



*OFFICE OF THE BISHOP*  
NEW JERSEY SYNOD  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
*God's work. Our hands.*  
1930 Highway 33, Hamilton Square, NJ 08690

October 10, 2023

Dear Friends,

My heart is breaking as I watch and listen to news reports out of Israel and Palestine. I mourn for the lives lost to violence borne from months of increased tensions and provocations in this land we call holy. The language of revenge and retaliation serves only to escalate the situation and results in the death and destruction of innocent people in Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank.

Our siblings in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land have asked us to pray with and for them as they work for a just peace. How do we speak a word of peace in this situation? How do we sift through all the noise to hear the still small voice of God? How do we follow the Prince of Peace when we are hurt and angry and uncertain?

The psalmist cries out, “How long, O Lord” and Ezekial, prays, “O God, you know”. We, too, join their voices as we pray for the Jewish and Palestinian people:

Gracious God, by day and night we pour out our prayer to you. We are crying out for justice, yearning for what is right, longing for your peace. Come quickly, O God; save those who call upon your name. Keep us working and praying for the day when your justice will roll down like waters, and your righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Replenish our strength and stir up our hope as we look for signs of your coming reign. And fill us with the peace that passes understanding—the deep peace of Jesus Christ our Savior, in whose holy name we pray. **Amen.**

*(All Creation Sings, Prayer of Lament)*

In sure and certain hope,

Bishop Tracie L. Bartholomew