

St Margaret's Church
Westminster Abbey



PRAYER VIGIL:
NON-VIOLENCE
AND EQUAL PROTECTION
FOR CHILDREN

Tuesday 7 October 2008

8.15 pm

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Prayer Vigil takes place ahead of the vote in the House of Commons on equal protection for children from assault, and is intended as an expression of respect for children and of solidarity and support for law reform.

The young people taking part in the service represent the views of a growing movement of children who want the law to be modernised to put an end to the social and legal acceptance of corporal punishment.

The Report of the United Nations Secretary-General's *Study on Violence against Children* calls for all countries to prohibit violent and humiliating punishment of children, including corporal punishment, by 2009:

“The Study should mark a turning point – an end to adult justification of violence against children, whether accepted as ‘tradition’ or disguised as ‘discipline’. There can be no compromise in challenging violence against children.”

The whole of the church is served by a hearing loop. Users should turn their hearing aid to the setting marked T.

Please ensure that mobile phones, cellular phones and pagers, are switched off.

The service is conducted by The Reverend Robert Wright, Rector of St Margaret's Church, and Chaplain to the Speaker of the House of Commons.

The organ is played by Richard Pearce.

The Cantor is Helen J Hicks.

Music before the Service:

All remain seated to sing:



U - bi car - i - tas et a - mor, u - bi car - i - tas De - us i - bi est.

Where charity and love are, there is God.



Ve - ni - te, e - xul - te - mus Do - mi - no, ve - ni - te, a - do - re - mus. Ve
ni - te, e - xul - te - mus Do - mi - no, ve - ni - te, a - do - re - mus. Ve

O come let us sing unto the Lord, O come let us adore him.

The Lord Mayor of Westminster is received at the East Door by the Rector and conducted to her place in the Nave. All stand then sit.

ORDER OF SERVICE

All stand to sing

THE HYMN

*during which the Clergy
move to places in the Quire and Sanctuary*



Can the parents' tender care
cease towards the child they bear?
Yes, and we stand by and see
sadnesses and cruelty.

Child abuse is wounding Christ;
children's armies pierce his side;
children's worries fill God's heart;
where can God's forgiveness start?

When the bells of Christmas ring,
we recall a savage king,
who killed children in his spite;
we today still share that night.

Children can bring into life
wonder, magic, and delight;
yet they need security
for their creativity.

Children trafficked, parents killed,
childhood's promise unfulfilled,
children naked, poor and cold,
children who will not grow old.

God of parents, carers, friends,
teach us how to make amends;
bless our aims, forgive our wrongs,
help our children sing your songs.

*Buckland 517 CP
Leighton George Hayne 1836–1883*

June Boyce-Tillman (b 1943)

All remain standing. Canon Wright says

THE GREETING

Welcome to St Margaret's Church, Westminster Abbey, this evening for this Prayer Vigil dedicated to children and non-violence. Throughout the world children are suffering as a result of violence: psychological, physical, political and socioeconomic. In this service we join our prayers to those of many people all over the world who long for an end to such violence. The gift of childhood is very precious, and we hope and pray for a world where children's suffering may be

reduced, a world where children may find that violence is not inevitable, as we respect the rights and needs of all twenty-first century children.

All sit. Sophie and Abraham deliver

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHILDREN

All stand to sing

THE HYMN

One more step along the world I go,
one more step along the world I go;
from the old things to the new
keep me travelling along with you:
*And it's from the old I travel to the new;
keep me travelling along with you.*

Round the corner of the world I turn,
more and more about the world I learn;
all the new things that I see
you'll be looking at along with me:

You are older than the world can be,
you are younger than the life in me;
ever old and ever new,
keep me travelling along with you:

*Southcote 405 HON
Sydney Carter (b 1915)*

Sydney Carter

All remain standing for

ACT OF REMEMBRANCE FOR CHILDREN WHO HAVE SUFFERED VIOLENCE

Canon Wright says

Let us give thanks to Almighty God for the gifts which children bring to our society, and for those who nurture and protect those gifts. And let us confess with penitence the ways in which our society has neglected or abused our children, remembering in particular, in a time of silence, those children who have suffered violence at the hands of adults, including corporal punishment.

The tenor bell is rung half-muffled

The Cantor sings:



Lord have mercy.

All repeat: **Kyrie, kyrie eleison. Kyrie, kyrie eleison.**

Creator God, we thank you for the inherent dignity of children. We remember with sorrow those children who are not respected and who suffer from violence.

Kyrie, kyrie eleison. Kyrie, kyrie eleison.

We thank you for those who protect children. We remember with regret those children who are not protected and who are humiliated through abuse.

Kyrie, kyrie eleison. Kyrie, kyrie eleison.

We thank you for those who listen to children. We remember with sadness those children who have no voice, or who are not heard.

Kyrie, kyrie eleison. Kyrie, kyrie eleison.

We thank you for those who help children understand their value. We remember with sadness those children who are kept ignorant of their rights.

Kyrie, kyrie eleison. Kyrie, kyrie eleison.

We thank you for those who are called to work with children. We remember with regret those children who have not received good quality care and support.

Kyrie, kyrie eleison. Kyrie, kyrie eleison.

We thank you for those who help children who have suffered. We remember with sadness those children who have not been helped adequately or appropriately.

Kyrie, kyrie eleison. Kyrie, kyrie eleison.

We thank you for those who model non-violent ways to resolve conflict. We remember with sorrow those children who have never known justice, fairness, and compassion.

Kyrie, kyrie eleison. Kyrie, kyrie eleison.

Canon Wright pronounces THE ABSOLUTION:

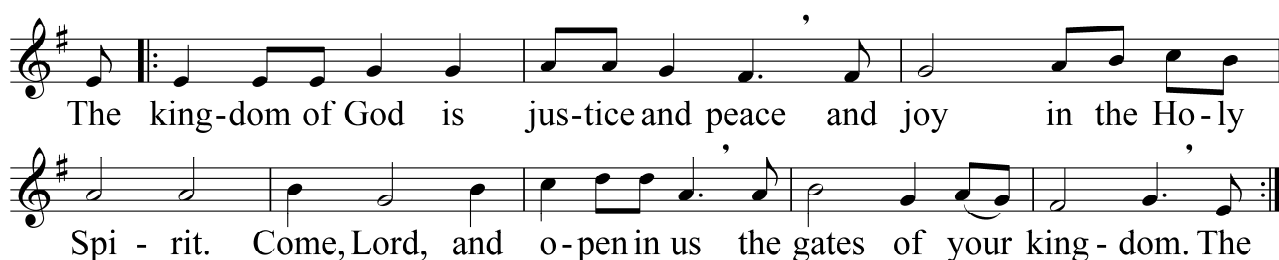
Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

In the name of God our nurturing father and protecting mother, we commit ourselves to our children, to helping them to learn well, to discover boundaries, and to explore safely, without fear of being hit or hurt by those they trust, so that we might reflect God's gentle love for them, for us, and for all the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

All remain standing to sing

THE GRADUAL



The king-dom of God is jus-tice and peace and joy in the Ho-ly
Spi - rit. Come, Lord, and o-pen in us the gates of your king - dom. The

All remain standing. Dame Mary Marsh, Chief Executive, National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, reads

THE GOSPEL

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' He called a child, whom he put among them, and said, 'Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. Then little children were being brought to him in order that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples spoke sternly to those who brought them; but Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.'

Matthew 18: 1-5; 19: 13-14

All repeat:

The king-dom of God is jus-tice and peace and joy in the Ho-ly
Spi - rit. Come, Lord, and o-pen in us the gates of your king - dom. The

All sit for

THE ADDRESS

by

The Right Reverend John Pritchard
Bishop of Oxford

All kneel or remain seated for

THE PRAYERS

*during which Representatives from churches and organisations
light the Candles in the Prayer Wreath.*

Shirley We thank you God for the gift of childhood; for its own particular wisdom, and for its glimpses into the wonder of our world and the promise of eternity. We pray for a society that so often steals childhood, that takes away its hopes and dreams, and does violence to the innocent. As in the manger-child, we gaze upon the face of God, so in each and every child, may we recognise the face of Christ, cherishing the miracle.

Incarnate God: hear our prayer.

Eternal God our Creator, we pray for all children and young people who endure violence in their homes. We pray that we may all work together to support the families in our communities so that all children may grow up in an atmosphere of compassion, loving-kindness, encouragement, and non-violence.

Eternal God: hear our prayer.

Merciful God, we remember all children in the world affected by the violence of poverty and armed conflict. We pray for peace for the children of Darfur, Iraq, Afghanistan, Israel, and Palestine. Fill us with love for all human beings so that we

All stand for

THE PEACE

Canon Wright says:

God is love and those who live in love live in God and God lives in them.

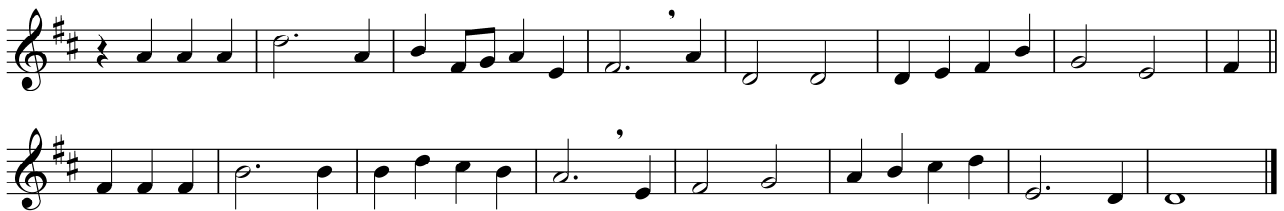
The peace of the Lord be always with you;
and also with you.

Members of the Congregation may greet each other with a sign of peace, most commonly a handshake.

All remain standing to sing

THE HYMN

*during which Members of Parliament,
pass the light of the Paschal Candle around the Church.
Please pass the flame to those around you.*



We sing a love that sets all people free.
That blows like wind that burns like scorching flame,
Enfolds like earth, springs up like water clear.
Come, living love, live in our hearts today.

We sing a love that seeks another's good,
That longs to serve and not to count the cost,
A love that yielding, finds itself made new.
Come, caring love, live in our hearts today.

We sing a love, unflinching, unafraid
To be itself, despite another's wrath,
A love that stands alone and undismayed
Come strengthening love, live in our hearts today.

*Woodlands 186 NEH
Walter Greatorex (1877–1949)*

June Boyce-Tillman (b 1943)

All remain standing. Canon Wright says

THE BLESSING

Go forth into the world in peace; be of good courage; hold fast that which is good; render to no-one evil for evil; strengthen the faint-hearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honour all people; love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be amongst you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

All follow the Bishop and Representatives of the Churches to Old Palace Yard.