

Connect

Autumn Edition

September to November 2025



Editor's Greeting

As September begins, we find the shops stocked with various items associated with Halloween (All Hallows Eve) and various autumnal décor finding its way onto the shelves. You can also, if you like to plan ahead, purchase your Advent Calendar and Christmas Chocolates, to avoid the rush! There is the risk, I suppose, of thinking and living so much into the future that we fail to really appreciate the present and there is plenty to note and keep us occupied in the here and now.

Enjoy this edition of Connect and the sharing of news, challenges and reasons for celebration across the pastorate. May God continue to bless us and enable each of our churches to flourish.

Revd Adam Earle

News from the Churches



**Leiston & Saxmundham
United Church (LSUC)**

Making Progress

Each denomination goes about things in their own distinctive ways. Although the URC and the Methodist Church may seem similar in many respects, they operate rather differently. This means that things are often processed in different



ways. However, we are pleased to say that we have now had confirmation from the Methodist District that the Partnership Agreement and Church Constitution for Leiston and Saxmundham United Church are approved and that therefore we are "Official" in the eyes of both denominations

We have also made good progress in other areas including sorting out banking and finance arrangements, including our energy suppliers and direct debit arrangements and our insurance arrangements. What seems straightforward on the face of it, has proved far more complex but thanks be to God that things are settling so we can focus more determinedly on mission and community.

Smart New Carpet

You'll remember from the last edition of connect that we had an unfortunate flood which caused damage to the ceiling and floor of the church hall at Leiston. Whilst the ceiling is awaiting attention, we are pleased to say the new lining boards and carpet in the hall are now in place with the full cost covered by the insurance. It all looks very smart. The challenge now is to avoid being the first person to spill tea or coffee on the floor. We are now reflecting on the further upgrade and development of the building, beginning with replacement of the boilers.



Beside the Seaside

As the old song goes, "Oh I do like to be beside the seaside!", that is exactly where we went for our annual church outing on Wednesday 16th July. First we enjoyed tea at the Aldringham Tea Room – always a good location for something refreshing and something good to eat. When fully replete we made our way to Thorpeness.



Thank you to a passerby for taking our picture so we all could be part of it. Say cheese everybody!

Celebrating @ Saxmundham

The weekend of 6th, 7th and 8th September saw the celebration of the 175th Anniversary of the opening of Saxmundham Chapel. In preparing for the celebrations it was interesting to discover that the Saxmundham Chapel stemmed from Rendham Chapel (which was founded in 1750) and that from Sweffling Chapel (founded in 1650).



On Saturday 6th September we welcomed friends to share in a celebration tea as well

as the opportunity to undertake a self-guided tour of the chapel, have a go at a time-line quiz focussed on events over the last 175 years, read up on the history in the newly updated booklet and a sing-a-long with some Sunday School favourites.



There was a display of various documents, objects and photographs which were all part of the story including minutes books and the original deeds for the site which has now been relocated to the Synod Office.

There was quite a spread to share including sandwiches, nibbles, savouries and, of course, plenty of cake to enjoy.



On Sunday 7th September we gathered for a service of worship, thanksgiving and celebration. We were glad to welcome folk from across the pastorate and other friends from the area.



We reflected on God's unchanging faithfulness over the years and looked ahead with hope. The service was followed by a great deal more tea and cake.

On Monday 8th September we held an additional "Start the Week with A Cuppa" with, yes, you've guessed, more cake. We were joined by members of the Awake Suffolk Coastal mission team who have been supporting a number of missional events in the area, in partnership with St John's CE – Saxmundham.

If you are wondering where Revd David was in the pictures, the answer is he was behind the camera taking them and managed to capture a great variety of images. We hope to have a book of the photos as a record of the special weekend.

Films & Food

We are continuing our Film lunches at Saxmundham Chapel. On 16th August we enjoyed an Irish themed lunch and watched the musical "Finian's Rainbow" – I think we all concluded that it was entertaining but rather strange. The cast included Frank Sinatra, Petula Clark and the all singing, all dancing Tommy Steele.

Our next film lunch will be at **13:00** on **Saturday 8th November**. As usual we cannot advertise the film in print or online but, don't panic, it is a much-loved comedy set in World War Two. The lunch will have a home front theme with recipes drawn from the famous Marguerite Patten. Eggs and Butter will be strictly rationed!



Felixstowe United Reformed Church

Celebrating 125 Years: We agree with the Psalmist in Psalm 92:1, "It is good to give thanks to the Lord..." On Sunday 29th June, we gathered to do just that. We welcomed folk from across the pastorate, from local churches and the wider community to join in a service of thanksgiving and celebration to mark the 125th Anniversary of the church. Established in 1900, originally as St George's Presbyterian Church, we became Felixstowe URC in 1978 when the two URC congregations in the town united.

The service was prepared and led by Revd David. Revd Adam was stationed at the organ.



As Time Goes By Flavours from History



**Mini Concert &
Afternoon Tea
@ Saxmundham Chapel**

**14:00 Saturday
18th October 2025**

Open To All

No Charge – Donations Welcome



It was a real delight to share the celebration with so many folk. We reflected on the history of the church, drawing on the church's history booklet and telling the story of the journey so far. We heard of God's faithfulness and blessings and considered the challenges of the future.

The kingdom of God
is justice and joy,
for Jesus restores
what sin would destroy;
God's power and glory
in Jesus we know,
and here and hereafter
the kingdom shall grow.

The kingdom of God
is mercy and grace,
the prisoners are freed,
the sinners find place,
the outcast are welcomed
God's banquet to share,
and hope is awakened
in place of despair.



Our service included a hymn written by former minister of Felixstowe URC, Revd Byrn Rees. Rejoice and Sing No 200 "The Kingdom of God" to the original tune "Out Skerries" - the second tune provided in the hymn book.



The kingdom of God
is challenge and choice,
believe the good news,
repent and rejoice!
His love for us sinners
brought Christ to his cross,
our crisis of judgement
for gain or for loss.

God's kingdom is come,
the gift and the goal,
in Jesus begun,
in heaven made whole;
the heirs of kingdom
shall answer his call,
and all things cry 'Glory!'
to God all in all.





Afterwards folk gathered in the large hall to share in a magnificent and copious collation of sandwiches, other savouries and cakes – a foretaste perhaps of God’s banquet mentioned in Revd Bryn’s hymn. Despite a degree of “planned under catering” in terms of how many people Christine had asked the caterers to provide for and having around ninety people present, we all ate heartily and there was a fair bit left. Many of us took home “doggy bags” filled with delights.

A Season of Prayer

As with many churches we are reflecting and discerning the way ahead for our local church and how God is leading us forward. There are so many challenges that seem to hinder the way but also some valuable opportunities and blessings.



Beginning at a special church meeting held in August the church family have entered into a “Season of prayer”, asking folk to commit to regular times of prayer focussed on seeking God’s will and way with three key questions in mind: What is God asking us to do? Where is the Holy Spirit leading FURC? How do we identify and fulfil our mission in Felixstowe?



Revd David produced a leaflet as a guide to folk as they pray. Each of us has been asked to pray: On Sundays at 10:10 at Church (Before our morning worship), on Tuesdays at 10:30 at Church, at home at a specific time each day that suits, on

Mondays at 6pm at home or on the phone or over a coffee with a fellow church member. Friends, we would also value your prayers so please do join us in praying about the way ahead. May God speak clearly and give us the faith and courage to follow wherever he leads.



Hadleigh United Reformed Church Great Meeting

Looking Forward



In the last edition of Connect we mentioned our current activities in reviewing our Mission Action Plan and spending time to discern our key missional purpose and activities as we look ahead. Following two very encouraging “Away Mornings” for the elders, in April and June, we will be broadening out the prayerful reflection and conversation with the whole church family by holding a church “away” morning on Saturday 20th September. We will be gathering at the church - the “away” part is the stepping aside from the normal routine to pause and wait on God.

We too would ask for your prayers as we look at ways to engage with God in building his kingdom, extending God’s love and invitation to salvation and serving those around us. We have quite a few ideas but,

like all of our churches, need to look to God to understand how best to engage the limited number, but enthusiastic, people to be fruitful for God's glory.

"Hollywood in Hadleigh"

The town of Hadleigh does not have its own cinema and whilst there are two available in Ipswich which are not a million miles away, we are blessed to be able to make use of the Ansell Centre as a Digital Cinema.



The hall is equipped with a projector (the modern computer variety), a large screen and sound system which includes a hearing loop for those who make use of hearing aids. Film shows are on Friday evenings at 19:30 (unless otherwise stated). The price is now £4.50 on the door (£2.50 for accompanied children when appropriate).

We also normally show subtitles to assist those with hearing loss. Tea, coffee, biscuits and choc ices are sold during a short interval. Over the next few months we are showing the following films:

September	
12 th	Mr Burton
26 th	Ocean (with David Attenborough)

October	
10 th	The Penguin Lessons
24 th	Mad about the Boy

November

14 th	The Ballad of Wallace Island
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To find out more about the films and future programme you can visit the Digital Cinema page on the Ansell Centre website:

<http://www.ansellcc.org.uk/digital-cinema/>

You would be most welcome to come along and there is no need to book in advance as payment is taken at the door.



Pentecost Service

Pentecost Sunday may seem some distance away now; it was way back on 8th June. However, as part of our ongoing prayer and partnership with Whitton Parish Church, we held our second joint "Pentecost Praise" Service – this year at Castle Hill URC.

The service was led jointly by Revd Adam and Revd Mary Sokanovic who also gave the address.



The service included readings from scripture, poetry and reflective readings as well as prayer and a variety of music both for listening and for singing together including the familiar hymns:

- Come down, O love divine
- O breath of life

- There's a spirit in the air
- O Thou who camest from above
- Come, Holy Spirit, Come!



We were greatly blessed to have live organ music for the service. We welcomed Stephen Hogger, the organist from Christ Church, Tacket Street, who is wonderfully familiar with the instrument and really knows how to get the best from it.

His playing gave a real lift to the music. We will be welcoming Stephen again to play for our morning service on 21st September when Christ Church will not be holding a morning service due to the half marathon and road closures in the town.

Congratulations

Revd Mary Sokanovic has been Priest-in-charge of the Parish of Whitton with Thurlestone and Akenham for a considerable time but on Wednesday 2nd



July, a service was held at St Mary & St Botolph in Whitton to mark her Collation as Rector of the parish. Although, on the face of things, it may not make a practical difference day to day this is significant event and blessing for her and we join with many in offering our congratulations. Revd Adam and Revd David spoke words of welcome at the service and we very much look forward to continue to work in partnership with her over the coming months and years.

Holiday @ Home

Our annual Holiday @ Home remains a popular event amongst our older folk and although some of our number who used to attend as helpers are now attending as "holiday-makers" it is well supported in both respects. This year's Holiday @ Home was held on 30th and 31st of July.



Our 2025 "destination" was Australia and our varied programme included craft and art activities, games, flower arranging, a sing-a-long of Australian songs (led by Revd David) interspersed with historical facts, musical performances (and some dancing) and the traditional chair exercises. We did notice, on the second day, that Revd Adam disappeared when the exercises began.



A big thank you to everyone who took part and to those who lead activities or provided the excellent food and refreshments. We are already thinking about next year's event and have some interesting possible destinations in mind.

Charities BBQ

Each year we hold our Charities BBQ as a social event for the church family and to raise money for the nominated charities for the year. This year's BBQ took place on Saturday 2nd August at the home of Michael and Anita Robertson. Good food and good company was enjoyed by all and we are please to report that over £200 was raised, to be shared between the three charities



New Members

In a time when we are so often concerned about decline and having had to say farewell to quite a number of long-standing members over the last few years it is a real blessing and encouragement to welcome some new members to our church.



On Sunday 7th September, as part of our Café Style Communion Service we were delighted to welcome Barbara, Geoff and Lesley into membership. It was a joyful occasion with a mix of informality and the formal elements blending well. It is so good to have them on board. The more minds and hearts that we have tuning into God's will and purposes, the better we can, together, discern God's will.

Before the blessing, Revd Adam invited any others who would like to become members

to speak with him, or one of the elders, after the service. We are thrilled to say that several other folk have asked to become members so we are looking forward to welcoming them in the next few months.

Castle Hill Amateur Performers (CHAPS)



CHAPS are a longstanding part of Castle Hill life. Each year they produce a pantomime. Previously this was in February half term but for the last few years,

to save money on heating during the rehearsal season (now over the Summer and early Autumn), the performances take place in the October Half Term. Each year they aim to find something original and entertaining.

This year they will be performing **Haunted House – A Spooktacular New Pantomime** by Barry Crossley.

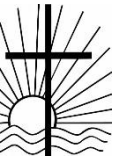




The performances are at 19:30 on Thursday 30th October, 19:30 on Friday 31st October and 17:00 on Saturday 1st November. Tickets are priced at £11.55

(Including booking fee) for adults, and £6.13 (Including booking fee) for children. Tickets can be purchased online by scanning the QR code on your phone or by emailing castlehillamateurperformers@gmail.com

All proceeds from the pantomime, when all expenses are covered, are donated to charity. This year our nominated charity is BBC Children in Need. Helping to support them in their excellent work.



St John's United Reformed Church

New Carpet

Whilst not of the red variety, we are pleased to report that, over the Summer period we have been able to complete the replacement of the carpet in several places around the church.



Wear to the carpet and the need for replacement in some areas was identified in our Quinquennial Report. We are grateful to Synod for supporting us with the cost of the replacement and for

all who worked to both arrange the fitting and with the clearing of the various spaces that were part of the project. Also thanks to

everyone who has contributed to the carpet fund. All this meant the work was completed ahead of scheduled and everything returned to its original location with minimal disruption.

The new carpet is in the form of tiles which can be easily lifted and replaced if necessary. They are also bleachable and hardwearing so hopefully, whoever has the misfortune to be the first to spill their tea on them will not have too much to worry about.

We are continuing to work through the list of other items on the report in priority order. Thanks to Revd David who produced a Spreadsheet version of the items raised in the report. We also have some ideas to improve the security of the building when in use by groups such as the pre-school and to enhance the sense of welcome and accessibility of information about church activities and events.

Mission Action Plan (MAP): We are currently in the process of reviewing our MAP, working through the different sections in elders' meetings in readiness to broaden out the discussion at Church meetings. We have also set aside a space on the notice board in Room 1 (the room which adjoins the main worship space) to accommodate a display identifying the key objectives in the MAP and displaying updates as they identified.

Worship		
Update/Review 2021	Review/Update 2022	Lead/Review
Case Preparation: Other worship which is necessary that we can offer during the rest of our week (including, space and staff, ensuring environment, participation and learning, ongoing care of God and building, or other prayer for us and the world, including things).		
Key Objectives	Planned Actions and Activities	Review / Finding
1. Develop a range of worship options for all ages and abilities, including those with special needs, and ensure that all are accessible and inclusive. 2. Develop a range of worship options for all ages and abilities, including those with special needs, and ensure that all are accessible and inclusive.	1. Include an array of songs and hymns, with traditional and modern, and ensure that all are accessible and inclusive. 2. Develop a range of worship options for all ages and abilities, including those with special needs, and ensure that all are accessible and inclusive.	1. Review the effectiveness of the current worship options and ensure that all are accessible and inclusive. 2. Review the effectiveness of the current worship options and ensure that all are accessible and inclusive.

We have now introduced a different layout and a simplified format for the MAP which other churches in the pastorate may find helpful. There are fewer columns to complete and the more

familiar portrait orientation is helpful.

One element that we have identified in the Worship section of our MAP is to include, more frequently, the use of drama, poetry, music for listening and art work in our services. There are quite a number of folk in the church who enjoy taking part in drama sketches and we are looking forward to these elements appearing more frequently.

Happy 90+ Birthday

With inspiration from our friends in Felixstowe we are hosting a special afternoon tea party to celebrate all those members of our church family who have attained (or in several cases exceeded) the grand old age of 90. Invitations have been produced and are being sent out. The celebration tea will be attended by all the church family (who are able) to mark this milestone for those who have reached it. For those 90+ who are unable to attend we will providing a special greeting card and gift to be delivered to them in person.



Other News

A Wonderful Welcome

As part of the United Reformed Church we are committed to ecumenism and working in partnership with Christians from different denominations. In some of our churches we are, in particular, working with the Methodist Church and the Ipswich Circuit in particular.

On Saturday 30th August Revd Adam attended, on behalf of the I&E Pastorate, a special welcome service held at Bramford Road Methodist Church in Ipswich. The

service was to welcome the new Circuit Superintendent Minister Revd Vivienne Smith and to officially welcome Revd Paulson Devasahayam who has particular responsibility for Felixstowe (one church in four locations) and Chantry. It was a wonderful celebration of faith and an inspiration to persevere in serving God.



Romans Bible Study



If you have not yet picked up on the publicity, beginning in October. We are offering, across the I&E Pastorate and

Methodist Circuit (with other churches welcome to join) the Bible Society's Roman Course.

The Romans Course gives a wonderful opportunity to dive deeper into scripture - exploring the letter of Paul to the Romans. As the name suggests this letter is written to the Christian Church in Rome and sets out the Gospel as Paul understands it, in a clear manner, to inspire and encourage. The course consists of ten sessions which will be available in person or via Zoom. Five will be in the Autumn 2025 and five in early 2026 with a break for Advent & Christmas. Each session includes video input and the opportunity for discussion, listening, reflection and learning. There is no charge for the course.

If you would like further details please check the leaflets available in your local church or email Revd Adam on revaje@outlook.com.

The Season of Creation

Whilst the shops may be charging ahead toward Halloween and Christmas, we mustn't overlook some of the things we celebrate and reflect upon this time of year. We are now in what is known as the season of creation which runs from 1st September to 4th October.

This is an annual, ecumenical celebration of prayer and action for creation. During this time, churches are encouraged to have a focus on creation, with all the joys and responsibilities that being part of God's creation brings to us. This year's theme is "Peace with Creation."

The URC Eastern Synod has set up a web page <https://urceastern.org.uk/season-of-creation-2025/> which includes links to a wide range of resources and information which very much links in with our Caring for Creation and Eco commitments.

Of particular interest is the Season of Creation



SEASON OF CREATION

www.seasonofcreation.org website which includes a link to download the celebration guide. This is an extensive resource (41 pages in fact) of ideas, messages and information.



Harvest Festival

Coinciding with the Season of Creation is the time when many of us traditionally hold Harvest celebrations. There will, no doubt be the familiar Harvest hymns and readings

and we will, again, give thanks for God's generosity and blessings.

Sunday 28th September

Felixstowe URC

10:30 Harvest Festival Service

Led by Revd David Rees

Hadleigh (Great Meeting) URC

10:30 All-Age Harvest Festival Service

Led by Karen Harman

Leiston & Saxmundham United Church @ Saxmundham Chapel

10:45 Harvest Praise

Led by the Elders

St John's URC – Ipswich

10:45 Harvest Festival Service

Led by Revd Adam Earle

(Followed by Harvest Lunch)

Sunday 5th October

Castle Hill URC – Ipswich

10:30 Harvest Festival Communion

(Caring for Creation Theme)

Led by Revd Adam Earle

(Followed by Harvest Lunch)

We are blessed that we might, not only satisfy our own needs, but share that blessing with others. Please do support the gathering of harvest gifts or money which will be distributed as each church determines to support those in particular need locally or in the wider world.

Caring for Creation – Eco Church

Caring for Creation

Again looking ahead to October, we will have our next round of Caring for Creation worship – part of our Eco-Church commitments. Unlike the



Spring services, these won't all take place on the same Sunday but will be held in each church when either of the pastorate ministers are leading worship as follows:

Sunday 5th October

St John's – Revd David
Castle Hill – Revd Adam

Sunday 12th October

Hadleigh – Revd David
LSUC – (Afternoon) Revd Adam

Sunday 19th October

Felixstowe – Revd David

Caring for Creation themes are not intended to hammer us with guilt and concern over the problems, such as climate change and pollution - things which we already know are real and concerning. Instead, we are encouraged to reflect on God's will and purposes for creation, in a variety of ways, to acknowledge the Creator's work and blessings and to consider how we can each play a part in Caring for Creation through the actions we take and the choices we make each day.

Our theme this Autumn will be **"How Does Your Garden Grow"** and we will be finding out more about what the Bible says about gardens, gardening and gardeners and some of the ways we can make a difference in this world. Some of us may have large gardens, others no garden at all but even a windowsill or balcony planter can have a positive impact.

There are so many things we can do that will help the environment. These include: collecting rainwater, composting kitchen and garden waste, avoiding chemical pesticides and herbicides, using peat-free compost, choosing native or drought-tolerant plants, and using less plastic.

Green plants are essential in the life of the planet, plants help remove Carbon Dioxide from the air and therefore help us reduce the level of "greenhouse" gases in the atmosphere and improve the quality of the air we breathe. Even a few herbs on the window sill or potted plants on the balcony can have a positive impact.

Here are some particular ideas, drawn from the National History Museum website about how we can create wildlife friendly gardens.

1. Grow butterfly-friendly plants: Adult



butterflies and moths will feed on almost any flower's nectar - as will most other pollinators such as bees - but their caterpillars are

choosy and may only have one or two plant species they'll live on. Planting an array of plant species that flower at different stages of the year will maximise the chances of a variety of butterflies and other insects visiting your garden.

2. Feed the birds: A seed feeder is a quick and simple way to make your garden more attractive to birds. If you're up for some DIY, you could try making a bird feeder out of a reused plastic bottle.



The type of food you put in feeders will affect the species visiting your garden. For example, mealworms are popular with insect eaters like sparrows, whereas goldfinches are partial to niger seeds. If you set up a feeder, remember to clean it regularly.

3. Get the most from compost:



Creating a compost heap in your garden from kitchen waste is a great way to reduce what goes to landfill and will create a minibeast haven. Minibeasts

are small invertebrates such as millipedes, woodlice and spiders. These are an excellent source of food for other wildlife. Worms help to create compost out of leaves and other organic material, and will likely wriggle their way into your compost heap. Spreading home-made compost on your garden will encourage worms wherever it spreads. Worms improve soil drainage and transfer important nutrients to the surface.

4. Help the creatures of the night:



Plenty of wildlife is out in your garden at night, even if you're not awake to see it. Honeysuckle and evening primrose are night-blooming flowers that

release their scents after dark, attracting pollinating insects.

There are 18 species of bat living in the UK and night-flying insects are an attractive meal for the insectivores. You can also help bats by reducing or removing artificial lighting from your garden and around your property.

Hedgehogs are mostly night-time visitors that keep the garden ecosystem balanced. Coordinating with your neighbours to add a hedgehog hole - a gap in garden-dividing fences and walls – will help them get in.

5. Add water: There are six amphibians native to the UK, including common frogs, smooth newts and common toads. All of them are good pest controllers,



feeding on a variety of invertebrates. Adding a small pond to your garden is a great way to keep these animals happy and may even attract dragonflies in summer when they're active. The insects that gather by water will also be popular with bats.

Instead of a pond, you could keep a shallow, sloping-sided dish filled with water in the garden for birds. This offers both fresh drinking water and a bath. You will need to keep the water topped up and refill the dish every so often to keep it fresh.

6. Create a woodpile and leave the leaf

litter: Some animals, such as butterflies and wasps, use woodpiles as a place to hide and to hibernate through the colder months.



In autumn, most gardens are carpeted with a layer of fallen leaves. Piles of leaf litter can be an attractive spot for hedgehogs to hibernate, keeping them warm and dry. It's best to not to tidy the leaves up in winter to avoid disturbing any hibernators.

Additionally, once leaves start to decay, they provide important nutrients for the soil.

7. Let things grow a little wild: Folk often go for paved patios, fake grass and over-manicured lawns, but sometimes just letting the grass grow is exactly what wildlife needs. But you don't need to let it overwhelm you.

Create a variety of habitats in your garden by leaving some parts of your lawn unmown. Longer grass is a good spot for insects to lay their eggs. You could try having longer grass with mown paths or a clear area for picnics.

Longer grass provides shelter, creating a microclimate under the stalks. Not mowing also allows flowers to bloom, which helps bees. But having some mown areas is helpful for animals that feed on animals like worms, such as blackbirds and robins.

Praying for Peace

On Sunday 7th September Gillian and I attended the NE Ipswich Churches United Service which was hosted by the Salvation Army at the Citadel in Woodbridge Road. The reading was the account of Jesus being freed from prison and arriving at the house where the Christians were gathered to pray. They were praying hard and in earnest but were greatly surprised, shocked even, when their prayer was answered and Peter arrived at the door!



We were reminded and encouraged to persist in prayer and to be specific in prayer as well as expecting God to answer even if not in the way we expected. Reflected further on this I was, not surprisingly, drawn to the many wars and conflicts which continue to rage around the world. It is hard to persevere in prayer when our requests go seemingly unanswered but we must not forget those who are suffering in the midst of all this turmoil.



24-7 PRAYER Today I discovered a useful prayer guide from 24-7 Prayer entitled “**Pray for Peace and an End to War**”. It provides some useful pointers of how to pray, and things to do to enable us to continue to pray through the days and weeks ahead.

Prayer for Peace and an End to War

This prayer guide has been created to help you pray for an end to war and peaceful solutions to violent conflict. It can be used to help intercede in a more sustained and focused way, as an individual or in a group.

Along with ways to pray now, we’ve also given you a few ideas for how to continue to pray in your daily life.

Get informed

Gather the basics of the story from a few trustworthy sources. When it comes to big conflicts, there are often many different points of view on the situation. This means that when you’re gathering information, you may want to look at a few different news sources.

It’s helpful to determine the main points. You might like to ask yourself these questions: What’s happening? Where? Who is affected? Who are the key leaders and who will be responding? What are the needs right now?

When you have the main facts, sit with the Holy Spirit for a moment and invite Him to share His heart for the situation with you.

Pause

Be still and welcome God’s presence. You might like to sit somewhere comfortable and take a few deep breaths, or pray a simple, short prayer such as ‘God, I welcome your presence’ or ‘Come, Holy Spirit.’

Pray through Psalm 46. Read the whole Psalm out loud once or twice, before using it to form the basis of your prayers.

Pray for People

God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.
Psalms 46:1

Pray for the people who are being affected by this conflict:

- For those who have their lost families, friends and loved ones.
- For those who have been displaced from their homes.
- For those who are cut off from key resources like food, water, and medical care.
- For those who are in danger.

Keep praying

The [Inner Room app](#) is a prayer list app that turns your mobile phone into a prayer room. Use it to create a prayer board on this topic, and set regular reminders to pray throughout your week.

Pray about the Problems

Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.
Psalms 46:6

When people turn to violence, it's often because they feel that there is no other solution to their problems. As you look at this situation, what are the problems that only God can fix? Ask God to intervene – changing the circumstances that led to war breaking out and solving the problems that people are facing in the midst of the conflict. These are big prayers to pray, but we believe in God who has changed the course of history before, and who invites us to pray with confidence.

You might like to pray:

- Where there is a history of pain, we ask for You to bring forgiveness.
- Where there is injustice, we ask for You to bring fairness and a just solution.
- Where there are differences, we ask for You to bring reconciliation.
- Where there is not enough (land, resources, opportunity), we ask for You to provide.

These are broad categories to help prompt your prayer – you may want to be very specific about the problems that have led to the specific conflict you are praying for.

Keep praying

Obtain or print out a map of the area affected by war and write your prayers for God's intervention on the map. Put it somewhere you'll see it regularly – on your fridge or in your Bible, perhaps – as a reminder to keep praying for these circumstances to change.

Pray for those in Power

He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire. **Psalms 46:9**

Who are the decision makers that can impact the story to bring peace? Pray for mercy, compassion and wisdom as they deal with the situation, and pray that they would be governed by love and the desire for peace instead of hatred and fear.

- For politicians, both for the leaders in the nations that are directly affected by the

conflict and for the leaders of nations who can affect the outcome.

- For peacemakers working to bring resolution between forces.
- For the powerful businesses and stakeholders who have the ability to change the course of the conflict.
- For the media, both the journalists risking their lives to report on the situation and the media companies that are choosing what wars and conflicts to cover.

Keep Praying

Write a leader's name on a post-it note and put it somewhere you'll see it in your daily routine as a reminder to keep praying for them to lead people to peace.

Pray for the Principalities

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. **Ephesians 6:12**

There are spiritual realities involved in human conflicts. Jesus has ultimate authority over every 'spiritual force of evil' in our world. You may want to spend some time praying against the darkness that is enflaming fear, hatred, and violence in people's hearts. Begin to praise God for who He is and ask for the Prince of Peace to bring miraculous transformation to minds and hearts, resolving the conflict.

Keep praying

Choose a worship song (or hymn) that sings of Jesus's victory over darkness and evil.

Listen to it throughout your week – you might want to add it to a playlist – and when it plays, spend a few moments praying for God to bring peace to the conflict.

Pray for the Church

He says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." **Psalms 46:10**

Pray for the Church – both for the members of God's family who are caught up in conflict, and for the brothers and sisters who are able to help them. Pray for protection, comfort, and courage for the churches in nations touched by war. Pray for pastors, churches and non-government organisations; that they would be equipped with all they need in the situation to bring relief.

Keep praying

Write a church leader's name on a post-it note and put it somewhere you'll see it in your daily routine as a reminder to keep praying for them to lead people to peace.

You can find more information and useful resources by visiting the 24-7 Prayer website (www.24-7prayer.com).

