

LITANY FOR PEACE

by Candace Bell

Candace Bell is the Associate Pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago. Candace was inspired by Omar Haramy, the Executive Director of Sabeel's February 2026 Beatitudes' reflection from Palestine.



LEADER:

We gather in the shadow of the mount—
the mount on which we received the Beatitudes,
the words of Jesus Christ in the Gospel,
the heart of the Sermon on the Mount.

PEOPLE:

We will not let His words float away in history.
We will plant them in the soil of Gaza.
We will plant them in detention centers.
We will plant them wherever imperial power cages the vulnerable.

LEADER:

Blessed are the poor in spirit.

PEOPLE:

Blessed are the besieged.
Blessed are the 2.2 million confined within open prisons.
Blessed are the children behind enemy walls.
Blessed are those made poor by blockade and embargo.
For the kingdom of heaven belongs to them.

LEADER:

Blessed are those who mourn.

PEOPLE:

Blessed are the mothers who bury their children.
Blessed are the men who search through rubble for their loved ones.
Blessed are the 70,000+ dead.
Blessed are the 20,000+ children killed.

Blessed are those struck down while seeking food and necessities.
God, remember their names when the world forgets.
For they shall be comforted.



LEADER:

Blessed are the meek.

PEOPLE:

Blessed are the displaced.
Blessed are the homeless.
Blessed are the 1.9 million forced from their homes.
Blessed are the families separated by borders and policies.
For they shall inherit a land rebuilt in justice.

LEADER:

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

PEOPLE:

Blessed are those who march nonviolently without weapons.
Blessed are those who appeal to law and conscience.
Blessed are those who cry out to the nations.
Blessed are those who refuse revenge.
For they shall be filled—not with hatred, but with justice.

LEADER:

Blessed are the merciful.

PEOPLE:

Blessed are the doctors in shattered hospitals.
Blessed are the nurses working in wards at 300% capacity.
Blessed are those who distribute bread.
Blessed are the journalists and the teachers.
For they shall receive mercy.

LEADER:

Blessed are the pure in heart.

PEOPLE:

Blessed are the children whose hearts are the purest.
Blessed are the 650,000 young Palestinians denied education, with classrooms raided and the books confiscated, with schools and universities reduced to dust.
Blessed are the young hearts that refuse to be hardened.
For they shall see God—even in the ruins.

LEADER:

Blessed are the peacemakers.

PEOPLE:

Blessed are those who demand ceasefire and justice.
Blessed are those who speak truth when others are silent.
Blessed are those who refuse to normalize genocide.
Blessed are those who refuse to normalize cages.
Blessed are those who believe there is no peace without justice.
For they shall be called children of God.



At a Chicago vigil against U.S. tech company Palantir, photos commemorate people targeted by ICE and children killed by U.S./Israeli bombing attacks.

LEADER:

Blessed are those persecuted for righteousness' sake.

PEOPLE:

Blessed are the detained.
 Blessed are the disappeared.
 Blessed are the tortured.
 Blessed are the silenced journalists.
 Blessed are immigrants targeted by ICE raids.
 Blessed are families tracked, surveilled, and databased.
 Blessed are those monitored by Palantir's watchful algorithms.
 For the kingdom of heaven, a place of true freedom, belongs to them.

LEADER:

When surveillance replaces sanctuary—
 when algorithms decide who is suspicious—
 when data becomes a weapon—

PEOPLE:

We remember that God sees differently.
 God does not profile.
 God does not deport.
 God does not reduce souls to data points.
 We are more than files.
 We are more than numbers.
 We are fearfully and wonderfully made.

LEADER:

How do we bless in a time of genocide?
 How do we rejoice in a time of famine?
 How do we hope in a time of cages and cameras?

PEOPLE:

We bless by remembering.
 We bless by naming.
 We bless by refusing erasure.
 We bless by resisting lies.
 We bless by insisting that no people are disposable.
 We bless by building sanctuaries where others build surveillance.

LEADER:

Rejoice and be glad.

PEOPLE:

Not because we deny suffering.
 But because injustice does not have the final word.
 Not because we ignore death.
 But because hope is relentless.
 Not because oppression is small—
 but because God is greater.



Photos of people targeted by ICE and children killed by U.S./Israeli bombing attacks.

ALL:

We will restore names.

We will tell stories.

We will bear witness.

We will not be silent.

For they are not statistics.

They are our brothers and sisters.

They are our neighbors.

They are our children.

They are us.

And blessing them is our sacred work.

Amen.

To learn more and take action against
surveillance tech company Palantir, visit

[AFSC.ORG/PURGE-PALANTIR](https://afsc.org/purge-palantir)

