

WCC encourages churches to pray on Hiroshima Day

People praying on August 6, 2015, at a memorial in Hiroshima, Japan. © Paul Jeffrey

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As an ecumenical delegation to Japan participates in Hiroshima Day observances on the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombing, the World Council of Churches (WCC) has published a liturgical resource and invites churches around the world to join in prayer.



The liturgy of “Prayers for Peace and Justice on Hiroshima Day” is available on the WCC website. In the service, the congregation offers this prayer to God: “As we gather here, we are conscious of our brokenness. We have heard the cries for justice and peace from all the corners of the earth.... Grant us grace that we may walk in the paths of righteousness.”

“As we stand in awe of the nuclear destruction wrought by the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the suffering endured by the victims,” said WCC general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, “we resolve to continue to press mightily for the outlawing and elimination of these weapons. The members of our delegation represent the whole fellowship of churches in the WCC, working and praying for a world without nuclear weapons.”

Tveit continued, “These pilgrims to Japan are specifically charged with bringing back and conveying to their governments the profound and urgent imperative

to keep their stated commitments against the use and stockpiling of nuclear weapons. The threat hangs over not just the East Asian region but all humankind and creation. That is why we ask Christians everywhere to join in prayer this Sunday, to lament our tragic nuclear past and to protect our precious future from nuclear disaster.

“We all need a nuclear free world. There is no just cause whatsoever that can legitimize use of nuclear weapons. Therefore, let us work hard to ban nuclear weapons! Let us pray!”

The anniversary and the delegation’s visit come at a time of increased tensions in the North Asia region and political controversy within Japan over how best to respond. Last December, the WCC general secretary visited Japan and expressed grave concern at the Japanese government’s initiative to reinterpret or change Article 9 of the Japanese constitution, which forbids war as a means of resolving disputes and which Tveit labelled “a central pillar for peace”. The lower house of the Japanese parliament has recently passed that initiative.

[Prayer suggested for churches for Hiroshima Day](#)
[More about the ecumenical delegation to Hiroshima and Nagasaki](#)
[Video: WCC pilgrims remember atom bomb's deadly destruction 70 years ago in Hiroshima](#)
[Prayers from the Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice](#)

The World Council of Churches promotes Christian unity in faith, witness and service for a just and peaceful world. An ecumenical fellowship of churches founded in 1948, today the WCC brings together 345 Protestant, Orthodox, Anglican and other churches representing more than 550 million Christians in over 120 countries, and works cooperatively with the Roman Catholic Church. The WCC general secretary is the Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, from the [Lutheran] Church of Norway.

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