

Bishops Issue Joint Statement Calling for Peace in the Middle East and Urging Prayer, Echoing Council of Bishops' Call to Action

If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

Romans 12:18

Beloved,

Our hearts are wrenching over the unfathomable atrocities perpetrated by Hamas against the Israeli people. Terrorism is never morally justified under any conditions and we fervently pray for those who have been impacted by this act of terrorism.

Our hearts are also wrenching over the innocent lives that have been and will be lost as a result of Israel's declaration of war against Hamas. Every war leads to the death and wounding of innocent people and for this reason The United Methodist Church advocates for peace, asserting the "...first moral duty of all nations is to work together to resolve by peaceful means every dispute that arises between and among them" (Social Principles ¶165c).

The historical and current political realities in Palestine and Israel are complex. While there are those who seek to use this conflict to sow further division in the midst of an already divisive situation, everyone involved in this current moment needs our prayers.

We lift in prayer the vulnerable Palestinian and Israeli citizens, in particular the innocent children, who have been physically, emotionally, and spiritually wounded. We pray God will comfort those who have already been lost and those who may lose loved ones in the days to come. We entreat God to impart wisdom, compassion, and love on all of the world and especially the local leaders who are making decisions that will impact the safety and welfare of those who live in the region.

Because of the historical realities of the region, it may seem as if peace is impossible. But we believe Jesus when he said, "*With man, this is impossible, but with God, all things are possible*" (Matthew 19:26).

Therefore, we ask for the next thirty days we pray each day for peace in the Middle East, even as we acknowledge peace begins within each one of our hearts.

Peace,
Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball

Here are some prayers that may be helpful to you as you lift the region in prayer.

O God Source of Life, Creator of Peace. . .

Help Your children, anguished and confused, To understand the futility of hatred and violence And grant them the ability to stretch across political, religious and national boundaries so they may confront horror and fear by continuing together in the search for justice, peace and truth. . . . With every fiber of our being we beg You, O God, to help us not to fail nor falter. Amen

-Written by Rabbi H. Rolando Matalon, Congregation B'nai Jeshurun, New York, NY

In the name of God, The Everlasting Merciful, The Cherisher of the Worlds and Worthy of all Praise, Our Lord:

You have created us from a single (pair) of a male and a female and made us into Nations and Tribes that we may know one another (not that we may despise each other) so help us love each other and take the hatred and anger from our hearts so that the People of the Book (Christians, Jews, and Muslims) in the Middle East may live in Peace and Justice. Amen

-Written by Dawud Ahmad Assad, Council of Mosques, USA, New York, NY

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:

where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen

-Written by Saint Francis of Assisi

United Methodist Church Bishops condemn violence in the Middle East, call for prayer and action

The Council of Bishops (COB) of The United Methodist Church has condemned the ongoing violence in the Middle East and has called for prayer and action.

In a statement released today, COB President Thomas J. Bickerton urged all United Methodists to renew a deepened commitment to pray for those who have been injured, abducted, or killed, and to deepen our prayers for those who have suddenly lost a loved one.

“As a people who pray for and work toward peace, we in the United Methodist family are appalled, and dismayed by the animosities and inhumane actions undertaken by Hamas. The declaration of war on the part of Israel as a result is also deeply saddening,” the COB statement said.

Bishop Bickerton reminded the UMC about the *Book of Resolutions (2016)* which states clearly that, “We seek for all people in the Middle East region an end to military occupation, freedom from violence, and full respect for the human rights of all under international law.”

Quoting the Prophet Isaiah, Bishop Bickerton remained hopeful to the future of peace and love for all of God’s children.

[See full statement.](#)