

## Opening Prayer for National Child Protection Week 29 May – 4 June 2022

Today our focus of the peace justice and hope candle will be National Child Protection Week. This week I ask that we pray for noise, for responses, for action to counter the harm and violence our children endure daily. In South Africa children are killed and abused and suffer violence daily. In Hanover Park, Facticeon, Nyanga, Kensington, Khayelitsha and Bishop Lavis children regularly have to hide in their classrooms because of gang violence right outside their schools. Sometimes children die on their way to school. In the news headlines this week we learnt about 19 children who were shot and killed in their classrooms in the city of Uvalde, Texas. In Ukraine, children are having to attend school online where possible (if their schools have not been bombed and destroyed) due to the occupation of their country by Russian forces because of the war being waged by Russian President Vladimir Putin. Many Ukrainians have also had to flee to Poland. We also think of the children in Russia whose parents are fighting and dying in Ukraine.

This was a prayer I have written many times and so I did not write this prayer today, but rather join me in praying for protection for children along with others in the Methodist Church as we pray a prayer shared by Steve Lottering of the child protection desk of the Methodist Church.

Before we pray let me make some noise, for one child, for all the children.

*Oh Lord Hear Our Prayer\**

*Oh Lord Hear Our Prayer*

*Come and Listen to us*

*Oh Lord Hear Our Prayer*

*Oh Lord Hear Our Prayer*

*Come and Listen to us*

Let us pray a prayer for children

Loving God, we thank you for the care and affection of Jesus, who placed children in the very centre of his community. We pray for children, created in your own image and likeness, dwelling places of your Spirit, each one called to experience the freedom of your daughters and sons.

We pray for all children – those in our family homes, those in our community of faith, those in the wider community, those in our global village, those with plenty and those who struggle to survive.

We yearn for the day when all children may know safety and freedom and protection from violence and abuse, when they may bask in constant love, safe from any harm, where they may flourish and be all they can be.

God of all goodness, we hope in you. Inspire us to surround others with gentleness and love and empower us to build a world that no longer knows abuse and violence. Grant us courage to speak out and act when children need protection, care and shelter.

We pray in Jesus' name.

Now we will pray the prayer for Africa:  
God Bless Africa and all the world  
guard our children,  
guide our leaders  
and give us peace. Amen.

Rose-Anne Reynolds | CMM 2022 05 29

\*Taize hymn