

October 8, 2023

Statement on War in the Holy Land

On Saturday the world watched in horror as Hamas launched a rapid, devastating barrage of violence against Israel. Rockets, drone attacks, the killing of civilians and the taking of hostages have ignited long simmering tensions between Israel and Palestine. Israel has responded with ongoing rocket attacks and the death toll on all sides rises daily.

Our hearts grieve at the resurgence of violence that bereaves both Palestinian and Israeli families. We long for peace and security for the people of Israel who seek a safe place to live free from discrimination, anti-semitism and repeated pogroms. We long for peace and security for the Palestinian people who also long to live in safety, to thrive free from occupation and discrimination. Neither have found that peace in repeated patterns of hatred and conflict.

We stand with Archbishop Hosam Naoum (Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem) and Bishop Sani Azar (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land) and their people, praying for safety for all who are caught in the middle of this conflict—including visitors and pilgrims. We pray for the Al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza and the Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem seeking to provide medical care to any and all in need amidst the chaos.

We urge Prime Minister Trudeau and all international leaders to offer whatever they can toward a cessation of hostilities and a lasting, just peace for Israel and Palestine.

In the face of grief and violence we offer this prayer.....

God of peace and justice,
Our hearts weep as the rockets fall in Israel and Gaza,
As families are bereaved
As men, women and children are taken hostage,
As anger and hatred are fuelled again.

In the land you chose for your people and your Son we pray
for those bereaved by the violence,
For the wounded and injured,
For the hostages
That your love will surround and comfort them.

We pray for strength and compassion
for all offering medical care, especially our partners, the Al-Ahli Arab Hospital
and Augusta Victoria Hospital.

We pray for Bishop Sani Azar and Archbishop Hosam Naoum and all Christians in the
Holy Land
for their safety and their leadership in this time of crisis.

We pray for all leaders in Israel and Palestine that a just and lasting peace will be
found.

In the midst of our grief and sorrow we trust in your unfailing love for all people, and
for your Land, and ask that your wisdom would prevail, for we ask in the name of
Jesus Christ, who brings the world eternal peace.
AMEN.



Bishop Susan Johnson
National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada



The Most Rev. Linda Nicholls
Primate, Anglican Church of Canada