



Galaxies Evening Service 2 September 2007

Service by Pete Cowley



Welcome:

Tonight we are remembering the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. What lessons can we still learn from this?



60 years on and still in the shadow of atomic weapons

Gathering together

Leader We gather here in peace to remember the terrible events of the nuclear bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Our peace light is lit in remembrance. Our bowl of water symbolises the peoples of the world and the water's properties of cooling the heat of burns, both physical, mental and spiritual, as well as cleaning our hearts of fear and anger.

People: **God, love and light of the world, help us to hear each other, to understand each other, to help each other, to care for other, and to love each other**



Reflection on peace

In this moment, we pause to remember ...
We remember that we are a people of hope,
Created by God who is love
For God who is love.

God does not create us for enmity and hatred.
God does not create us for alienation and injustice.
God does not create us for violence and war.
God creates us for peace and justice.
God creates us for wholeness and community.
God creates us for full and abundant life.
Loving and serving God.
Loving and serving one another.

God gives Jesus.

Jesus lives.

Jesus is put to death.

Jesus is raised.

Through Jesus, God reveals that while evil and sin and suffering are extremely strong, they will not have the final word.

Through Jesus, God reveals that there is another way to live - the way of faith, the way of peace, the way of love.

Every time the bread and wine are shared ...

Every time a cup of cold water is poured ...

Every time wounds are bound up ...

Every time walls are torn down ...

Every time the hungry are fed ...

Every time differences are transcended ...

Every time truth speaks to power ...

Every time we practice nonviolence ...

Every time justice prevails ...

Every time love is shared ...

Every time ... hope abounds.

Hope for you.

Hope for me.

Hope for all people.

Hope for all creation.

Hope that we will study war no more ...

That we will lay down our arms and come together ...

That we will pound swords into plowshares.

Hope that God's will, will be done.



"I will write peace on your wings and you will fly around the world." --Sadako Sasaki, 12-year old victim of the atom bomb

Affirmation of faith (said all together)

We believe

in God the creator who gives birth to all that is .. with labour and sighing and looks to the world with joy and love.

We believe

in Christ the reconciler, who is earthed in our life and enfleshed in its patterns of dying and rising, who gives honour to our reality and grace to our way.

We believe

in God the free Spirit, who weeps with our grieving in the depths of our darkness and dances among us high on life's mountains - the Spirit who finds us with newness and hope.

We believe

in the community of faith, which is born of our humanness, is nurtured in sharing and grows whole in our struggling and celebration as one people of God.

Notices

If you have any notices to bring to our attention please share them now.

Contemporary reflections

Please stand and move around the room looking at the pictures as the contemporary reflection is read. If you would like to light a peace candle on the table, you are invited to do so.

Mitsuyoshi Toge: 'How Could I Ever Forget That Flash'

Mitsuyoshi Toge, born in Hiroshima in 1917, was a Catholic and a poet. He was in Hiroshima when the atomic bomb was dropped on the city on August 6, 1945, when he was 24 years old.

Toge died at the age of thirty-six. His first hand experience of the bomb, his passion for peace, and his realistic insight into the event made him a leading poet in Hiroshima. This poem is from Hiroshima-Nagasaki: A Pictorial Record of the Atomic Destruction (1978).

How could I ever forget that flash of light!
In a moment, thirty thousand people ceased to be,
The cries of fifty thousand killed
At the bottom of crushing darkness;
Through yellow smoke whirling into light,
Buildings split, bridges collapsed,
Crowded trams burnt as they rolled about
Hiroshima, all full of boundless heaps of embers.
Soon after, skin dangling like rags;
With hands on breasts;
Treading upon the broken brains;
Wearing shreds of burn cloth round their loins;
There came numberless lines of the naked,
all crying.



Bodies on the parade ground, scattered like
jumbled stone images of *Jizo*;
Crowds in piles by the river banks,
loaded upon rafts fastened to the
shore,
Turned by and by into corpses
under the scorching sun;
in the midst of flame
tossing against the evening sky,
Round about the street where mother and
brother were trapped alive under the
fallen house.
The fire-flood shifted on.



On beds of filth along the Armory floor,
Heaps, and God knew who they were ...
Heaps of schoolgirls lying in refuse
Pot-bellied, one-eyed, with half their skin
peeled off, bald.
The sun shone, and nothing moved
But the buzzing flies in the metal basins
Reeking with stagnant ordure.
How can I forget that stillness
Prevailing over the city of three hundred thousands?
Amidst that calm,
How can I forget the entreaties
Of departed wife and child through their orbs of eyes,
Cutting through our minds and souls?

Thoughts, reflections, Discussion.



Prayer

A time for remembrance and challenge. At 8:15 in the morning of August 6, 1945 an atomic bomb was dropped from a USA B-29 bomber on Hiroshima, Japan. More than seventy thousand people died instantly or within hours. Few were soldiers.

Leader: Let us join in prayer of remembrance for Hiroshima, to recall the past, to be challenged in the present and to seek hope for the future.

People: O God of power, gracious in love, you have given humankind responsibility to care for all the earth. But we have put our faith in military power, while you call us to build a community of trust and love.

Leader: By our actions and by our inaction, and by our participation in the systems of society we often become agents of violence and destruction.

People: O God of us all, let Hiroshima become for us a symbol of hope that nuclear weapons will never again be used to kill and destroy.

Leader: Let us remember Hiroshima as a beacon to commit ourselves to find ways to live together in peace, that we may not be just peace lovers, but peacemakers.

People: O God of infinite possibility, transform our hearts and minds and give us courage to use our skills and technology to transform weapons that destroy into all that upholds life.

Leader: Isaiah said: "It shall come to pass that the peoples shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.

All: We pray for the time when "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

Departure

As we depart from this place
of light,

love,

and peace

may we be a light to others

may we treat all we meet with loving-kindness

may we warm others hearts with our care and commitment

to compassion, truth, justice and peace

in all our dealings.

