

# This Day in History... September 21, 2002

## International Day of Peace

In 2002, twenty years after it was first established, the International Day of Peace was celebrated on its new permanent date – September 21. Also known as World Peace Day, it's a United Nations-sanctioned holiday calling for peace and an end to war and violence.

The International Day of Peace was first established in 1981. That summer, the International Association of University Presidents' Sixth Triennial Conference proposed the declaration of a Peace Year, Peace Month, and Peace Day. Meeting that November, the UN General Assembly considered this proposal. In their notes for the session, the Assembly recalled "that the promotion of peace, both at an international and a national level, is among the main purposes of the United Nations."

In keeping with this major goal, they declared that beginning in 1982, International Peace Day would occur on the third Tuesday of September. This was to coincide with the opening day of the regular sessions of the General Assembly. According to the UN, the Day of Peace "shall be devoted to commemorating and strengthening the ideas of peace both within and among all nations and peoples."

The International Day of Peace was celebrated in accordance with this declaration for nearly 20 years. In 2001, the General Assembly planned on opening early, on September 11. However, that meeting was interrupted by the 9/11 terrorist attack on New York.

Prior to the attack, the Peace One Day Organization had called for International

*Issued for International Peace Year in 1986*

Peace Day to be held on the same calendar date every year, to help avoid confusion. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan announced that beginning in 2002, International Peace Day would be celebrated on September 21. He further declared that it would be a day of global ceasefire and non-violence.

In the years since, the International Day of Peace has continued to be celebrated on September 21, with the secretary-general calling for a global ceasefire. Reportedly, in 2008, violence was reduced by 70% in Afghanistan on Peace Day that year.

Among the traditions of International Peace Day is the ringing of the Peace

*Issued for Peace Day in 2004*

Bell at the New York Headquarters. The bell was created from coins donated by children from around the world as a gift from Japan "as a reminder of the human cost of war." An inscription on the bell reads "Long live absolute world peace."

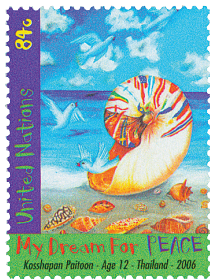
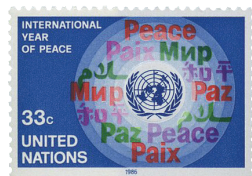
Most years have included a special theme to their celebrations. In 2007, it was "Peace is the United Nations' Highest Calling;" in 2008 "Human Rights and Peacekeeping;" in 2009 "Disarmament and Non-proliferation;" in 2010 "Youth for Peace and Development;" in 2011 "Peace and Democracy;" in 2012 "Sustainable Peace for a Sustainable Future;" in 2013 "Education for Peace;" in 2014 "The Right of Peoples to Peace;" in 2015 "Partnerships

for Peace – Dignity for All;" in 2016 "The Sustainable

*2004 stamp issued for the 50th anniversary of the Japanese Peace Bell.*

Development Goals: Building Blocks for Peace;" in 2017 "Together for Peace: Respect, Safety and Dignity for All;" in 2018 "The Right to Peace – the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at 70;" in 2019 "Climate Action for Peace;" in 2020 "Shaping Peace Together;" and in 2021 "Recovering Better for an Equitable and Sustainable World."

Since 1988, Lions Club International has held an annual poster contest. Children from around the world are invited to design posters that express their visions of peace. Several of the winning posters have been featured UN International Day of Peace stamps over the years.



*Issued for Peace Day in 2006*

**Mystic Stamp Company • Camden, NY 13316**

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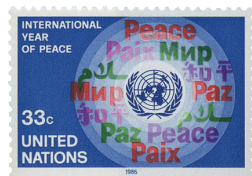
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