

Ecumenical Appeal to be read in places of worship between 12 and 14 September 2025

## Dear friends,

I am sharing a significant and important appeal at a period of profound global crisis. This appeal is being shared today and this week, in person, in newsletters, and online. It comes from the leaders of a number of Scottish faith communities including the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Scotland and the United Reformed Church National Synod of Scotland.

This appeal is made to all leaders, politicians and representatives. It is also made to each of us, whoever we are, who care about the state of the world and is distressed by the escalation of destructive conflict, displacement, hunger, and suffering which is destroying lives and futures - in Palestine, Ukraine, Sudan and elsewhere – and disproportionately those of women and children.

This appeal comes now because of the state visit to the United Kingdom, possibly including Scotland, of the President of the United States of America. This gives us a particular opportunity to reflect on our shared values and vision for the world - and our own country too. We welcome opportunities to seek a common understanding.

The sermon preached in Washington Cathedral by Bishop Mariann Budde, the day after the inauguration of the President, spoke of the danger of a growing culture of contempt and urged ways of building bridges between people rather than dividing them.

For the good of the world, we too, as people of faith, appeal to all leaders, politicians and representatives, and each one of us, to honour every human being with respect and empathy. We need to recognise, with humility, that all beings are of equal significance and are interconnected.

We too appeal to all leaders, politicians and representatives to speak with truth and integrity in private and public conversation and in the provision of information, whether in person or online. We may not always know the truth, but when we do, we need to speak it, even more so when there is a cost to us.

But we cannot rely on governments alone. In these distressing times, each of us carries the responsibility to lead - in our communities, in our workplaces and in our families.

We are each required to look deeply into our life at this time of global and local unrest.

- Do we personally live in a way which increases suffering, or alleviates it?
- Do we personally live in a way which builds trust or destroys it?
- Where are the seeds of conflict in our own heart, our home, our neighbourhood, our workplace? And how can we address them?

In quietness, we can ask ourselves what kind of world we really want to live in, and then seek to bring it into being, one action at a time.

In 1943, in the depth of war, Quakers were looking ahead towards peace. The Quaker governing body made this statement: True peace cannot be dictated, it can only be built in co-operation between all peoples ... (The) way of peace ... requires that men and nations should recognise their common brotherhood, using the weapons of integrity, reason, patience and love, never acquiescing in the ways of the oppressor, always ready to suffer with the oppressed... Now is the time ... to declare our willingness to make sacrifices... for the common good.

(Quaker Faith and Practice 24.09)