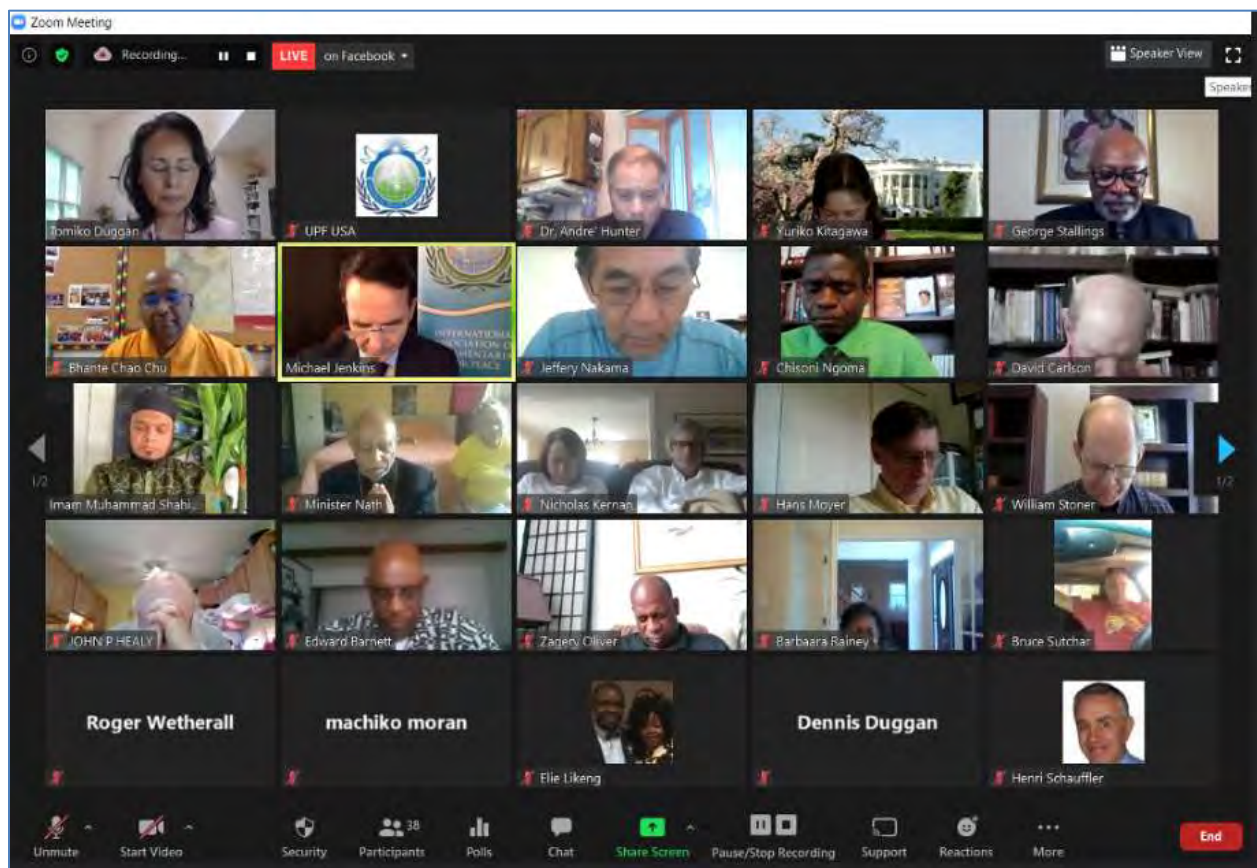


## UPF-USA's Tenth Weekly Interfaith Prayer Draws over 800 Participants

Tomiko Duggan  
June 11, 2020



United States -- UPF-USA's tenth weekly Interfaith Prayer for the Nation and the World was convened on the Zoom and Facebook platforms on Thursday, June 11, at 1 PM (EDT) through a call out to Ambassadors for Peace, UPF members and friends of UPF. Approximately 821 participants from the East and West coasts and Hawaii joined live.

UPF-USA recognizes that the challenges of the COVID-19 epidemic requires a unified response. With the collapse of economic life and the isolation and separation of people forced by the mitigation discipline, many communities, families, and individuals are threatened. The threats are spiritual as well as physical.



Mrs. Tomiko Duggan, senior vice president of UPF-USA, hosts the brief mid-week program that features representatives from different faith traditions who offer prayers, comments, and scriptural readings to those linked remotely by internet views and audio connection.

Archbishop George Augustus Stallings of the Imani Temple African American Catholic Congregation and National Director of UPF's Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD), moderated the June 11 UPF prayer program and introduced the faith leader prayer representatives.

Ven. Bhante Chao Chu is the president of the Los Angeles Buddhist Union and Center for Buddhist Development, vice president of the Interreligious Council of South California, and co-chair of the Buddhist–Catholic Dialogue. He shared his insight into our present situation:

Today the hearts of people are filled with anger, pain, fear, greed, ignorance, and uncertainty. We are passing through a pandemic that we never thought would be this disastrous -- including the social

conflicts we are experiencing right now.

The normal life of people has been affected in many ways -- socially, economically, and spiritually. So, this is a good time to come back to all our religions, study our teachings and reflect on our own practices.

The Buddha explains that greed and hatred are based in our ignorance. Ignorance of people is the cause of many disasters. Seeing the nature of reality will give us the ability to transform these: challenging times into opportunity to develop the mind, to understand moral values.



Let me repeat again: moral values and connectedness. Everything begins with causes and conditions. So, in a pluralistic society there is the challenge to live in peace. Peace begins with us, or with oneself, or with you. If we can change our destructive behavior and use our energy to create a positive force, then there is hope for peace.

Let us come back to a little bit of meditation. Let us find some methods to educate people to be more mental and compassionate. Let us hope that we can overcome these stressful times. Let us try to understand the interconnectedness of everything and all living beings. Let us meditate on loving kindness.

Venerable Chu chanted a prayer that he then translated:

May the suffering be free from suffering. May the fearful be free from fear. May the sad be free from sadness. May all beings attend to final freedoms. May they have courage and understanding to overcome their problems, their difficulties, and failures in life.

I would like to say finally, that this is a time when we can learn. We have learned to put humility and science first, rather than business, religion, and politics. Thank you.

Dr. Andre Hunter, Pastor, Unity of Faith Christian Ministries in Baltimore, served in the U.S. Marine Corps for 30 years and later was a county fireman until called to full time service for Christ following a serious life-threatening car accident.

The scripture I would like to share with you is a familiar scripture from the Book of John 14:27. Jesus said:

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

Let us pray:

Father God, in the name of your mighty son, Jesus Christ, we come before you to lift your name up, God.

Father, we thank you for the unity you have given us in our hearts, Dear God, to give you the glory and the praise. We pray for peace in the world today.

Father, we pray for peace with actions, that we may go out and be an example of your glory and love, Dear God.

Father, we just want to thank you for what you made possible here today, Dear God, as we come together in unity and in love and in peace.

Father, I just want to thank you, God.

Father, I just want to give you the glory and praise, God. I thank you that you are working it out according to your will and your way.

We give you glory and praise, in the name of Jesus. Amen"



As believers in Christ, in a difficult situation, a season, in a difficult time that we are dealing with, we must take a stand. And we must take a stand without fear, without doubt. We must come together and pray for peace around the world. This peace is a special peace; it is a Shalom peace that can only come from God.

Jesus walked the earth and he was an example of love. We have all seen the video that has been going around about our dear brother Floyd, and we pray for his family. I just want to say that peace is part of the birthright of the people of God. When you learn to claim the blessings of God in the name of Jesus Christ, you can expect nothing more but peace. When you ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our dear Father will provide for you.

But unfortunately, peace will do no good if faith is not in the mix. We need faith, we need peace, and we need the works, to come together for the people of God to stand in unity with our brothers around the world, to operate and to go forward into the world and to be sent ones and to share the gospel of love in the name of Jesus Christ.

God bless you all. May the peace be with you.

Imam Muhammad Shahidullah, president of Interfaith Center of USA, is very active in TV media programming and commentary. He expressed his gratitude to UPF and particularly its co-founder, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, for bringing people together under the vision of one family under God. He began with an explanation of the daily obligation of the Sura Al'Fatiah and then with its recitation

In the name of Allah, the most gracious, the most merciful.

Praise be to Allah, the lord of the universe.

The most gracious, the most merciful;

Master of the Day of Judgment.

You alone we worship, and [from] you alone we ask for help.

Guide us [to] the straight path:

The path of those on whom you have bestowed your grace, not of those who earned [your] wrath, nor of those who have gone astray.

Thank you everyone. Let us begin with the universal greetings of peace: Salaam. As-salamu alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh. [May the peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be with you.]

We are all living in a very special time. In Islam we always ask: "What about the situation that we are in?" It means all praise and glory belong to God. This is a unique time for us all. We are faced with a pandemic that our world hasn't seen in many generations. On top of that, we as a society face a horrible systematic racism -- in our community, in the whole of America, in the whole world.

I want to mention a very famous narration by our beloved prophet Mohammed:

Where you see something that is wrong, fix it with your hand. If you cannot do that, speak out against it. If you cannot do that, detest with your heart – and that will in itself be the weakest of our faith. [Hadith 34]

I ask to you and everybody, keep us in prayer, and ask that God unite us with his reasons. We ask God for his service, to defend those who speak out of with wisdom.

Thanks to all. Thank you, and Amin.



Dr. Michael Jenkins, chairman of UPF-North America, expressed his appreciation of the character and work of the presenters, and spoke to the importance of their coming together at this time.

We come together as religious leaders and we are seeking peace at a time when there is such racial strife and difficulty. But it will never be overcome without God's intervention or Divine intervention, and with love. And the central people that can bring that to all races and all communities are the faith leaders.

That is why when faith leaders pray and especially when we pray together there is an exponential multiplication of the power of Divine spiritual healing that goes forth -- not only in our community but across the nation and the world. So, we are praying for George Floyd's family, praying for every race and religion to come together, praying that major religious leaders throughout the world will now come and lead us -- because we see that the political leaders of the world are lost without morality and integrity and sacrifice to be able to love all families and all people. And the religious leaders bring all that.

So, we are very honored to have you with us, and we ask your wisdom and advice to help us grow the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development, a global pillar of the Universal Peace Federation.

Dr Jenkins closed with a sincere request for a moment of prayer:

That the strife and struggles that are going on in America and the world will now be reduced, and the wonderful people that are taking to the streets to bring about an end to racism, please bless them and guide them with non-violent spirit, that they can bring love to every community. And we pray for all those that lost loved ones or are struggling with the pandemic. We pray for healing.

On Thursday, June 19, at 1:00pm EDT, UPF USA will continue its weekly outreach of bringing people of different faiths together in a larger communion to pray for the nation and the world.

The live recordings of this and previous "Prayer for the Nation and the World" activity can be found on UFP-USA's Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/watch/UPFAmerica](https://www.facebook.com/watch/UPFAmerica)