

# MODERATOR'S 2023 PEACE SUNDAY MESSAGE



This year Peace Sunday falls on Hiroshima Day, 6 August.

It also falls on a Sunday when the lectionary reading is about Jacob wrestling with God on the eve of being reunited with his brother, after years of discord and disconnection.

This is a story that comes to us through the ages as such a typical story of familial conflict. But within this story there are also timeless messages about peace-making. God stirring up a desire for reconciliation in Jacob, and both Jacob and Esau responded to that with a heart-rending reunion.

On this Peace Sunday 2023, it is interesting to reflect on how often conflicts stem from the interactions that happen in families. World War 1 is a stunning example. At the time of the First World War, the rulers of the three main protagonists – King George V of Great Britain and Tsar Nicholas II of Russia on the one hand, and Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany on the other – were closely related, their grandmother was Queen Victoria.

And the terrible war in Ukraine is between neighbouring countries with many people who have family members on each side of the border!

South Korea and North Korea are in a similar situation, with family on both sides of the border. As we mark this year the 70th anniversary of the 1953 Armistice

Agreement which established a ceasefire but not a formal end to the Korean War, we do so in the midst of a renewed escalation of tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

One of the practical things we can call on our people to do is to participate in the *Global Day of Prayer for Peace and Reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula* that is set down for 13 August – see WCC resources for churches [here](#) and [here](#).

Ukraine and the Korean Peninsula are examples of conflict on the international stage that can leave us feeling powerless to change. However, it seems to me the story of a down to earth conflict of two brothers, Jacob and Esau, and their attempts at making peace are actually empowering for us. The words of the song, “Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me” resonate with me in this regard.

As we pray our lofty prayers for world peace this Sunday, may we also reflect on how we attend to the conflicts in our lives. That is certainly something that, with God’s help, we can change for the better.

- See the 2023 CWS Peace Sunday resources for churches: [Witness for Peace](#) and [slide](#).

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