

IAPD: Religious Leaders Join Global Interfaith Prayer for World Peace

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Global IAPD – The 2nd Global Interfaith Prayer for the Nation and the World, "Prayer and World Peace," sponsored by the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD), was held on July 30, 2026. Participating in the virtual program were 52 people on Zoom from different parts of the world.

Three faith leaders – from Japan, the United States and the United Kingdom – shared their thoughts about the power of prayer and world peace. **Patriarch George A. Stallings, Jr.**, founder of the Imani Temple of African American Catholic Congregation and a board member of the World Clergy Leadership Conference (WCLC), moderated the program.

"We have to pray, and we have to pray incessantly," Patriarch Stallings told the group. "And I appreciate being reminded of that. If we really want peace, it has to be rooted in prayer. To make the change, it must begin in the heart, for that is where we share communion."

Ven. Ajari Wako Higashi is a Tendai Buddhist monk and master, qualified to teach and guide others. He received Buddhist ordination and Dharma transmission at Enryakuji Temple on Mount Hiei in Japan. On the sixth day of every month, he conducts a one-hour memorial service and prayers for world peace at the Atomic Bomb Memorial Mound in Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park.

He quoted from a sutra from around the year 700, referred to as the Nine-Leaf Gate: "I will begin peace with myself. Just as incense and flowers are offered to the Buddha, so too will our words and actions be cleansed. And then, we shall expand that prayer beyond our own borders and communities, reaching out to individuals from every nation, culture, faith, and perspective across the globe. May we each be a

shining light, dispelling darkness and conflict, and inspire actions that reduce the suffering of others."

Archbishop Sulanch Lewis is the founder of Little Rock Zion International Deliverance Ministries. She stated that lasting peace begins with God, and that one of humanity's most precious blessings is the ability to pray. "Prayer isn't just about uttering words, it's also about widening one's heart towards God. It impacts us. It aligns us and equips us to become instruments of peace."



Sheikh Dr. Abdul Wahid Pirzada is director of the Al-Shaafi Pirzada Foundation in the United Kingdom. He served as a powerful peace negotiator during the Bosnia war. Dr. Pirzada spoke of common ground between all people of faith, and the mission to create a harmonious and peaceful community, breaking through all divisions. In the Quran, he said, there are over 6,666 verses or quotations about peace.

"We have to become peace-loving individuals who can foster peace both within communities and globally." He also expressed appreciation for UPF's efforts in inviting leaders from different fields and walks of life to contribute to global peace. He said he had experienced genuine love through a UPF conference he attended in Korea, which became a significant part of his journey.

Dr. Michael Jenkins, chairman of UPF-North America, was the final speaker. "Peace will come as a result of the wisdom, love and holiness possessed by faith leaders," he said. He referred to his frequent visits to the Middle East, saying that peace in that region necessitates the cultivation of faith, along with acts of love, compassion, kindness, and service toward others. In Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon, northern Israel, and any other place he went, he said, "We always discovered that faith and love for everyone and for all beliefs made all the difference. God always provides a path, and you find the people."

To conclude, he offered a moment of silent prayer for all suffering from wars, conflicts, illness, and wounded hearts.