

3rd September 2025

Peace

“There is no way to peace; peace is the only way.”

A J Muste, as quoted in “The New York Times”, November 1967

I’ll be away on 5th September, but I can’t let that date go by, so please indulge me if I deal with it now. You’ll see why in a moment ...

On 5th September 2022, Liz Truss won the Conservative Party leadership election in the UK, defeating Rishi Sunak, and thus became our Prime Minister. Is it *only* three years ago? Goodness, I’ve lived an entire lifetime since then. But there are other events to be marked on 5th September. On this day in 1972, a Palestinian terrorist group, “Black September”, attacked Israeli athletes and took eleven of them hostage at the Munich Olympic Games. Two died in the attack and nine were murdered the following day. It’s what become known as “The Munich Massacre”. And on 5th September 1981, the first women arrived at what was to become the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp in the UK. And for many years, “Greenham Common” was synonymous with peaceful, and constant, protests against the retention of a nuclear arsenal in our country, and a desire for peaceful resolutions to world conflicts.

Politicians come and go, with some, like Liz Truss as Prime Minister for only 50 days, coming and going more quickly than others. But two things don’t change. There are still tensions between nations – and did the Palestinian attacks on Israel on 7th October 2023 do any more to alleviate these tensions than had been achieved by the Munich Massacre? And thank God, there are still people who are committed to peace, and to the end of all conflicts, nuclear or not.

Since Cain killed Abel, as recorded in Genesis, the world has seen conflict: person to person; religion against religion; civil wars; nation at war with nation. Humanity’s failure to live peaceably with itself knows no end. So, once again I say, thank God for Greenham Common, and for all those who offer a different way: the prophetic ones; the peaceful-protest ones; the marching ones; the speak-truth-to-power ones; the campaigning ones; the advocate ones; the loving ones; the reconciling ones.

If “peace is the only way”, then today, or on *any* day, might we need people like the Greenham Common women more than ever before?

A prayer for today

Loving God, in the face of conflict, I pray for those who work for peace – your Peace.

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