

## 2020 01 19 Prayer for Peace, Hope and Justice

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At this time of year we stop to consider the meaning of covenant. I looked up possible synonyms for the word and nothing seemed adequate or equal in matching its deep truth. The word stands alone and as such requires us to pay heed to it. We do so now in the context of the peace and justice candle...

Let us pray...

Jesus, we come to you with a deep gratitude in our hearts this morning for your covenant, not only to us as individuals, but to the imagining, to the on-going creating, to the ever grace-filled invitation to join you in bringing about a world where peace and justice characterize its existence. In covenanting, we recognise that, from your side, you have made a promise that you have locked deep inside you and then thrown away the key. It declares loudly the nature of your being – a being that is committed to ensuring that every person, every part of creation, holds equal value. We acknowledge that, until we align ourselves to this deep truth, we have not fully understood you.

We confess that we are scared of the word “covenant”. It seems to demand too much from us and, as a result, on our side, we hold back from entering into covenant with you, holding onto the key in our wavering commitment to working towards justice and peace in this world. We are often scared to even begin because we fear we may fail. But we get it wrong when we think that success is about achieving it. We know only too well from the recent happenings in our sanctuary that we are not capable of making it happen in the way we would like. So what does it mean? Covenant seems to demand something deeper, something that is equal to tectonic plates deep in the earth’s core, shifting and clicking into new places. Covenant is like that. It puts us in a new place whereby we come to believe, so deeply, that our very breath depends on it, that justice and peace are essential to our very existence, to the existence of our children and their children and we dare not let go of that truth. We owe it, in the very least, to the children we send to school for an education that claims to equip them for life but seems to produce a people that perpetuate injustice and violence.

So we ask you to forgive our unbelief, our not daring to imagine, our not believing enough to hope that there is another way of being. Please will you envision us to live creatively, always to be looking for ways to live out the truth that your ways are indeed higher than ours. Forgive our arrogance in thinking we know better. Please give us an understanding of covenanting that causes us to work together, for we cannot change the world alone nor were we ever designed to do so. May we come to genuinely believe that every single thing we think and do ultimately determines whether we truly believe in the oneness of all... all people and all of creation.

And in so believing...may we enter into covenant with you...

As we pray the prayer for Africa, let us do so knowing we are Africa, we are its leaders... and its children.