

Hiroshima Remembered

Fulwood Old Chapel and Underbank Service

9th August 2020

Opening – **Children of Hiroshima (Green Hymn Book Hymn 225)**

I come and stand at every door,
but none can hear my silent tread:
I knock, and yet remain unseen,
for I am dead, for I am dead.

I'm only seven, although I died
in Hiroshima long ago:
I'm seven now as I was then:
when children die, they do not grow.

My hair was scorched with swirling flame,
my eyes grew dim, my eyes grew blind;
it came and burned my bones to dust,
and that was scattered by the wind.

In need no fruit, I need no rice,
I need no sweets, nor even bread:
I ask for nothing for myself,
for I am dead, for I am dead.

All that I as is that for peace
you fight today, you fight today,
so that the children of this world
may live and grow and laugh and play.

Source unknown [this is not correct ©
Nazim Hikmet, 1902-1963 ET Jeanette Turner
(d. late 1950s)]
© 1966 by Stormking Music Inc.

Good Morning everybody.

Today is a time to look backwards and to the future. We might, for a short time, forget the trials and tribulations of Covid-19 and remember an event that changed the world.

75 years ago, the US air force dropped the first atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima. August 6 1945 was one those few days in history that is etched on the minds of so many people and so today, I light the chalice in memory of those who perished and in the hope that peace will prevail around the world.

The American journalist and author, John Hersey, said 'What has kept the world safe from the bomb since 1945 has not been deterrence, in the sense of fear of specific weapons, so much as it's been memory. The memory of what happened at Hiroshima.'

So, let us take a minute of silence to remember those who perished and those who suffered on that day, 75 years ago

Our opening hymn is 43 in the purple book; Gather the spirit

43 Gather the spirit

Gather the spirit, harvest the power.
Our separate fires will kindle one flame.
Witness the mystery of this hour.
Our trials in this light appear all the same.

*Gather in peace, gather in thanks.
Gather in sympathy now and then.
Gather in hope, compassion and strength.
Gather to celebrate once again.*

Gather the spirit of heart and mind.
Seeds for the sowing are laid in store.
Nurtured in love and conscience refined,
with body and spirit united once more.

*Gather in peace, gather in thanks.
Gather in sympathy now and then.
Gather in hope, compassion and strength.
Gather to celebrate once again.*

Gather the spirit growing in all,
drawn by the moon and fed by the sun.
Winter to spring, and summer to fall,
the chorus of life resounding as one.
*Gather in peace, gather in thanks.
Gather in sympathy now and then.
Gather in hope, compassion and strength.
Gather to celebrate once again.*

Jim Scott, b. 1945 © Words Jim Scott, PO Box 4025, Shrewsbury MA 01545-7025
<jim@jimscotmusic.com>; www.jimscotmusic.com

In our service today, I am going to tell three stories and after that, reflect a little on our future.

The first story, I don't really want to tell. It's painful, it's shameful and most of all it tells of man's inhumanity to man.

There had many been atrocities committed in the run up to the Second World War and many more committed during it. America, trying to keep out of it, though, for most part sympathising with the Allies, was eventually drawn in by a surprise Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, 7th December 1941 – A day that will live in infamy, according to President Roosevelt. The Japanese Naval Commander Admiral Yamamoto is famously quoted as saying ' I fear all we have done is to awaken a sleeping giant and fill him with a terrible resolve' Whether he actually said that is unclear, but he was certainly against provoking America into war.

And so, for 3½ years, the war in Pacific caused untold damage suffering and America plotted its ultimate victory.

75 years ago, last Thursday, 6th August 1945, the US Air force dropped the first atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. Hiroshima was a coastal city of about 350,000 people of whom just under 50,000 were military. Most of the houses were made of wood. There had been an air raid warning just after midnight that lasted a couple of hours and another one 7.30 am that lasted only a few minutes. It was Monday morning;

people were on their way to work. Above them, a B-29 bomber named Enola Gay after the pilot's mother was approaching with two other planes. At 8.15 am the plane had the distinctive T-shaped Atomic bridge in its sights and released the bomb. 43 seconds later the bomb exploded 600meters above a hospital by which time the aircraft was already 11.5miles away.

70-80,000 people were killed instantly by the bomb or from the firestorm that followed, 90% of the buildings in city were either burned or collapsed. Many other people died from radiation related injuries. Nobody knows how many people in total died but by the end of December 1945 it is estimated the 140,000 people had lost their lives. 20,000 of those were Korean slave labourers

So now a time of quietness and prayer and I offer you two prayers today

The first one written by Rev. Nobu Hanaoka,
United Methodist minister

O God, the Creator of this beautiful planet
and all that dwells in it,
we now pause to remember the souls
of those who perished in the atomic bombings
and those who suffer from radiation even now.

We join our hearts and voices together
to pray for peace everywhere.

May the deadly power of nuclear arsenals
never be unleashed again upon your sacred creation.

May such weapons of mass and indiscriminate annihilations
be forever banned and eliminated from the face of the earth.

Forgive our silence, O God,
and enable your Church to raise its prophetic voices
to speak against the madness of nuclear pursuits anywhere.

Renew our commitment to be faithful stewards
of your beautiful creation
and vehicles of peace.

Amen.

This is a Prayer for Hiroshima Day written by The Rev. William G. Sinkford president of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations from 2001 to 2009 and the senior minister of First Unitarian Church of Portland, Oregon.

Like most traumatic scars, the ones that are found in Hiroshima and Nagasaki are permanent: reminders of the terrible damage human beings can inflict.

Similar scars can be found in the hearts and souls of people around the world who understand this terror: scars of grief, sadness, fear and even shame.

None of these scars promise an end to war and devastation. Instead, they serve as a reminder of healing and renewal—of a return to life.

Gracious God, Spirit of Life and Love, help us to see our scars: those we have created, those we are called to witness, and those we can soothe and heal.

We are deeply grateful for the buds and blossoms that even the most scarred offer as a revelation to the world.

And, especially on this 75th* anniversary of Hiroshima Day, we renew our commitment to peace individually, collectively and globally:

To "peace within" which calms our anxieties and fears,

To "peace between" which overcomes differences, animosities and conflict,

And, to "the great peace," beyond even our understanding, that is Your gift and which we attempt to be stewards of for the world. - Amen.

Our next hymn is again from the purple book,

No 42 'From the light of days remembered'

From the light of days remembered burns a beacon bright and clear,
guiding hands and hearts and spirits into faith set free from fear.

*When the fire of commitment sets our mind and soul ablaze;
when our hunger and our passion meet to call us on our way;
when we live with deep assurance of the flame that burns within,
then our promise finds fulfilment and our future can begin.*

From the stories of our living rings a song both brave and free,
calling pilgrims still to witness to the life of liberty. *(Chorus)*

From the dreams of youthful vision comes a new, prophetic voice,
which demands a deeper justice built by our courageous choice. *(Chorus)*

Mary Katherine Morn b. 1961 and Jason Shelton b. 1972

Out of the sadness and the pain and the suffering came stories of hope. This is probably the most famous one

Sadako Sasaki was two years old when the bomb was dropped on her home city on August 6, 1945. Sadako seemed to escape any ill effects after her exposure to the bomb, until, ten years later, she developed leukaemia, the Japanese call it "the atom bomb disease."

In August 1955, she was moved into a hospital room with a girl named Kiyo, a junior high school student who was two years older than her. It was shortly after getting this roommate that cranes were brought to her room from a local high school club. Sadako's father, Shigeo, told her the legend of the cranes. In Japanese, they are called senbazuru

An ancient Japanese legend promises that anyone who folds a thousand origami cranes will be granted a wish by the gods. Some stories believe you are granted happiness and eternal good luck, instead of just one wish, such as long life or recovery from illness or injury. This makes them popular gifts for special friends and family. The crane in Japan is one of the mystical or holy creatures and is said to live for a thousand years: That is why 1000 cranes are made, one for each year. In some stories it is believed that the 1000 cranes must be completed within one year and they must all be made by the person who is to make the wish at the end.

Now there is another version of the story that says it was her best friend, Chizuko Hamamoto who brought her a folded paper crane and told her the story about it.

So, Sadako set herself a goal of folding 1,000 of them; she folded cranes throughout her illness. The flock hung above her bed on strings. Although she had plenty of free time during her days in the hospital, Sadako lacked paper, so she used medicine wrappings and whatever else she could scrounge; including going to other patients' rooms to ask for the paper from their get-well presents. When she died at the age of twelve, Sadako had folded six hundred and forty-four cranes. Classmates folded the remaining three hundred and fifty-six cranes, so that one thousand were buried with Sadako.

That is the popular version of the story and it comes from the novelized version of her life *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*. However, an exhibit which appeared in the Peace Memorial Museum stated that by the end of August 1955, Sadako had achieved her goal and continued to fold 300 more cranes. Sadako's older brother, Masahiro Sasaki, says in his book that she exceeded her goal.¹

3 years after she died, in 1958, with contributions from school children, a statue was erected in Hiroshima Peace Park, dedicated to Sadako and to all children who were killed by the atom bomb.

Each year on August 6, Peace Day, thousands of paper cranes are placed beneath Sadako's statue by people who wish to remember Hiroshima and express their hopes for a peaceful world. Their prayer is engraved on the base of the statue:

"Peace Crane, I will write peace on your wings and you will fly all over the world."
Sadako Sasaki

Now, you may be asking why this story, interesting and sad that it is, is still being told today.

Sadako has become a leading symbol of the effects of nuclear war. Sadako is also a heroine for many girls in Japan. Her story is told in some Japanese schools every year on the anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing.

Closer to home, some of you may recall that Anna Barganski, a member here at Fulwood also folded a thousand cranes. Inspired by the story of Sadako and the display of paper cranes at Manchester Museum she had the aspirational idea of making a senbazuru to raise money. It was a massive commitment when she was only 11, but she followed it through. Anna made her cranes back in 2015 as a fundraising effort for Bluebell Wood (part of a larger charity drive by Verve, the performing arts academy she attended at the time). In the end, the 1000 cranes had triple significance - raising about £1400, containing many thoughts, prayers, messages of hope and memories folded inside the cranes, and ultimately becoming a work of art.

But for me the real point is the inspiration that young people get from the story of Sadako to reach out and help other people.

and now I want you listen to the Song for Sadako by Fred Small.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JI0b3sN0CcY>

Susie and I went to Hiroshima last year. I had a meeting in Tokyo and we decided to extend our trip, to meet friends in Osaka, to go to Kyoto and to take the Shinkansen, the bullet train, to Hiroshima. Where I was in the privileged position of being able to arrange to meet with the Peace Commission. In all honesty, I think Susie was dreading it – it promised to just too much of an emotional experience.

It's a bit difficult explain but Hiroshima, well the centre at least, is the delta of Okagawa River with tributaries cutting through it as it meets the sea which create a number of islands. On one of these islands is the Peace Park which is basically where the bomb exploded.



For those with iron stomachs, there is museum in front of the Peace Park with all the gory details that allow you to share the pain that followed the explosion. I think you could describe it as interesting but not very pleasant.

It was there that we met a survivor, Mr Masao Itou, who was 4 years old when it happened. His family lived on the edge of the city, though his father and elder brother were in the city centre when it happened. They perished immediately and rest of his family died in dribs and drabs in the following months from radiation related illness.



He talked for a long time about the road to recovery and how Hiroshima rebuilt itself over the following decades. He now works for the Peace Commission as an advocate for peace and reconciliation, but the question we really wanted to have an answer to was how he felt now about Westerners and particularly Americans. His simple answer consisted of two words: 'Pearl Harbour'. That was it 'Pearl Harbour'.

He then took us outside and showed us something else. I don't know whether you know but at Ground Zero in New York next to the two giant black holes that now stand where the twin towers once stood is a survivor tree; a tree damaged but not destroyed by the collapse of the buildings and coaxed back to life and now blooming. And so, it is in Hiroshima, in fact not just one tree but a quite number, but the trees which are outside the Peace Museum are *aogiri* (Chinese parasol) trees, originally growing 1.3



kilometres from the hypocenter of the explosion; they took the full force of the heat and blast. Although apparently dead, the next spring they started to bud again, giving hope to the people of the city. In 1973, they were transplanted to their current location in the park by the east building of the Peace Memorial Museum. Today their seeds are

sent around the world so that they may be planted and grown into new trees that remind us of what happened.

And so we walked into the park itself to be confronted first and foremost by a cenotaph. The cenotaph consists of a stone chest beneath an arch representing the roof, inspired by the *haniwa* pottery used to decorate prehistoric tombs.

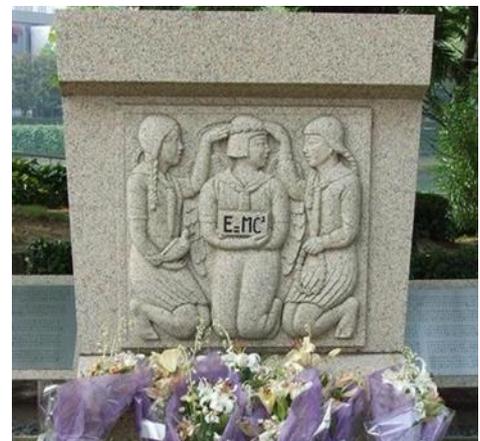
Within the chest is a record of the names of all the known victims of the atomic bombing, not limited by nationality. As of August 6, 2015, there were 297,684 names on the list. On a plaque below the chest is inscribed the phrase: "Let all the souls here rest in peace, for we shall not repeat the evil."

Behind the cenotaph is the Peace Flame, another monument to the victims of the bomb that destroyed Hiroshima, but it has an additional symbolic purpose. The flame has burned continuously since it was lit in 1964, and will remain lit until all nuclear bombs on the planet are destroyed and the planet is free from the threat of nuclear annihilation.

There is the Atomic Bomb Memorial Mound, a large, grass-covered knoll that contains the cremated ashes of 70,000 unidentified victims of the bomb.

There is a memorial to the girls of Hiroshima Municipal Girl's High School.

A total of 676 students at this girl's school were killed in the bombing, many of whom were deployed in building demolition work around the south part of where the park now stands. No other Hiroshima school suffered as many fatalities. The monument was constructed at the school in 1948 before being moved to the park in 1957. When it was built, the General Headquarters of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers did not allow the use of the characters 原爆 that the Japanese language uses to mean "atomic bomb", so instead the formula $E = mc^2$ appears on the memorial as an indirect reference to the bombing.



There is also the memorial, of course to Sadako, the Children's Memorial that I talked about earlier. With the words on the plaque below "Peace Crane, I will write peace on your wings and you will fly all over the world." Sadako

Sasaki



There is a memorial to the Koreans, built in 1970 and moved into the park in 1999. Korea was a Japanese colony from 1910 and many Koreans were brought to work in Japan through conscription or forced service, including a large number in munitions plants in Hiroshima. There are believed to have been tens of thousands of Koreans in the city when it was bombed, and it is

estimated that 20,000 of those who were killed were from Korea.

And then there is the Peace Bell. At first glance, this modest, grey coloured dome-shaped bell in the middle of the Park doesn't inspire, but the genius is in the details. Completed in September 1964, the peace bell can only be appreciated if standing directly under the bell. The dome covering the bell was intended, according to its creator, the artist Masahiko Katori, to represent the universe.



The shell of the bell, on the outside, shows a map of a boundary-less world; that would have made John Lennon nod with approval. As you ring the bell, that haunting, broad echo is one of 100 hundred sounds that Japan has made a goal to preserve.

If you look closely, you'll notice inside the bell a picture of the atomic symbol of energy—a design meant to symbolize the eventual end of atomic weapons in the world. Around the bell is a pond outlined with lotus flowers. These same lotus flowers were used to staunch the bleeding of the victims on that fateful day.

Here is an excerpt from the poem by Hiroshima Higan-No-Kai

*"We dedicate this bell
As a symbol of Hiroshima Aspiration:
Let all nuclear arms and wars be gone,
And the nations live in true peace!"*

As you get to the far end of the park, you reach the famous Aioli bridge – the T-shaped bridge which was the target of the Americans bomber. Walk across the bridge and you reach the enduring symbol of Hiroshima, The A-bomb Dome—also known as the Genbaku Dome—it is a brick building designed by Czech architect Jan Letzel and completed in 1915 as an Exhibition Hall. In 1945, the structure housed national and municipal government offices. As it was located just 160 meters from the hypocenter of the blast, most of the building’s walls were badly damaged in the bombing, but it was one of the few structures in the area to remain upright. In the post-war era it became a symbol of the atomic bombing; it is now a UNESCO World Heritage site.



And finally, just around the corner down a little back street is a plaque on the wall of a relatively new building which marks what they call the hypocentre. The point 600m directly below the place where the bomb exploded.

There were plenty of people in the park, but very few seemed to go to see the hypocenter plaque. If you ever get the chance go to Hiroshima and go to the Peace Park. You will not forget it.....and nor should you!

No 42 A dream of widening love from the green book.

We rest awhile in quietness
the world not to forget,
but rather shape the silence
and words and thought we’ve met
to nobler ways of living,
to hope-filled truth, above
our narrow selves, to seek one
great dream of widening love.

We know that strength is weakened
by narrow truths and fears,
that still we claim true knowledge,
deny the changing years:
yet here, within the silence,
we question what we know,
that through more honest persons
all humankind may grow.

We share a world where sorrow
and poverty and greed
live side by side with privilege
of wealth beyond true need;
yet though we cannot alter
all ways of humankind,
we ask a strength within us
to right the wrongs we find.

To find Eternal Meaning
deep in each passing hour,
to seek beyond the confines
of our small powers, one Power.
Strength deep within our being,
arise as hope and will:
come, silent living Spirit,
with peace our spirits fill.

Frank R. Clabburn, 1947 - © Sheila Clabburn

Horishima – Address

When Susie and I went to Hiroshima, I think, we were overtaken by a sense of peace that pervaded the area now known as the Peace Park. Not surprising, you may think, that a Peace Park should give you that sense. Well, if you go to the Peace Gardens in the centre of Sheffield you may very find a sense of tranquillity in the midst a bustling city, but this was something very different, something extra.

So, I wonder what it is that makes the difference. Maybe it's the sense of history, that sense something appalling happened there. In fact, many things that were appalling came to a head in that place on that day. The bombing of Pearl Harbour that started it off; America seeing the need to develop a weapon so destructive that it would bring a nation to its knees almost immediately; the treatment of prisoners, probably on both sides, but we have certainly got the records of the Japanese treatment. Some years ago, I went to the Museum for Thai Burma railway. It was absolutely horrific, the way that man treated his fellow man. So was the tragedy of the innocent Korean slaves who were killed, not that the death of the Japanese people was any less appalling. So ultimately for the past 75 years, the world has lived in the shadow of the nuclear weapons – in the shadow of Hiroshima.

But the trouble is that we cannot rewrite history, we cannot put the atomic genie back in the bottle. It is true that because of the discoveries made in the development of the bomb, we have learnt to use nuclear power for more peaceful means. Some, I'm sure would question the need for nuclear power stations, but they are peaceful, whatever we think about their environmental impact.

No, the problem is with those who understand the science and can develop the technology to make a bomb for themselves and use it to hold the world hostage with the threat of devastation. So here we have the situation where the US, Russia, Britain, France and China admit to having them and have signed a non-proliferation Treaty. India, Pakistan and North Korea have them but won't sign up. South Africa, Ukraine, Belarus and Khazakstan have given them up already. Israel probably has them but won't admit it. And others, notably Iran, are actively trying to develop them. The world lives in fear of a nation or indeed some terrorist organisation going rogue. We have no choice it seems but to get on with our lives and ignore the threat, though we expect our governments keep their eye on it.

Personally, I wish the UK government would stop spending the millions it does each year to maintain the so called independent nuclear deterrent, but I am not privy to all the thinking or the facts.

What it seems to me to be most important is that the nations of world need to become closer to each other, to work together to make the world a safer place and to ensure its survival. That applies to the environment just as much as it does to nuclear weapons.

But are we doing? Well, we seem to be wanting to become more nationalistic. We are becoming isolationist. We are putting up barriers rather than tearing them down. We elect governments that put their nation before others and we opt out of organisations that work together. For all the efforts that our forefathers put into building the League of Nations and then the United Nations, their authority has never been allowed to develop and now seems to be receding even further.

Former UN Secretary General Antonio Gueterres said 'Nagasaki and Hiroshima remind us to put peace first every day; to work on conflict prevention and resolution, reconciliation, and dialogue; and to tackle the roots of conflict and violence.'

I know many Unitarians talk of peace at any price, of pacificism. I wonder what we should do when someone threatens a person we love. Or country threatens us with nuclear weapons or even simply the destruction of our environment. Jesus talked about being slow to anger and turning the other cheek, but I suspect that even Neville Chamberlain, a lifelong Unitarian, when he reflected on his policy of appeasement with Hitler, wondered whether it had been the best way of dealing with things.

But that aside, today Hiroshima, the city of Hiroshima styles itself as an International Peace Culture city; a city to symbolise the human ideal of sincere pursuit of genuine and lasting peace'. Peace for Hiroshima is more than the absence of war. It is, they say, a state in which people live together in a safe and amicable environment that provides each individual ample opportunity to live a dignified and worthy human life.

The city of Hiroshima is the lead city in Mayors for Peace. 7921 cities around the world have so far joined up. 81 cities in the UK including the City of Sheffield. The purpose of the "Mayors for Peace" is to contribute to the attainment of lasting world peace by arousing concern among citizens of the world for the total abolition of nuclear weapons through striving to solve vital problems for the human race such as starvation and poverty, the plight of refugees, human rights abuses, and environmental degradation.

As I was writing these words, I came to reflect upon the practical meaning of them in our own lives. There might be something small that we could do about it in Sheffield. I think none of us expect to have such influence in the world upon the politicians and other leaders who can seriously change events and attitudes and the truth is, a bit like climate change, whatever we do, whatever little part we play, it's probably not going to make any significant difference. At best it will be a gesture and an example to others

But we can apply an attitude of peace and reconciliation in our own lives. Being prepared to listen more, especially to those who we disagree with. To try not to become frustrated by their lack of understanding and indeed their unwillingness to listen. For me, that is the most difficult one. I still seem to get very frustrated because the more I try to listen, the more I recognise other people are not listening and are not wanting to understand.

I had no trouble selecting our final hymn

A song of Peace 226 in the green hymn book no226 and sung to Finlandia.

This is my song, O God of all the nations,
A song of peace for lands afar and mine;
This is my home, the country where my heart is,
Here are my hopes, my dreams, my holy shrine;
But other hearts in other lands are beating
With hopes and dreams as true and high as mine.

My country's skies are bluer than the ocean,
And sunlight beams on clover leaf and pine;
But other lands have sunlight, too, and clover,
And skies are everywhere as blue as mine.
O hear my song, thou God of all the nations,
A song of peace for their land and for mine

Lloyd Stone 1913 –

by permission of The Lorenz Corporation, Dayton, Ohio

I end our service with words of Pope John Paul II when he visited Hiroshima

War is the work of Man
War is destruction of human life
War is death
To remember the past is to commit oneself to the future
To remember Hiroshima is to abhor nuclear war
To remember Hiroshima is to commit oneself to peace.

On this day when we commemorate those perished and suffered,
May we all listen to each other
May we all want to and try to understand each other
May we all ring our own bell for peace Amen

This service ends with Imagine by John Lennon

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L6svOHFSAH8>