



“Peace cannot be achieved through violence, it can only be attained through understanding.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Next Meeting at Barrow Castle

Christmas Service

Sunday 17 December, 10.45 Coffee, 11.15 Worship

Led by Peter

Please let Peter know in advance your favourite carol or song

Please bring gifts to the “Manger” for the local Food Bank

Reflection

At Christmas in 1914, at a number of points along the Western Front of World War I, the fighting stopped. Soldiers met in No Man's Land to talk and share a nip of something festive and above all to collect and bury their dead. It was hardly Turkey & Tinsel, but these brief and spontaneous cease-fires have become part of the mythology of the Great War.

It is unlikely that the fighting will stop in Gaza for the purpose of observing Christmas Day. With Israelis fighting Islamists, they are not going to be influenced by the Christian Feast of the Nativity or, for that matter, the Festival of Diwali or any of the other religious markers of the calendar.

And yet . . . The message of Christmas is needed now as much as it ever has been. The promise of peace on earth, and goodwill to all, is a potent message from a loving God. It means much more than a pause in a war. It means respect for each other and a desire to do no harm, and implies the Golden Rule that is woven through all religions. Dare we hope? At least at Christmas, let's do just that.

Kay

Gaza Israel Interfaith Peace Appeal

An urgent humanitarian interfaith response to the suffering in Gaza and Israel

We express our solidarity with the urgent pleas for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, a lasting peace and common security in Israel-Palestine by the United Nations General Assembly, UN, Red Cross/Red Crescent and other international aid agencies, the Secretary General of the UN, Pope Francis, Religions for Peace, Quaker, Jewish, Muslim, Roman Catholic, Unitarian and other religious peacemakers as well as people of goodwill around the world who wish to see an immediate end of the death and destruction caused by this war and achieve a just peace and true reconciliation between the people of Palestine and Israel.

We encourage all who are concerned by the grave crisis in Gaza and Israel and the suffering of all victims of war and violence, civilian and military, in Gaza and Israel to respond generously to the lifesaving British Red Cross Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territory Appeal to enable the sending of urgent medical and other humanitarian aid to victims of this dangerously escalating war endangering ever increasing numbers of Palestinian and Israeli lives.

If you wish to respond to this emergency appeal please donate by phone on 0300 456 1155, online by visiting [redcross.org.uk](https://www.redcross.org.uk) or by post to: Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territory Appeal, British Red Cross, 44 Moorfields, London EC2Y 9AL. Thank you.

Poem of the Month

Christmas Mail by Ted Kooser

Cards in each mailbox,
angel, manger, star and lamb,
as the rural carrier,
driving the snowy roads,
hears from her bundles
the plaintive bleating of sheep,
the shuffle of sandals,
the clopping of camels.
At stop after stop,
she opens the little tin door
and places deep in the shadows
the shepherds and wise men,
the donkeys lank and weary,
the cow who chews and muses.
And from her Styrofoam cup,
white as a star and perched
on the dashboard, leading her
ever into the distance,
there is a hint of hazelnut,
and then a touch of myrrh.

*Ted Kooser (b. 1939) is one of America's most highly regarded poets, winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 2005 for his eleventh collection, *Delights and Shadows*, and US Poet Laureate from 2004-06.*



Hilfield Retreat L to R: Evie, Rhosi, Rod, 2 new friends, Rev John, Leader Gavin, Joshua

Words to Ponder

For so the children come, and so they have been coming.
Always the same way they come, born of the seed of a man and a woman.
No Angels herald their beginnings. No prophets predict their future courses.
No Wise Men see a star to show where to find the Babe that will save humankind.
Yet each night a child is born is a holy night.
Sitting beside our children's cribs, we feel glory in the sight of new life beginning.
We ask: "Where and how will this new life end? Or will it ever end?"
Each night a child is born is a holy night.
A time for singing, a time for wondering, a time for worshipping.

Sophia Lyon Fahs, Unitarian Universalist

And Finally . . .

Happy Christmas Everyone!



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