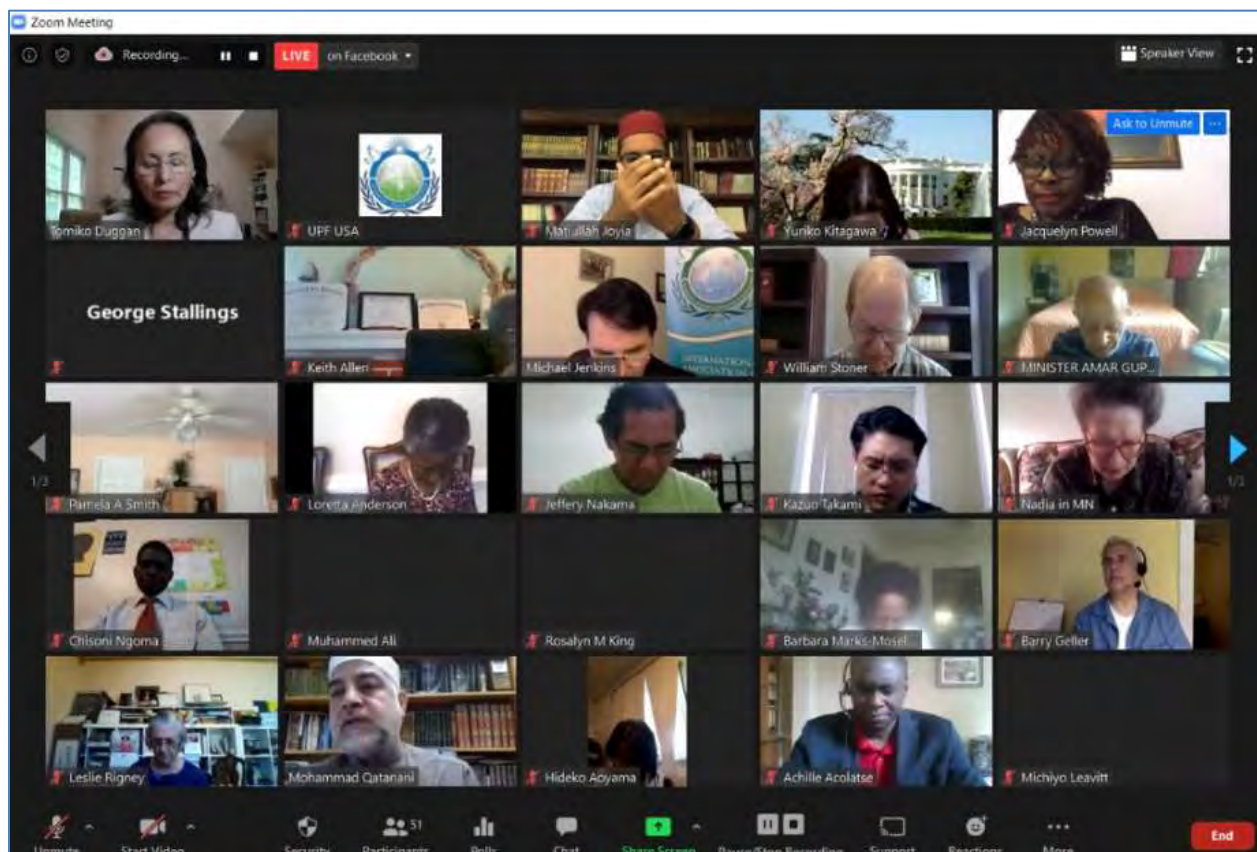


UPF-USA's Eighth Interfaith Prayer for the Nation and World attracts 600 Viewers

Tomiko Duggan
May 28, 2020



United States -- UPF-USA's eighth weekly Interfaith Prayer for the Nation and the World was convened on the Zoom/Facebook platform on Thursday, May 28, at 1 PM (EST) through a call out to Ambassadors of Peace, UPF members and friends of UPF.

UPF-USA recognized 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.

The brief mid-week program features representatives from different faith traditions who offer prayers, comments, and scriptural readings to those linked remotely by zoom views and audio. The May 28 edition attracted 600 viewers from the East and West coasts, Hawaii, and points in between.

Archbishop George Augustus Stallings of the Imani Temple African American Catholic Congregation and National Director of UPF's Interreligious Association of Peace and Development (UPF-IAPD), moderated the May 28th UPF prayer program and introduced the faith leader prayer representatives. He referred to two acronyms that he uses to describe his prayer activities as the battle against the pandemic continues: PUSH ("Pray Until Something Happens") and PULL ("Pray Until Love Lifts").



Imam Matiullah Joyia is the leader of an Ahmadiyya Muslim community in Hawaii. In 1974, Pakistan passed legislation that made it criminal for Ahmadi members to proselytize or even identify as Muslim. As a result, when he was eight years old, his family fled to Canada in search of religious freedom. He is

very active in interfaith activities. Following are his remarks:

I greet you all with the Islamic greeting of, "As-salamu Alaykum Wa Rahmatullah Wa Barakatohu!" Which means "May peace, blessings and mercy of God be with you all."

As we pass through these challenging times, I thought, why don't I share the prayers of God's beloved, the prophets, and how they prayed in the time of distress and difficulty. What better prayer could there be than in the words of His loved ones?

The first prayer I have selected is of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) as it is recorded in the Holy Quran 26:79-8:

I seek refuge in God, from Satan the accursed,

In the name of God, most gracious, ever Merciful.

It is my Lord Who has created me, and it is He Who guides me;

And it is He Who gives me food and gives me drink.

And when I am ill, it is He Who restores me to health.

And it is He Who will cause me to die, and then bring me to life again.

And Who, I hope, will forgive me my faults on the Day of Judgment.

Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) used to pray the following prayer:

"O Allah, I seek refuge with You from anxiety and sorrow, weakness and laziness, miserliness, and cowardice, the burden of debts and from being overpowered by others.

"O Allah, it is Your mercy that I hope for, so do not leave me in charge of my affairs even for a blink of an eye and rectify for me all of my affairs."

The following prayer was suggested by Hazrat Ahmad (peace be upon him), the promised messiah of the age and founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community to his followers in the time of adversity.

"O our benefactor and our Lord, we are your humble servants filled with countless shortcomings. You have seen from us injustices upon injustices and have granted us favors upon favors. You have seen from us sins upon sins and have bestowed us with blessings upon blessings. You have always overlooked our weaknesses and shortcomings and have always blessed us with your infinite treasures. Therefore, now too, show mercy on your servants and forgive us our transgressions and save us from the calamity that we find ourselves in, for there is no savior besides you, Ameen."

At the end I pray that may God the Almighty be with all those who are inflicted with any kind of hardship throughout the world. May He remove all their worries and may all their sorrows become their everlasting happiness. May they never see another day of hardship, and always find solace and comfort in Him, Ameen.





Dr. Apostle Jacquelyn Powell founded Powerhouse International Ministries, which incorporates Powerhouse International Christian University (PICU), an accredited school of ministry, and Powerhouse International Women's Ministry (PIWM). Apostle Powell is married to Pastor R. Edward Powell, who is an ordained pastor and serves in ministry at Augusta Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Together they co-founded Sycamore Family Services of Indiana, a non-profit organization designed to strengthen families through counseling and education. She said:

We are called by God. We are ambassadors called out and anointed for the assignment, and God has trusted us to carry out His mission.

Isaiah 61:1 -- The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.

Zechariah 4:6 -- This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel saying Not by might nor by power but by my spirit saith the Lord of host.

1 Peter 2:9 -- But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people that ye should shew forth the praises of God who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

I just want to encourage you today to know that you are anointed for an assignment. We are anointed and given authority to break yokes of bondage, to persevere in spite of what the enemy is trying to do. We must place a demand on the anointing to carry out our assignment. We need God's spirit, not by might nor by power but by His spirit. We are called to represent God. We are divinely inspired to operate in our calling.

We are ambassadors called out of darkness to lead God's people. God will not allow us to fail. You cannot be held back by the enemy. We must not grow weary in well doing, as it says in Galatians 6:9. Always remember, as stated in Romans 8:18, that what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory that will be revealed to us later.

We must protect our witness, for some will come to know God based on how we endure. Because with God's spirit we can accomplish the impossible.

Almighty God, Creator of Heaven and Earth. Thank you for being a gracious and compassionate God.

Thank You for calling us and anointing us to respond to the call. You are our Light.

We come to you as sisters and brothers from all over the world acknowledge you as our God. We represent your people from all over the world. All nations, religious cultures, and ethnic backgrounds.

Thank you for choosing us. For trusting us to carry out the assignment to lead and serve your people. Empower us to be the movement you desire. Empower us to be spiritual warriors prepared to bless your people.

Help us to be faithful to the call. We surrender to you and your plan. We ask that your presence be made known. You are welcome in each of our places. For in your presence there is no lack. In your presence there is provision, peace, unity and understanding.

In your presence there is respect, courage, and unconditional love. In your presence is divine inspiration. In your presence is life more abundantly.

Thank you for your divine intervention, your power, your spirit. Thank you for revelation knowledge. Help us to see one another as you see us. We call forth your divine resources to meet the needs of your people. We ask that you heal, deliver, and encourage. God it is in your sovereign faithfulness we ask these things. Amen



Dr. Michael Jenkins, Chairman of UPF-North America, introduced one of the call participants, Jamie Rosenstengel, who helped provided some unscripted inspiration in filling a program gap caused by technical difficulties. Jamie tested her breath control and performance anxiety by spontaneously offering and singing Psalm 91 and followed it with "Shake the Devil Out".

Dr. Jenkins' closing comments identified the tragic death of George Floyd on May 25 in Minneapolis as part of the "other pandemic" that we must attend to, which we cannot ignore.



Dr. Apostle Cesar Wilbur Garcia, the president and founder of International Pastors of America, was able to connect from Elizabeth, New Jersey, to the program after technical interruptions and offered a short closing prayer:

Oh, My Lord; Oh, God.

Embrace all of us in one single love. Make everyone share the love to another who does not know about love. Let them experience it, heal their heart, and think differently.

There is only one earth and we should all love each other. Amen.

On Thursday, June 3, 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 this and previous "Prayer for the Nation and the World" activity can be found on [UPF-USA's Facebook page](#).