

UPF USA: Fifth Weekly Interfaith Zoom Prayer for the Nation and the World

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May 7, 2020



United States -- UPF-USA's fifth weekly Interfaith Prayer for the Nation and the World was convened on the Zoom platform on Thursday, May 7, at 1 PM (EST) through a call out to Ambassadors of Peace, UPF members and friends of UPF.

UPF initiated the prayer program to promote greater unity among leaders and communities of all faiths as way to bolster hope, maintain our appreciation of the profound relationships that bind us together, and inspire understanding and love of others. The brief midweek program features representatives from different faith traditions who offer prayers, comments, and scriptural readings to those linked remotely by Zoom views and audio. Through Zoom, audio connections, and Facebook, 765 people joined the prayer.

The timing of this week's UPF prayer program coincided with the annual U.S. National Day of Prayer televised from the White House lawn and convened by the president and first lady for socially distanced guests and prayer representatives from various faiths.



Archbishop George Augustus Stallings of the Imani Temple African American Catholic Congregation and national director of UPF's Interreligious Association of Peace and Development (IAPD), introduced the speakers and moderated the UPF prayer program.

District Elder Rev. John Watts, who serves along with his wife Angela as the senior pastor at Kingdom Life Church in Brooklyn Park, Maryland, prayed to "the almighty everlasting Creator."

Some quotes from his prayer:

You alone who owns the earth, who alone knows the secrets of all things. . . may your kingdom be manifested and advanced through us so others will be drawn to you as they see your Holy Spirit living in and through our lives.

Release to us the spirit of truth upon our lives so that we can become the people of the kingdom of God who walk in integrity. As you move upon the earth, we pray that our motives will be purified by your word so that we may be able to walk in your will. As we walk in your will, let your heart be our heart, your word be our words, your thoughts be our thoughts, and your understanding be our understanding.

Send your wisdom through the power of the Holy Spirit. Give us divine direction, divine interpretation; give us divine revelation so that you will connect us to the right people at the right time for the right season. Order our steps. Help us to find favor in your eyes. Help us after today to hear your clarion voice in this prayer....Prepare us for our destiny. Teach us how to wait upon you. Reveal to us your divine

timing. Help us to walk circumspectly so that we may redeem the time. Let us walk worthy of the vocation you have called us all to.

Rev. Watts concluded with a scriptural reading from Psalm 46: 1–11 for blessing, help and encouragement to listeners that God is our refuge and strength.



Iman Mohammed Zafarullah from the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community of Chicago introduced the founder's purpose in creating the Ahmadiyya community. As the oldest Muslim community in the United States, it was established in 1920 as a way to gather righteous and sacrificial people who through their unity could create a holy influence on the world and be an example for the Muslim world in the expression of compassion and living with love for all and hatred for none

Iman Zafarullah, while honoring the month of fasting, read from the Koran, translated his reading, and prayed:

In the name of Allah, the gracious and the merciful, all praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of all the earth. Gracious, the merciful, the master of the day of judgment, you alone do we worship, and you alone do we implore for help. Guide us in the right path, the path of those on whom you have bestowed your blessing, those who have not incurred thy displeasure, and those who have not gone astray. Grant us good in this world as well as in the world to come and protect us from the torment of the fire.

Oh, Lord, in our world some are sick, some are dead, some are jobless. Some have become orphans and widows. We are weak and fragile and sinful. You have seen sin after sin, and cruelty after cruelty from us and yet have blessed us with forgiveness and support. Oh, Allah, sustainer of mankind, have mercy on us and remove the illness and provide the cure and change our condition. You are the one that cures. There is no cure except your cure. So please grant a cure that leaves no illness. Oh, Lord, the merciful, you do not put more burden than one is capable of sustaining. Forgive us our mistakes and spare us from hardship we cannot sustain. Your love for us is profound, so unique. So do not let us suffer from the illness. Oh, Allah, your cure is the best. And your kindness and love is most powerful.

I seek protection in the might of Allah and his power from evil and what we are experiencing and what we fear. Oh, Allah, keep us alive longer. Life is better for us. And save us from dependence and pain. Amen.

Ven. Katugastota Uparatana Maha Thera, chairman of Buddhism for the Interfaith Council of Metropolitan Washington and Buddhist chaplain at the American University in Washington, DC, offered a prayer chant and then explained the important context of prayer in the month of May, when the entire Buddhist world is celebrating the birth of Buddha.

Annually we celebrate the birth, the enlightenment, and the passing away of the Buddha -- three significant events. Today is a full moon day during Buddha's holy birth month, which is celebrated by Buddhists around the world. It is a spiritual event day and a good chance for a Buddhist prayer for people around the world who are suffering from Covid-19. We wish for them to have a spiritual blessing. Buddha teaches that the noble community of the Sangha will protect them in their prayers

Buddha was a great human being. The Buddha's birth happened in India in the month of May in 563 BCE. He was enlightened in 528 BCE. He passed away in 483 BCE in India So this is commemorating 2,564 years from his birth. For Buddhists it is their biggest ceremony -- like Christmas for Christians.

Buddha said, do not do unlawful things, unwholesome things. Buddha said, cultivate the wholesome thing, and he asked that you concentrate your mind as a conclusion to this teaching. At the same time, may all beings be free from suffering, fear, grief. May all calamity be warded off. May all illness be

dispelled. May no obstruction hinder us. May you live long and with happiness. May all good fortune come our way. May all the deities protect us. May all the power of the community of the Sangha always enjoy well-being. May rains fall in due time. May there be a rich harvest. May the world be prosperous. May the government be righteous.

Buddha's great blessings all encourage people to practice generosity, practice healthy actions, practice meditation, practice the principles that protect. Buddha encourages kindness, compassion, joyfulness, equanimity. Practice all these good things, especially when contemplating the Buddha's birth, enlightenment and passing.

We wish the whole world, everyone, to be of happy mind, good health, wealthy and successful. My prayer is for all beings to be happy and at peace. Thank you.



Dr. Michael Jenkins, chairman of UPF-North America, made these closing remarks:

This is a time of great trial and tribulation for many families, for all of us in different ways. But we are grateful for the religious leaders, for their prayers because prayer to God can cause a great strengthening of our souls and strengthening of our spirit so that we may help serve all the families of the world experiencing the loss of loved ones or even those facing sickness themselves. We know that, so we sincerely thank our faith leaders today.

Testifying to his belief that prayer can cause the Holy Spirit to bring healing, Dr. Jenkins concluded the program thanking the leadership of the speakers and moderators before leading the more than 700 call participants in a silent closing prayer for healing of all.

On Thursday, May 14, at 1:00pm EST, UPF-USA will continue this weekly outreach in bringing people of different faiths together in a larger communion to pray for the nation and the world.

The live recordings of the Prayer for the Nation and the World can be found on UFPUSA's Facebook page: [5th Interfaith Prayer click here](#)