



MIDDLE EAST CRISIS

RESOURCES FOR A PRAYER VIGIL

Christian Aid and Embrace the Middle East offer you and your church this resource to help you pray during the current crisis in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. You are welcome to use parts of this resource as appropriate in your services or to use these materials to help you plan a **prayer vigil** for the region.

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... we pray without ceasing for justice, reconciliation, peace, and an end to hatred and war. We also pray for God to change the hearts of all leaders and decision-makers in our countries and around the world. For we are in dire need of hearts that love, show mercy, and are willing to live in unity with others—hearts that respect human dignity and choose life rather than death.
(++ Hosam E. Naoum, Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem)

Gathering

A moment of silence followed by words of welcome appropriate to your context.

You may use the following words as candles are lit:

**In the name of Christ, who is our peace,
we light this light for peace in Israel, peace in Gaza, peace in the West Bank, and peace across the Middle East.**

Opening Prayers

O God of all justice and peace, we cry out to you in the midst of the pain and trauma of violence and fear which prevails in the Holy Land.

Be with those who need you in these days of suffering; we pray for people of all faiths - Jews, Muslims and Christians and for all people of the land.

While we pray to you, O Lord, for an end to violence and the establishment of peace, we also call for you to bring justice and equity to the peoples.

Guide us into your kingdom, where all people are treated with dignity and honour as your children, for to all of us you are our Heavenly Father.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

The Very Revd Canon Richard Sewell,
Dean of St George's College Jerusalem.



Lord, hear us as we pray for peace.

We pray that this crisis will end now, without further loss of life.
We pray for the injured, the suffering and for those who mourn their loved ones.
We pray for all people who have been displaced, those who have lost their homes and have nowhere safe to go.
We pray for all those in danger at this moment.

Lord, hear us as we pray for peace.

We pray for the powerful, the decision-makers, who can choose to act for peace.
May they follow the paths of justice, mercy and compassion.
We pray for recognition of the value of human life
We remember that we are all made in the image of God.

Lord, hear us as we pray for peace.

We pray for those who are most vulnerable.
We remember your call, Lord, to help the bereaved, the stranger, the orphan.
We pray for medical staff and humanitarian workers who continue to serve others, even when they are themselves deeply affected by this conflict.
We pray especially for children caught up in the violence, that they may know safety.

**God of peace and justice, hear our prayers.
Amen.**

Music or Singing

We listen and reflect, or sing together.

Suggested hymns and songs:

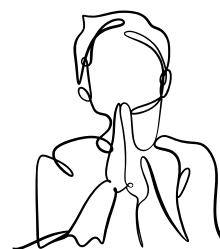
- Longing for Light, We Wait in Darkness [Christ Be Our Light] (Farrell, 1993)
- O God, you search me and you know me (Farrell, 1992)
- For the Healing of the Nations (Kaan, 1968)
- When Mountains that We Thought Secure (Hill, 2001)
- We Pray for Peace (Gillette, 2022)

Voices from the conflict

Here you may wish to invite some of those present to read out a selection of the accounts below. These have been gathered in recent days by our organisations from partners in the region, both Palestinian and Israeli.

“ I feel like I’m in a movie. I’m part of the cast. It’s a bad, bizarre film. And I have no idea - because I haven’t heard from any source - what’s with my son.

“ We didn’t sleep last night. We are so scared. Many people have been killed. Some of our staff are evacuating and some of them have lost their houses already. ... There are thousands and thousands of families who are seeking shelter at schools but there are also many families that are now living on the streets.



“ We are facing an unbearable situation. We are struggling to keep our strength and hope. We are waiting now to see what the world is going to do for people in Gaza. We feel frustrated and we feel alone.

There are continuous airstrikes and destruction everywhere. There are so many displaced people - hundreds of thousands. There are shortages of water and electricity which is making life unbearable. We have lost access to water in my home, like many others, so we only use the water we have for drinking water. We are keeping close to our children and prioritising them for water and food.

“ If I was there 10 seconds before I would have been dead. It's not like previous wars...the whole population is affected.

“ I saw [a family member] being taken on a motorcycle toward Gaza and then I saw [another] surrounded by four or five Hamas guys. I hope we can come together, so that together we can think about what is best for us and also for them. They are suffering, too; they are being battered, too.

“ We have received letters from many of you in which you are asking about our safety, and we are very grateful that you are thinking and praying about us! Thankfully, we all ... are doing ok, though one of the rockets fell just about 100 meters from [us]. ... Thank you for standing with us at this dark hour.

“ I think my home being reduced to rubble and what's happened to many others makes us understand that peace is the best. May the king of peace show his love for all the people.

“ We struggle to keep our hope, but we are taking hope from the eyes of our children and [from] your solidarity during very hard times, these difficult and critical times that we are living in Gaza right now. We need nothing but peace, love and justice. I feel this very strongly.

We call to God

In our distress we called upon the Lord; to our God we cried for help.
It is you who light my lamp; the Lord, my God, lights up my darkness.

Even though we walk through the darkest valley
It is you who light my lamp; the Lord, my God, lights up my darkness.

Hear the voice of our supplication, as we cry to you for help.
It is you who light my lamp; the Lord, my God, lights up my darkness.

(From Psalms 18, 23, 28)

Music or Singing

We listen and reflect, or sing together.

Suggested hymns and songs:

O Lord, Hear My Prayer (Taizé)

Stay with me, remain here with me. Watch and pray. (Taizé)

A piece of music performed by an organization that brings Palestinian and Israeli musicians together. For example, the West-East Divan Orchestra or the Polyphony Conservatory, Nazareth.

We offer our own prayers in a period of silence.

Verses to meditate upon as you pray

For God alone my soul waits in silence,
for my hope is from him.

(Psalm 62.5)

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

(John 1.5)

Because of the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us,
to shine upon those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.

(Luke 1.78-79)

But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

(James 3.17-18)

Closing Prayer

Pray not for Arab or Jew,
for Palestinian or Israeli,
but pray rather for ourselves,
that we might not
divide them in our prayers
but keep them both together
in our hearts.



When races fight
Peace be amongst us
When neighbours argue
Peace be amongst us
When nations disagree
Peace be amongst us

Where people struggle for justice
Let justice prevail
Where Christ's disciples follow
Let peace be our way
Amen.

Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace
at all times in all ways.

(2 Thessalonians 3.16)