

St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Lewes, DE

A Vigil for Peace in a Wounded World

Monday, March 30, 2026 Noon

The Rev. Jeffrey Austin Ross, Rector

The congregation gathers in silence. All stand as are able when the service begins.

OPENING ACCLAMATION

Officiant: Blessed be the God of peace:

People: **Who breaks down dividing walls and makes us one.**

Officiant: In the name of God: Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit.

People: **Amen.**

INVOCATION

O Christ of the poor and the broken,
be with us in the sorrow of this world.

O Christ of the wounded and the weary,
walk with all who flee, who grieve, who fear.

Circle us, Lord—
keep peace within, keep hatred without.

Bind us together in the shelter of your mercy. **Amen.**

LIGHTING OF THE VIGIL CANDLE

Officiant: Grant us, Lord, the lamp of charity which never fails, that it may burn in us and shed its light on those around us, and that by its brightness we may have a vision of that holy City filled with peace, where dwells the true and never-failing Light, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A large candle is lit.

Officiant: Christ is our light.

People: **The light no darkness can overcome.**

The congregation is seated for the readings of Scripture

SCRIPTURE READINGS

A reading from the book of the prophet Micah (4:1-5)

In days to come the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised up above the hills. Peoples shall stream to it, and many nations shall come and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between many peoples, and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift

up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken. For all the peoples walk, each in the name of its god, but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever.

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People **Thanks be to God.**

A period of silence is kept

Psalm 46 *Deus noster refugium*

God is our refuge and strength,*

a very present help in trouble.

Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be moved, *

and though the mountains be toppled into the depths of the sea;

Though its waters rage and foam,*

and though the mountains tremble at its tumult.

The LORD of hosts is with us;*

the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, *

the holy habitation of the Most High.

God is in the midst of her; she shall not be overthrown; *

God shall help her at the break of day.

The nations make much ado, and the kingdoms are shaken;*

God has spoken, and the earth shall melt away.

The LORD of hosts is with us; *

the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

Come now and look upon the works of the LORD, *

what awesome things he has done on earth.

It is he who makes war to cease in all the world; *

he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear, and burns the shields with fire.

“Be still, then, and know that I am God;*

I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth.”

The LORD of hosts is with us;*

the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

A period of silence is kept

A reading from Saint Paul's letter to the Romans (12:9-21)

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not

curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People **Thanks be to God.**

A period of silence is kept

A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew (5:38-48)

Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you. You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People **Thanks be to God.**

A period of silence is kept

Officiant: Everlasting God, we turn now to You once more to cry out our longing and the longing of all men and women for a beginning of that wholeness we call peace. Ever and again, we now admit, we have turned our backs on You, and on our sisters and brothers; forsaking Your Law, denying Your truth, ignoring Your will, defacing Your beauty. The intelligence You have imparted within us we have applied to the arts of war; with the skill we have from You we make engines of terror and pain. We have prayed for peace, even as we laughed at truth; for blessing, but did not care to do Your will; for mercy, and have shown none to others. We have prayed for impossible things: peace without justice, forgiveness without restitution, love without sacrifice. But You, our Creator, abound in grace: so now again we turn to You, to attach ourselves to Your purpose, to set ourselves on the paths that lead to the coming of peace and right, freedom and joy for all the world. Again, today, we ask forgiveness, and again

we praise You, O God, the Source of peace. **Amen.**

▲ CONFESSIOIN OF SIN

Officiant Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor. *Silence is kept.* God of all mercy,

People **we confess that we have sinned against you, opposing your will in our lives. We have denied your goodness in each other, in ourselves, and in the world you have created. We repent of the evil that enslaves us, the evil we have done, and the evil done on our behalf. Forgive, restore, and strengthen us through our Savior Jesus Christ, that we may abide in your love and serve only your will. Amen.**

Officiant Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins ✠ through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

Officiant: As Jesus taught us we now pray:

▲ THE LORD'S PRAYER *In the Celtic tradition. Said together by all*

Holy One beyond all names, Eternal Wellspring. May love rise again in us today, with food for every table, shelter for every family, and reverence for every life. Forgive us our failings in love, and free us from all falseness, that the light of our souls may shine, and the strength of our spirits endure for the Earth and all its people this day, tonight, and forever. Amen.

A LITANY FOR PEACE IN TROUBLED TIMES

God the Father,

Have mercy on us.

God the Son,

Have mercy on us.

God the Holy Spirit,

Have mercy on us.

Holy and blessed Trinity, one God,

Have mercy on us.

In these days of trouble, fear and sorrow,

Have mercy on us.

In our despair at the violence that seems to fill the world,

Have mercy on us.

In the pain of lost life and shattered hopes,

Have mercy on us.

In our grieving for those who have died,

Have mercy on us.

In our compassion for all who are bereaved,

Have mercy on us.

From the history of violence that corrupts every society and our own,

O Lord, deliver us.

From the greed and injustice that divide the world into rich and poor,

O Lord, deliver us.

From the urge for revenge that adds to the cycle of violence,

O Lord, deliver us.

From the fear that grows into hatred for people who are different,

O Lord, deliver us.

From being too quick to attribute blame and demand retribution,

O Lord, deliver us.

From believing ourselves safe through anything other than your grace,

O Lord, deliver us.

From dying suddenly and unprepared,

O Lord, deliver us.

For those who plan and carry out acts of violence,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For all who seek justice and ensure the rule of law,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For the victims of war and terrorism everywhere on earth,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For all who live in fear, and for refugees from violent regimes,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For courage to resist demonizing and dehumanizing others,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For wisdom in choosing the paths of peace,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For solidarity with the suffering of the dispossessed,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For generosity in sharing the world's resources fairly,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For respect in conversation with people of no or other faiths,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For honesty in knowing and confessing the sin in our own hearts,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For grace to change and be changed as you forgive us,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For rescue workers and medical teams treating those injured in conflict zones,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For aid agencies and their workers, responding with practical care in dangerous places,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For the leaders of all the nations, looking for ways to work together beyond fear and suspicion,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For people of goodwill, responding generously to the needs of suffering communities,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For all who have friends and family involved in areas of conflict and disaster,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For communities that are terrified by missiles, snipers, vigilantes or death squads,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For the vulnerable and defenseless in conflict zones, for the children, the elderly, the disabled, the sick:

Lord, hear our prayer.

For Christ to bring all the peoples of the world into one flock with one shepherd,

We pray to you, O God.

For Christ to bring healing and comfort for those we love who are sick or in mourning,

We pray to you, O God.

For Christ to lead us into the paths of peace, writing the law of love on our hearts,

We pray to you, O God.

For Christ to bring us, with all who have died in faith, to a joyful resurrection,

We pray to you, O God.

God of all peace, have mercy on our broken and divided world, and on your people who cry out to you for healing, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

To you, Creator of nature and humanity, in truth and beauty we pray: Hear our voice, for it is the voice of victims of all wars and violence among individuals and nations. Hear the voice for all children who suffer and will suffer when people put their faith in weapons of war. Hear our voice when we beg you to instill into the hearts of all human beings the wisdom of peace, the strength of justice, and the joy of fellowship. Hear our voice, for we speak for the multitudes in every country and every period of history who do not want war and are ready to walk the road of peace. Hear our voice and grant insight and strength so that we may always respond to hatred with love, to injustice with total dedication to justice, to need with the sharing of self, to war with peace. O God, hear our voice and grant unto the world your everlasting peace. **Amen.**

Encircle, O God, those who are in danger today.

Encircle with your presence those who live with constant fear and have nowhere to sleep.

Encircle with your love those who weep without comfort.

May your angels of peace go before them, your light shine behind them, your wisdom guide within them, this day and always.

Amen.

God, as we depart from this place today, we pray for courage, and for strength. When we

remember the evils in the past, the innocents tortured, maimed, and murdered, we are almost afraid to make ourselves remember. But we are even more afraid to forget. We ask for wisdom, that we might mourn and not be consumed by hatred; that we might remember and yet not lose hope. We must face evil— and in so doing, reaffirm our faith in future good. We cannot erase yesterday's pains, but we can vow that they will not have been suffered in vain. And so, we pray: for those who were given death, let us choose life; for us and generations yet to come. For those who found courage to stand against evil— often at the cost of their very lives— let us vow to carry on their struggle. We must teach our children and ourselves: to learn from hate that we must love, to learn from evil to live for Good. **Amen.**

Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart, that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that our divisions being healed, we may live in justice and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

BLESSING

Officiant May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships so that you may live deep within your heart. May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that you may work for justice, freedom, and peace. May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation, and war, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and turn their pain into joy. And may God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference in this world, so that you can do what others claim cannot be done. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Officiant: Go forth in peace to love and serve the Lord.
People: **Thanks be to God.**

HOLY WEEK



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Monday, March 30th

Noon - Prayer Vigil for Peace

Tuesday, March 31st

6 pm - Seder Meal (Reservations Required)

Wednesday, April 1st

7 pm - Tenebrae - a Service of Shadows
with Choral Music

Maundy Thursday, April 2nd

7 pm - Worship for Maundy Thursday with
foot washing (Service includes incense)

Maundy Thursday - Good Friday

8 pm to 9 am - Vigil in the Garden

Good Friday, April 3rd

Noon - Liturgy for Good Friday
2 pm - Walking the Stations of the Cross

Holy Saturday, April 4th

7 pm - The Great Vigil of Easter
(Service includes incense)

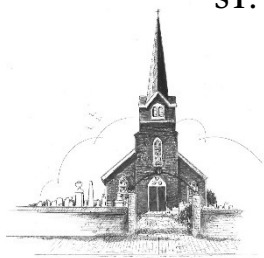
Easter Day - Sunday, April 5th

8 am - Festal Choral Eucharist in the Church
10:15 am - Festal Choral Eucharist in the Church
10:15 am - Festal Eucharist in the Parish Hall

Easter Egg hunt on St. Peter's square following the end of the last service.

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