This hour of prayer is divided into 4 quarter hour periods— each has a theme, moving through loss, fear, anticipation and arriving at hope and resolve.

**LOSS**

We find ourselves in the period between the Ascension and Pentecost. Just like the Disciples, we too are waiting for the Holy Spirit.

Reading. *Acts of the Apostles: ch1. vv 1-14*

Perhaps we can silently imagine ourselves as one of them. They must also be feeling the loss of

Jesus in His human body.

Maybe some of us have also felt some loss where we waited for comfort.- for life to start again.

*Silence.*

Can we lay these losses before the Lord, knowing that His comfort is there for us.

*Prayers.*

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**FEAR**

Jerusalem had been somewhere where their dearest friend had been crucified. It could not have been a very comfortable place to be, but the disciples followed what Jesus told them shortly before he ascended.

Could we remember those who have to stay in places where they too could be tortured or killed.

Reading.

*A Poem for Peace. ( Tessa Ransford)*

*Warfare waged*

*not welfare*

*missiles*

*unsubmissive.*

*Hate allowed, justified and paid for:*

*incalculable riches of hate*

*fed by inexhaustible mines of fear*

*and refined refineries of torture!*

*Whom then*

*do we so passionately hate*

*and crave to kill?*

*Our neighbour, like ourselves,*

*humankind*

*with exquisite flesh, elegant mind*

*and languishing spirit for love.*

*Energy-love*

*verboten*

*confidence-faith*

*forbidden, unbidden.*

*It is hard to understand*

*How war can be planned*

*but love and peace only happen*

*almost by mishap*

*in their own good time,*

*When our charts and predictions have failed*

*our graphs, statistics,*

*limited objectives.*

*Unpredictable love*

*take-over bid us,*

*before liquidation!*

*You may walk on the grass*

*litter the world with the wrappings*

*removed from your heart....*

*Peace- weak*

*irresistible,*

*begotten not made*

*verily veritable*

*pleasing in our eyes*

*reflected in everyone’s eyes*

*when we look into them*

*light of light*

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*Silence*

*Prayers.*

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**ANTICIPATION**

Do you remember, when you were a child, how you got so excited waiting for something special to happen- a birthday- a holiday- a visit from somebody special- How you wanted the time to pass quickly?

What was it like waiting? What did we ask for?

What is it like waiting for the Spirit? What do we ask for now?

*Silence*

*Prayers of Petition*

The response is “*O Lord, deliver us”*

Remember, O Lord, the People’s of the world divided into many nations and tongues; deliver us from every evil which obstructs thy saving purpose; and fulfil thy promises of old to establish thy kingdom of peace. From the curse of war and all that begets it.

*Response.*

From believing and speaking lies against other nations, *R.*

*F*rom narrow loyalties and selfish isolation, *R.*

*F*rom fear and distrust of other nations, from all false pride, vain glory, and self-conceit, *R*

*F*rom the lust of the mighty for riches that drives peaceful peoples to slaughter, *R*

*F*rom putting our trust in the weapons of war, and from want of faith in the power of justice and goodwill . *R*

(*The Grey Book. Congregational Church. Connecticut. 1979)*

**HOPE and RESOLVE**

Lead me from Despair to Hope

Bruce Kent wrote: ‘ If there is one question at public meetings that I know I can count upon, it is “ What can we do?” It comes not in hope and expectation but in near- despair. The risks are seen, but such is the sense of collective impotence that throwing up one’s hands becomes quite a respectable reaction. This is the major problem. Many people in our complicated and confusing society just do not see themselves as having any power to make any significant change. This I reject entirely. True, change may take much longer than we expect and involve more sacrifice than we are often prepared to make, but change does take place on social issues all the time. The early trade unionists, the anti- slave trade lobby, the initial heroines of the women’s rights movement, must all have felt themselves up against problems of such complexity and opponents of such power, that grounds for optimism were minimal, but they proved otherwise.

Martin Luther King said; ‘ I refuse to accept the cynical notion that nation after nation must spiral down a militaristic stairway into the hell of nuclear destruction. I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality.’

What do we hope for- what do we need the strength of the Holy Spirit for?

**THE PLEDGE TO ACTION**

We cannot accept a situation in which vast sums are spent on weapons of destruction as nations prepare for mutual annihilation whilst children are allowed to die for lack of food and shelter.

We pledge ourselves to work and pray for peace; to urge the nations to seek the ways of peace by entering into urgent discussions to rid the world of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction; to press our own government to lead the way in steps of faith on the path to hope.

To this end we shall join with all people of goodwill in forging international links of friendship and building up the security which is based on trust and in reliance on the living God

**Conclusion**

We finish this section with 2 verses from Isaiah,. 61: vv1&2.

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