

12th Annual Commonwealth Interfaith Service:  
Prayers for Justice and Peace  
Loving Your Neighbor as Yourself in a Time of Pandemic



May 7, 2020, 6:00 pm

Gathering Music

*Allegro con Fuoco*

Welcome to this Virtual Service

*The Rev. Sandra L. Strauss*

Message from Public Officials

*Secretary Rachel Levine*

*The Honorable George P. Hartwick, III*

Opening the Altar

*Oshō Geoffrey Dunaway*

Chalice Lighting

*The Rev. Joan M. Sabatino*

Introduction

*The Most Rev. Michael J. Scalzi & The Rev. Yvette Davis*

Call to Prayer

*Rabbi Carl S. Choper*

*Opening to Jewish afternoon service, based on Psalm 145<sup>1</sup>*

*The Rev. Canon Kate Harrigan, Christian call to worship*

*Mr. Masroor Ahmad, Islamic call to prayer<sup>2</sup>*

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**One:** We come, unified in love, to lift our communal prayers for justice and peace. Our faith traditions call for us to live together in peace and love even when we must practice social distancing or offer greetings with masked faces that hide a smile.

**Many:** We come together through technology seeking justice for all who are impacted; directly and indirectly by injustice. We are mindful of the injustice in healthcare, the injustice in employment and the injustice through discrimination. We are mindful of our leaders who need our prayers to make wise decisions and to do their work exercising justice for all.

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Narrative

*The Most Rev. Michael J. Scalzi*

Prayer

*Dr. Madhu Parikh*

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**One:** We lament the inequality of available resources.

**Many:** May we work to ensure the healthcare needs of all people. May we have the wisdom to see that all who need a mask will receive a mask, that all who need a test will receive a test, and that all who need medical treatment will receive treatment.

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Narrative

*The Rev. Yvette Davis*

Music

*Devotional Music-Violin*

*Mr. Vasan Srimat*

Prayer

*Ms. Aaysha Noor*

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**One:** We lament the impact of this disease upon our economy.

**Many:** We are mindful of those who are without work; of those who have lost their jobs due to the closure of businesses and stay at home orders. We are mindful of those who have had to close their business and the financial difficulties this has caused both owners and employees. May all who are hungry receive nourishment of mind, body, and soul. May the roofs over our head keep out the rain and cold and may those without a roof have shelter.

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Narrative

*The Most Rev. Michael J. Scalzi*

Prayer—the Quaker Way

*Ms. Ruth Seitz*

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**One:** We lament the discrimination and abuse that is appearing due to the stress of the COVID-19 disease.

**Many:** May we work to eliminate discrimination of Asians who are being wrongfully blamed for a virus. May we be present and mindful and pray for those who are not handling the impact of this disease well, leading to the abuse of another. We pray for the protection of our children and those who are abused in any manner.

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**Narrative** *The Rev. Yvette Davis*

**Music** *Alter Rebbes Nign* *Ms. Susan Leviton*

**Prayer** *Mr. Mark Dunmire*

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**One:** We lament those who have gotten sick and those who have died of COVID-19 complications.

**Many:** We pray for their families and friends. We grieve with them as they experience the trauma of being unable to touch or be present with their loved ones as they die. We pray for comfort and healing for all who mourn due to lack of closure without funerals or memorial services.

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**Prayer** *Imam Fatih Akdemir*

**Prayer** *Father Orlando Reyes*

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**One:** We come together in our hope for justice and peace in this time of chaos. We are mindful of those who have gone beyond the call of duty.

**Many:** We are thankful for the medical professions and staff: doctors, nurses, technicians, custodians, housekeeping staff, and administrators who are on the front-line ministering to patients and families. May we be mindful of their endless efforts and the risks they take to help those who are sick. We pray also for grocery store workers, delivery workers, mail carriers, and all who risk exposure to provide for our daily support and sustenance. Let us pray for our world.

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**Music** *Hallelujah* *Mr. James Hoffmann / Ms. Jill Hoffman*  
*Written by Leonard Cohen*

**Closing Narrative** *The Most Rev. Michael J. Scalzi & The Rev. Yvette Davis*

**Benediction** *The Rev. Sandra L. Strauss*

**Music** *God Be With You Till We Meet Again* *Ms. Becky Boone*

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**Because we are not meeting in person, we urge you to consider making a gift to aid in response to COVID-19 relief. Here are a few suggestions:**

Christian Churches United COVID-19 Response Fund:  
([https://www.ccuahbg.org/how-to-help/donate/covid\\_19-response-fund.html](https://www.ccuahbg.org/how-to-help/donate/covid_19-response-fund.html))

Downtown Daily Bread: <https://pinestreet.org/ministries/downtown-daily-bread/>  
(provides free lunches and other services for homeless persons)

Ecumenical Food Pantry: <https://ecumenicalfoodpantry.wordpress.com/donations/>

Food Not Bombs: Send check to MCC of the Spirit, 2973 Jefferson St., Harrisburg 17110, with  
“Food Not Bombs” in memo line

Gather the Spirit for Justice: <https://gatherthespirit.webs.com/donate-wish-list>

Latino Hispanic American Community Center: <http://lhacc.org/> (click on “Donate”)

Market Square Presbyterian Church: <https://www.marketsquarechurch.org/>  
(go to Online Giving page and donate to “Deacons Fund”)

St. Francis of Assisi Roman Catholic Church: <https://stfrancishbgpa.wordpress.com/online-giving/>  
(provides free lunches)

**There are many other local organizations that could use your help—please consider one of these or another organization of your choice.**

<sup>1</sup>Happy are they that dwell in Your house: they will praise You forever. Happy is the people for whom this is so; happy is the people for whom the Eternal is God. A Psalm of Praise: of David. (*Psalms 145*)  
I will praise You, my God, and Sovereign; I will bless Your name forever.

Every day will I bless You; I will praise Your name for ever and ever.  
Great is the Eternal, and much to be praised: Whose greatness is beyond comprehension.  
Each generation shall laud Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts.  
On the majestic glory of Your splendor, and on Your marvelous deeds, will I meditate.  
All shall speak of the might of Your awe-inspiring acts; I shall recount Your greatness.  
They shall attempt to describe Your great goodness, and shall sing of Your righteousness.  
The Eternal is gracious and merciful; slow to anger and of great lovingkindness.

#### <sup>2</sup>Adhan/Islamic Call to Prayer:

<i>Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar (2x)</i>	Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest (2x)
<i>Ash-hadu allaa ilaaha ill-Allah (2x)</i>	I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah (God) (2x)
<i>Ash-hadu anna Muhammad-arr-rasool-ullah (2x)</i>	I bear witness that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah (2x)
<i>Hayy al-as-Salaah (2x)</i>	Come to Prayer (2x)
<i>Hayy al-al-Falaah (2x)</i>	Come to Prosperity (2x)
<i>Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar</i>	Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest
<i>Laa ilaah illa-Llah</i>	There is none worthy of worship except Allah
The following phrases are added in the call to prayer for the pre-dawn (Fajr) Prayer after "Hayy al-al Falaah"	
<i>As-salaa khairum-minan-nawm (2x)</i>	Prayer is better than sleep (2x)

### Participants in the Service

**Mr. Masroor Ahmad**, Ahmadiyya Muslim Community Harrisburg  
**Imam Fatih Akdemir**, Assistant Religious Services Administrator, Pennsylvania Department of Corrections  
**The Rev. Anthony C. Alexander**, member St. Stephen's Episcopal Cathedral, President Christian Churches United Board  
**Mr. David Arnold**, Market Square Presbyterian Church  
**Ms. Rebecca Boone**, Penbrook United Church of Christ, Harrisburg  
**Mr. Tyler A. Canonico**, Minister of Music and Organist, Market Square Presbyterian Church, Harrisburg  
**Rabbi Carl S. Choper**, President, The Interfaith Alliance-Pennsylvania  
**The Rev. Yvette B. Davis**, Director of Formation, POWER Interfaith  
**Oshō Geoffrey Dunaway**, Blue Mountain Lotus Society  
**Mr. Mark Dunmire**, Spiritual Assembly of Bahá'í's, Harrisburg  
**The Rev. Canon Kate Harrigan**, Rector, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Harrisburg  
**The Honorable George P. Hartwick, III**, Dauphin County Commissioner  
**The Rev. Dr. Lori Hatch-Rivera**, Pastor, Metropolitan Community Church of the Spirit, Harrisburg  
**Mr. James Hoffmann**, Market Square Presbyterian Church, Harrisburg  
**Ms. Jill Hoffmann**, Market Square Presbyterian Church, Harrisburg  
**Secretary Rachel Levine**, Pennsylvania Department of Health  
**Ms. Susan Leviton**, Susan Leviton Arts  
**Mr. Jordan R. Markham**, Director of Music Ministry, Wesley United Methodist Church, Bloomsburg  
**Ms. Aaysha Noor**, Muslim Community of Central Pennsylvania  
**Dr. Madhu Parikh**, Hindu American Religious Institute  
**Father Orlando Reyes**, Roman Catholic Diocese of Harrisburg  
**Ms. Jennifer Ross**, President and CEO, Jewish Federation of Greater Harrisburg  
**The Rev. Joan M. Sabatino**, Director of Legislative Affairs, Unitarian Universalist Pennsylvania Legislative Advocacy Network  
**The Most Rev. Michael J. Scalzi**, Bishop/Pastor, The Old Catholic Church  
**Ms. Emily Schmid**, Episcopal Service Corps Fellow, Sycamore House (serving at Pennsylvania Council of Churches)  
**Ms. Ruth Seitz**, Harrisburg Monthly Meeting, Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)  
**Mr. Vasan Srimat**, Hindu American Religious Institute  
**The Rev. Sandra L. Strauss**, Director of Advocacy and Ecumenical Outreach, Pennsylvania Council of Churches  
**Ms. Carol Zandieh**, Spiritual Assembly of Bahá'í's, Harrisburg

### Information About Future Services

This service is being held virtually in order to protect the health and safety of participants and observers alike, and to follow Pennsylvania's directive concerning gatherings during this COVID-19 crisis. An in-person service may be scheduled for later in 2020 if it becomes safe to meet.

The tentative date for the 2021 service is May 3, 2021. If you are interested in being a sponsor of the 2021 service, or if you would like to learn more, please contact [s.strauss@pachurches.org](mailto:s.strauss@pachurches.org) or call (717) 545-4761.

## The Purpose of this Service

We come from many places and are of different colors, genders, dress, political views, and faiths—but today we gather here because we share a common bond of humanity and the hope and passion for justice and peace. Our prayers are for peace and justice wherever they are needed—in homes, communities, the workplace, the nation and the world, as well for inner peace that dwells in our hearts. We give thanks that you have joined us to raise your own prayers, hopes and actions to create a more peaceful and just world for all.



## What is Prayer?

Prayer means many things to many people. We offer a simple broad statement that may be helpful as you think about prayer:

*Prayer requires no consecrated edifice and no appointed hour. Indeed it needs no words or forms fixed and eternal. Prayer is a step on which we rise from the self we are to the self we wish to be. Prayer is not an escape from duty. It is no substitute for the deed. Prayer seeks the power to do wisely, to act generously, to live helpfully. Prayer takes us beyond the self. Joining our little self to the selfhood of humanity, it gives our wishes the freedom to grow large and broad and inclusive. Our prayers are answered not when we are given what we ask, but when we are challenged to be what we can be. (Rabbi Morris Adler, adapted)*

## What is Peace?

The definition of peace is as elusive as that of prayer. Here is one concept:

*Peace is more than the absence of war. **PeaceWomen Across the Globe** has concluded that peace is best understood in terms of “human security,” which encompasses much more than state security. It is the combination of: Economic security (having an assured basic income); Food security (physical and economic access to food); Health security (access to basic healthcare); Environmental security (access to clean water, clean air, ecological integrity); Personal security (freedom from physical violence and threats, right to human dignity and freedom of person); Community security (cultural integrity); and Political security (protection of civil rights and freedoms and responsibilities). (<http://www.1000peacewomen.org/typo/index.php?id=155&L=1>)*

## Pennsylvania’s Heritage



*We meet on the broad pathway of good faith and good will; no advantage shall be taken on either side, but all shall be openness and love. I will not call you children, —for parents sometimes chide their children too severely; nor brothers only, —for brothers differ. The friendship between me and you I will not compare to a chain; for that the rains might rust, or the falling tree might break. We are the same as if one man's body were to be divided into two parts, we are all one flesh and blood.*

*--William Penn*

The sentiment expressed by these words embodies what writer Jim Powell described in an article reprinted on *quaker.org*: “During the late seventeenth century, when Protestants persecuted Catholics, Catholics persecuted Protestants, and both persecuted Quakers and Jews, (William) Penn established an American sanctuary which protected freedom of conscience.” Pennsylvanians have a long and proud history of goodwill toward the prayers and religious practices of individuals of many faiths. We are fortunate to continue this tradition here in the twenty-first century. The representatives of the faith traditions offering prayers here today represent but a fraction of the hundreds of faiths followed by Pennsylvanians from across the Commonwealth.

## Special Thanks and Recognition

### **Commonwealth Interfaith Service Planning Committee:**

Ms. Mahmooda Bhatti, Rabbi Carl S. Choper, Oshō Geoffrey Dunaway, Rev. Lori E. Hatch-Rivera, Ms. Aaysha Noor, Mr. Michael Sand, The Most Rev. Michael J. Scalzi, Rev. Sandra L. Strauss, Mr. Behzad Zandieh