowl of blessed water with rose petals floating in it (this is the water of life). We all sing a soft chant while everyone takes turns dipping their hands. After everyone has dipped their hands in the water, I will lead a blessing having all repeat the words after me and touch the parts of their bodies being blessed, extending hands to bless each other, and then in a circle to bless the world. Here are the words for the blessing:

I bless my hands that they may perform actions of peace
I bless my eyes that they may see peace
I bless my ears that they may hear peace
I bless my mouth that it may speak peace
I bless my mind that it may know peace
I bless my heart that it may guide me in peace
I bless others that they may be filled with peace
I bless the world that it may be at peace

The chant we are singing is Heart of the Mother by Michael Stillwater:

I am the heart of the Mother
I am the heart of Love
I am the heart of the Father

I am one with Peace ("Peace" substituted for "God" in original music)

As a remembrance of the evening we are giving everyone a bookmark with a shortened version of Ernest Holmes' Prayer for World Peace. We will also have Practitioners available for individual prayer sessions.

Here are the 12 World Peace Prayers:

***Baha'i Prayer for Peace**

Be generous in prosperity, and thankful in adversity.
Be fair in judgement, and guarded in thy speech.
Be a lamp unto those who walk in darkness, and a home to the stranger.
Be eyes to the blind, and a guiding light unto the feet of the erring.
Be a breath of life to the body of humankind,
a dew to the soil of the human heart, and a fruit upon the tree of humility.

***Buddhist Prayer for Peace**

May all beings everywhere plagued with sufferings of body and mind quickly be freed from their illnesses.
May those frightened cease to be afraid, and may those bound be free.
May the powerless find power, and may people think of befriending one another.
May those who find themselves in trackless, fearful wilderness - the children, the aged, the unprotected - be guarded by beneficial celestials, and may they swiftly attain Buddhahood.

***Jewish Prayer for Peace**

Grant us peace, Your most precious gift, O Eternal Source of peace, and give us the will to proclaim its message to all the peoples of the Earth. Bless our country, that it may always be a stronghold of peace, and its advocate among the nations. May contentment reign within its borders, health and happiness within its homes. Strengthen the bonds of friendship among the inhabitants of all lands. And may the love of Your name hallow every home and every heart.
Blessed is the Eternal God, the Source of peace.

***Hindu Prayer for Peace**

I desire neither earthly kingdom, nor even freedom from birth and death.
I desire only the deliverance from grief of all those afflicted by misery
Oh God, lead us from the unreal to the real; from darkness to light; from death to immortality.
May there be peace in celestial regions.
May there be peace on earth.
May the waters be appeasing.
May herbs be wholesome and may trees and plants bring peace to all.
May all beneficent beings bring peace to us.
May thy wisdom spread peace all through the world.
May all things be a source of peace to all and to me.

Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti (Peace, Peace, Peace).

***Jainist Prayer for Peace**

Peace and Universal Love is the essence of the Gospel preached by all Enlightened Ones. The Lord has preached that equanimity is the Dharma.

Forgive do I creatures all, and let all creatures forgive me.

Unto all have I amity, and unto none enmity.

Know that violence is the root cause of all miseries in the world.

Violence, in fact, is the knot of bondage.

"Do not injure any living being."

This is the eternal, perennial, and unalterable way of spiritual life.

A weapon, howsoever powerful it may be, can always be superseded by a superior one; but no weapon can, however, be superior to non-violence and love.

***Islamic Prayer for Peace**

We think of Thee, worship Thee, bow to Thee as the Creator of this Universe; we seek refuge in Thee, the Truth, our only support.

Thou art the Ruler, the barge in this ocean of endless births and deaths.

In the name of Allah, the beneficent, the merciful.

Praise be to the Lord of the Universe who has created us and made us into tribes and nations.

Give us wisdom that we may know each other and not despise all things.

We shall abide by thy Peace. And, we shall remember the servants of God are those who walk on this earth in humility and, when we address them, we shall say Peace Unto Us All.

***Native African Prayer for Peace**

Almighty God, the Great Thumb we cannot evade to tie any knot;

the Roaring Thunder that splits mighty trees;

the All-seeing Lord up on high who sees even the footprints of an antelope on a rock mass here on Earth..

You are the one who does not hesitate to respond to our call.

You are the cornerstone of peace.

***Native American Prayer for Peace**

Oh Great Spirit of our Ancestors, I raise my pipe to you.

To your messengers the four winds, and to Mother Earth who provides for your children:

Give us the wisdom to teach our children to love, to respect, and to be kind to each other so that they may grow with peace of mind.

Let us learn to share all good things that you provide for us on this Earth.

***Shinto Prayer for Peace**

Although the people living across the ocean surrounding us are all our brothers and sisters why, Oh Lord, is there trouble in this world?

Why do winds and waves rise in the ocean surrounding us?

I earnestly wish the wind will soon blow away all the clouds hanging over the tops of the mountains..

*Zoroastrian Prayer for Peace

We pray to God to eradicate all the misery in the world:
that understanding triumph over ignorance,
that generosity triumph over indifference,
that trust triumph over contempt,
and that truth triumph over falsehood.

*Sikh Prayer for Peace

God adjudges us according to our deeds, not by the coat that we wear.
Know that Truth is above everything, but higher still is truthful living.
Know that we attaineth God when we loveth,
and only victory endures in consequences of which no one is defeated.

*Christian Prayer for Peace

Blessed are the PEACEMAKERS, for they shall be known as the Children of God.
But I say to you that hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,
bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.
To those that strike you on the cheek, offer the other one also;
and from those who take away your cloak, do not withhold your coat as well.
Give to everyone who begs from you; and of those who take away your goods,
do not ask for them again.
And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.

Ronnie Stark <ronniestark@earthlink.net> wrote:

Dear Friends,

Last year, about 2 weeks after the 9/11 attack, my neighbors asked me to do a service so that the neighborhood could begin healing together. It went well. We had 40+ people of all ages, backgrounds, ethnicities, religious traditions, and some that consider themselves more "spiritual," and haven't set foot in a church except to get married. It's a very mixed bag and politically these folks are at both ends and in between. But we're a great neighborhood, like an earlier time period.

Last night, I was asked to do a service again this year on 9/11, this Wednesday. Of course, I accepted.

I would like to do something besides a talk and candles, make it a little more interesting. It would be great if there was something that gave

those who want to an opportunity to participate in some way, or express something about some insight gained, etc.

I know some of my experienced colleagues out there have great ideas and creativity so I'm picking your brains to consider some more creative options that what I have so far.

I truly appreciate the responses and material I received for the memorial I did for my aunt. It was a real gift for me to receive the love

that came with the materials you sent. It also gave me an opportunity to connect with some of you that I had not previously met.

I welcome whatever you have to share asap and again, I am very grateful

that I have you in my life. We are so blessed to have one another. Many

thanks with love, Ronnie

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Ronnie Stark <ronniestark@earthlink.net>

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