



**METROPOLITAN
WASHINGTON, D.C.**
SYNOD ELCA

A Call for Peace and Action in Palestine and Israel

October 7, 2024

Dear Siblings in Christ,

As we witness the ongoing tragedy unfolding between Palestinians and Israelis, our hearts break for the immense suffering endured by our neighbors in the Holy Land. As followers of Christ, we are empowered to speak against the violence and injustice that continues to plague this region.

Our Lutheran faith teaches us that we are called to be peacemakers, to stand with the oppressed, and to work tirelessly for justice. In this spirit, and in accordance with the teachings of our church, I urge our government to take immediate and sustained action to:

1. Secure an immediate and permanent ceasefire;
2. Ensure the release of all hostages and unlawfully detained political prisoners;
3. Establish unhindered access to humanitarian aid for all of Gaza;
4. Recognize the State of Palestine, support full membership of Palestine in the United Nations, and call on the parties to the conflict to avoid actions that jeopardize a two-state solution and that undermine Palestinian self-determination; and
5. Enable the resumption of a credible political process in order to achieve a negotiated, non-violent solution to this long-standing conflict.

As Lutherans, we believe in the transformative power of God's grace and the redemptive nature of Christ's love. This belief compels us to act, to speak truth to power, and to stand in solidarity with those who suffer. I call upon all members of our Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod to join in this crucial work for peace:

- Pray fervently for our Palestinian and Israeli siblings, especially those actively working for justice, equality, reconciliation, and peace.
- Support our church leaders' calls for peace and justice by contacting decision-makers.
- Affirm and support the vital work of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, the Lutheran World Federation, and the Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel.

- Engage with our synod's newly established Middle East Peace Team, participating in educational opportunities and advocacy efforts.
- Learn about and engage with the ELCA's SUMUD initiative, formerly known as Peace Not Walls.

As we live and lead at this time, let us boldly and faithfully pursue a just peace inspired by Jesus' message of love, reconciliation, and justice... with God's help and in Jesus' name.

In Christ's peace and justice,



Rev. Leila M. Ortiz, Bishop of The Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod of the ELCA

