




# The United Reformed Church

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## URC joins call for a global ceasefire to help counter pandemic

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**The Moderators of the United Reformed Church (URC) General Assembly are supporting the call for warring parties around the world to lay down their weapons to help battle Covid-19.**

Echoing the urgent plea made by António Guterres, the United Nation's (UN) Secretary-General, Moderators Derek Estill and the Revd Nigel Uden have added their names to an international call for a ceasefire: that the threat to life from the coronavirus, a true shared enemy, is being amplified by armed conflict and putting vulnerable people at an even greater risk.



Voicing his concern, Mr Uden said: "Both poverty and war are unacceptable blights on our world. Each makes Covid-19's march even easier. In the name of Jesus, the one whose mission is abundant life for all, I passionately endorse the call for a global ceasefire."

Many will be familiar with images of refugee camps filled with people displaced by war, such as [currently on the border of Syria and Turkey](#). Makeshift beds, overcrowding, limited access to water, nutrition, and healthcare mean that an outbreak of coronavirus in these places will have a devastating impact.

The effects of war are not limited to camps but also found in ravaged and impoverished communities in towns and cities too. Humanitarian workers aiming to respond to the current health crisis find their safety put at risk not just from the disease, but as targets of opposing factions who would rather let their enemies suffer.

The Moderators are encouraging all Christians to [add their voices](#) to an international petition which calls for a global ceasefire, so that each national leader within the UN will appreciate the urgency needed to take the steps required for warring factions to lay down their weapons and find ways to cultivate peace within their own countries and beyond.

More than 2 million people have already signed the petition. [Please join them](#) and then share this article and encourage others to do the same, that peace may prevail and more lives will be saved. People are also being asked to [email their MP](#), to ask them what the UK government is doing to answer this call.



Mr Estill added: "I urge everyone, in the face of the threat, pain and suffering that the coronavirus pandemic is causing the whole world, to put aside differences, pray, work and stand together in peaceful cooperation and determination to defeat this common enemy. Working cooperatively will enable us to find new and better ways of living. In peace, we can together make a difference for the better, for God's sake."

The Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) which works on behalf of four denominations – the URC, the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church in Great Britain, and the Church of Scotland – has a hub of information relating to Covid-19. This can be found [here](#).

**A Prayer for Peace** (written by the Revd Steve Faber, Moderator of the URC West Midlands Synod)

Holy and loving God,  
who sent your son Jesus into the world as the Prince of Peace,  
we pray for peace.

As we learn again what it means to be human,  
of our unavoidable connection one to another,  
let us be those who will move forwards to make a new normal:  
a world where we will not invest in weapons of mass destruction,  
a world where compassion for those in need prevails over hardness of heart,  
a world where we finally learn to love one another.

Let this be a time when all peoples lay aside difference  
and find a new way to work together for the common good.  
Let warring and hatred end;  
let the call for a global ceasefire be heard and honoured.

In working together in a way which brings you glory, O God,  
let fear be driven out and a new trust in each other and in you grow.  
And as we work together to end poverty and violence,  
may the light of Christ shine ever more brightly in your world.

We pray in the name of our risen saviour, Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

The URC is one of more than 190 international civil society organisations that have signed a letter urging all those with influence across the world to 'overcome disagreement and find consensus'.

The letter states:

"A global ceasefire is vital to protect health and humanitarian workers and to enable effective preparation and response to coronavirus that meets the needs of diverse groups and protects the most vulnerable; to allow unimpeded life-saving humanitarian aid to meet escalating needs on the ground, provide a crucial window for inclusive peacebuilding and the pursuit of durable political solutions (including meaningful engagement with women leaders) to build sustainable peace. Without this, there can be no effective global response to Covid-19."

The UN Security Council is being asked to issue a resolution that will support a global ceasefire. Given the various political interests that each member of the council brings, this will be challenging to achieve. Strong public support for a ceasefire will help to underline the importance of making such a resolution. The International Crisis Group website carries [further information](#).



Picture 1: Derek Estill, left, and the Revd Nigel Uden, Moderators of the URC General Assembly (2018-20)

Picture 2: António Guterres, UN Secretary-General. US Mission Photo by [Eric Bridlers/Wikimedia](#).

Picture 3: A photo of a bronze sculpture entitled 'Non-violence (The Knotted Gun)' by Carl Fredrik Reuterswård, sited at the United Nations headquarters in New York City. [Flavio Bolana/Pixabay](#).

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It is with deep sadness that the #URC announces the death of the Revd Robert Waters. Mr Waters, widely known as Bob, died peacefully in his sleep at home on 3 July, just four days shy of his 90th birthday. His funeral takes place on 16 July. Details here: [bit.ly/URCrevdwaters](http://bit.ly/URCrevdwaters)



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