

At the lighting of the Candle of Peace, Hope, and Justice  
22 August, 2021  
A PRAYER FOR AFGHANISTAN

God, we wonder sometimes how the flame of this candle burns at all, and why the cruel barbed wire so often seems victorious. In the midst of a land dealing with dreadful loss and as part of a church family with so many touched by bereavement, we need your mercy.

But even as our own need cries out, you invite us to bear on our hearts also the needs of others...

So, we pray this day for the people of Afghanistan, treated for centuries as pawns in the chess-games of powerful nations, and held ransom to the cruel ebb and flow of endless war.

We pray for *all* of them: those locked into a harsh and patriarchal culture, and others - a whole generation - who for a brief two decades have breathed the different air of liberty and are now being abandoned to their fate.

In this time of betrayal and loss, as those who claimed to be the guardians of their freedom abandon them behind barriers of barbed wire, we pray for all who made choices for which they may now pay with their lives, and we lay before your compassion especially those Afghan women and children now in terror of having all their gains ripped from them and their humanity once more trampled by primitive forms of subjugation in the name of religion and patriarchy.

Have mercy on them O God; protect them we pray, answer the cries of your Afghan children.

And even as we pray for that place of seeming hopelessness today, forgive us that the ugly oppression we ask you to deliver them from – especially the domination of women and children by cruel men - lives amongst us here in our own cultures of domination and the cruelties practiced by many of our own religion. Open those primitive places in our faith also to transformation.

In Jesus' name we pray,

AMEN.

The prayer for Africa ...

**God bless Africa and all the world**

**Guard our children**

**Guide our Leaders**

**And give us peace. Amen**