

The following resolution was adopted by the 2011 Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly during its Spring Session on May 6-7 at the National Conference Center in Leesburg, Virginia. "Whereas" clauses are listed as background for Voting Members. The Assembly votes on "Resolved" clauses only.

Kairos Palestine Response

Whereas, in its *Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine* (2005) the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) makes known its intent to “act and speak boldly, engaging in coordinated and strategic actions for the sake of both Israelis and Palestinians”^a by "Intensifying ELCA Efforts to Support Advocacy by Members;" to "encourage and support ecumenical partnership" in the Middle East^b; and for “Managing collective or personal investments with concern for their impact on the lives of all Holy Land peoples who suffer from the ongoing conflict”^c; and

Whereas, an ecumenical group of concerned Palestinian Christians has written the document, *A Moment of Truth: A word of faith, hope and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering*, [hereinafter “*Kairos Palestine*”]^d written first in Arabic to the people of the churches in their land, and subsequently supported by the patriarchs and heads of the thirteen historic churches in Jerusalem and the Holy Land in a united response^e; and

Whereas, Christians worldwide were moved to respond to the Kairos statement from Christians in South Africa about their oppression, and subsequent global expressions of solidarity helped end apartheid there through the nonviolent transformation of that society; and

Whereas, *Kairos Palestine* is not an in-depth analysis of the conflict, but is instead a call both to reject the oppression of the occupation itself and a strong affirmation that for followers of the Christ “... love puts an end to evil by walking in the ways of justice”^f; and

Whereas, *Kairos Palestine* is, in the words of Bishop Munib A. Younan of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), “...an expression of the aspirations of Palestinian Christians inspired by our common spiritual heritage”^g; and

^a ELCA Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine (2005), I. A.

^b *ibid.* II.B. Accompaniment. 2.a.

^c *ibid.* II.B. Advocacy. 4.f.

^d <http://www.kairopalestine.ps/sites/default/Documents/English.pdf>

^e Statement issued December 15, 2009

^f <http://www.kairopalestine.ps/sites/default/Documents/English.pdf>, 4.2.1

^g News Release, ELCA News Service, December 11, 2009

Whereas, the ELCA has committed itself to nurturing a caring and respectful relationship with the Jewish community, we acknowledge the importance of *Kairos Palestine's* vision that we as Christians share with Jewish and Muslim religious and spiritual leaders, "that every human being is created by God and has been given equal dignity"^h ; and

Whereas, ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson has called *Kairos Palestine* an "authentic word from our brothers and sisters in the Palestinian Christian community" and has termed the document "primarily a word of hope in a time of overwhelming pessimism in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a pessimism that could lead to despair,"ⁱ and Bishop Hanson has further affirmed, "Their hope, their affirmation of love for every person, and their nonviolent resistance to the occupation inspire us to continue to do what we can to stand with our companions and partners seeking a just and lasting peace for all in the region"^j ; and

Whereas, the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly in May 2010 resolved to call upon and urge all of its congregations, laity, and clergy to

1. Read and discuss the *Kairos Palestine* document,
2. Seek ways to achieve a deeper understanding of the Israeli - Palestinian conflict, and
3. Seek ways in which they can act to help end the occupation, bring about justice for all, and foster reconciliation among all the people of the Holy Land; and

Whereas, the synod's Middle East Working Group has made available resources and education to synod congregations through several workshops and mailings; therefore, be it

Resolved, that the ELCA Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly publicly receive the *Kairos Palestine* document as an authentic perspective of Palestinian Christians on the state of affairs in their homeland, and as an expression of their commitment to finding peace, justice, and reconciliation with their brothers and sisters through the way of the Christ we follow together; and be it further

Resolved, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly, in solidarity with the churches in Palestine and the Church of Christ throughout the world, affirm the *Kairos Palestine* belief that "The mission of the Church is prophetic, to speak the Word of God courageously, honestly and lovingly in the local context and in the midst of daily events"^k ; and be it further

^h <http://www.kairospalestine.ps/sites/default/Documents/English.pdf>, 8

ⁱ In Response to the Kairos Palestine Document <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Office-of-the-Presiding-Bishop/Messages-and-Statements/091217.aspx>

^j *ibid.*

^k *ibid.* 3.4.1

Resolved, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly direct the bishop of the synod invite ELCJHL Bishop Munib Younan (President of the Lutheran World Federation) to speak to the pastors and congregations of our synod, and be it further

Resolved, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly memorialize the 2011 ELCA Churchwide Assembly meeting in Orlando, Florida, to

1. Call upon and urge all of its congregations, laity, and clergy to read and discuss the *Kairos Palestine* document.
2. Receive the *Kairos Palestine* document as an authentic word of the Palestinian Christian perspective on the state of affairs in their homeland and of their commitment to finding peace, justice, and reconciliation with their brothers and sisters through the way of the Christ we follow together.
3. Affirm the path of non-violent resistance to oppression which *Kairos Palestine* has set forth as the means by which the Body of Christ is called to act and live.
4. Direct appropriate churchwide units to review how investment funds managed within the ELCA, including ELCA Foundation and ELCA Board of Pensions, might be construed to support activities that violate international human rights and international law within Israel and Palestine, and report back to the congregations of the ELCA through *The Lutheran* magazine.