



# Steädfast / Sumud

FOR JUSTICE IN PALESTINE & ISRAEL

Presented by the Just Love Ministry

# Steädfast/Sumud

## FOR JUSTICE IN PALESTINE & ISRAEL

Lent is a season of reflection, repentance and purification, as we journey deeper in our relationship with God. Christ's love invites us to speak out against the violence of the world and our complicity towards it. This Lent, join the Just Love team as we confront the trauma and terror in Palestine and Israel and accompany our siblings calling for a lasting peace rooted in the justice and love of God.

In October of this year, the ELCA released [2022-2023 Review and Summary Recommendations of Peace Not Walls](#) (RSR). This document and the continued atrocities on the ground in Palestine and Israel inspired this Lenten series. Excerpts from the document along with testimonies from Palestinian Christian leaders will be included in each devotion. Though not required, reading through the entire RSR will deepen your Lenten reflections. A huge thank you to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) and the ELCA for their long-time partnership and work in producing the [Sumud video series](#).

Please find additional liturgical resources that may be helpful this Lenten season.

# Prayers of the People

OR OPENING LITANY

**Leader 1:** Let us pray for the peace of Jerusalem, of Israel, of Palestine, and of all God's beloved creation.

**L1:** O God, source of all goodness and compassion . . .

**L2:** Where people live with suspicion and fear, uncertainty and upheaval as their constant companions,

**Congregation:** grant that your holy and life-giving Spirit may move among us, breaking down walls that divide, giving light and courage to the refugee and the most vulnerable in society, and ushering in the day that all may live in safety and security.

**L1:** God of hope . . .

**L2:** When hearts are discouraged and tired, where political prisoners are separated from their loved ones, when husbands and wives are not permitted to live together in Jerusalem because of unjust laws, when whole families despair because they have been forced out of their homes,

**C:** grant that your love and life-sustaining power will flow, encouraging, energizing, freeing, uniting and protecting all your children who struggle to keep hope alive.

**L1:** O God, our creator . . .

**L2:** Where unemployment is staggeringly high, where many have difficult access to medical care and basic necessities, where land and water and other resources are taken illegally,

**C:** reveal your justice and life-preserving grace to us, opening our eyes, inspiring leaders to work for the common good. Embolden advocates and activists to speak truth to power. Strengthen teachers, social workers, pastors and bishops, scientists and lawyers, reporters and film producers,

farmers and laborers, and all who help in the delivery of humanitarian services to ensure that everyone may enjoy a fair portion of the abundance of the earth.

**L1:** God of peace . . .

**L2:** Where there is reliance on the force of arms to frighten, harm or subjugate a neighbor, where children cannot walk to school without the threat of being attacked along the way, where farmers cannot harvest their crops without being harassed,

**C:** grant that your righteousness and life-affirming presence be proclaimed, challenging Israelis and Palestinians to follow a nonviolent path toward the end of the occupation, agitating for the protection of human rights, and comforting those whose lives have been afflicted by abuse and violence.

**L1:** God of reconciliation . . .

**L2:** Where relationships are broken, where people are isolated – from each other and also from goods and services that alleviate suffering – and where political processes meant to restore dignity produce cynicism and anger,

**C:** grant that your mercy and life-restoring steadfastness may astound us, animating in us an eagerness to forgive and be forgiven. Empower individuals, communities, and nations to be generous and tenderhearted. Bless Palestinians and Israelis who dare to take risks for peace. Guide and refresh all those who accompany them. Help the Palestinians to see the image of God in the Israelis and the Israelis to see the image of God in the Palestinians, so that they can accept each other's humanity and mutually recognize each other's civil, religious, political and national rights in order to live in their states in peace based on justice, reconciliation and forgiveness.

**L1:** All this, and everything else that is needed for wholeness in the Holy Land and in our own land, we pray, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

# Kyrie

God of our planet, heavens and all eternity,

We turn our prayers to each of the humans you have created, who are involved in the Israel-Hamas conflict happening right now,

We know that you know them each by name.

We pray **Lord have mercy.**

We pray for the mothers and fathers who have lost children in the fighting. We think of the scripture in Matthew 2:18, "A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more." You are God not unfamiliar with our suffering in times of war and persecution. Draw close to them and bring them solace in their loss.

We pray **Christ have mercy.**

We pray for those who have loved ones who are sick, injured, in danger and in hostile environments. Those in hospitals, care homes, unable to move or flee. We know that you are a God who moves in the unseen. Restore their safety and health we pray.

We pray **Lord have mercy.**

God, for those inflamed tensions, retaliations, fighting, fear, and attacks right now.

We pray you bind the forces of evil that would cause loss of life, murder, maiming. We know our battle isn't against flesh and blood, and so we pray you turn back the Enemy as he seeks to kill, steal, and destroy.

We pray **Christ have mercy.**

Jesus, walk amongst your people in the great divide happening right now. We pray that peace would fall upon the heads of each person in that land, and those related to those conflict in lands far away. We pray peace would dwell in their hearts, thoughts, and communications. Only you can do this magnificent thing, for your glory and your name's sake we pray.

We pray **Lord have mercy...**

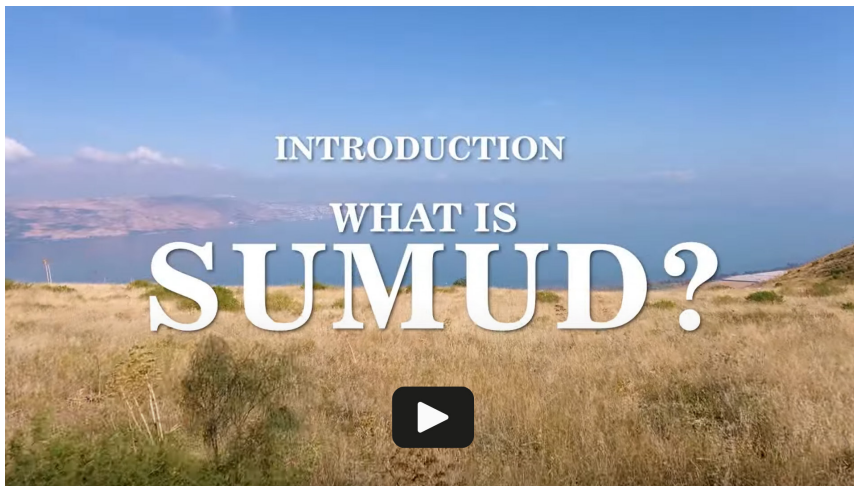


# Week 1: THE NOAHIC COVENANT: A COVENANT FOR ALL PEOPLE AND ALL CREATION

## Meditate **GENESIS 9**

<sup>8</sup>God said to Noah and to his sons with him,<sup>9</sup>“As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you,<sup>10</sup>and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark.<sup>11</sup>I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.”<sup>12</sup>God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations.<sup>13</sup>I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.<sup>14</sup>When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds,<sup>15</sup>I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.<sup>16</sup>When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.”<sup>17</sup>God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

## Explore



*Excerpts from the deep listening with Palestinian Christian leaders (RSR p. 11)*

Development of physical and legal infrastructure for a permanent Israeli occupation of Palestinians in the Holy Land, including:

- Construction and technological development of a separation wall and permanent checkpoints in the West Bank and continued enforcement of the total enclosure of Gaza, which isolate and control entire Palestinian populations.
- Collective punishment of Palestinian populations, including repeated bombings of Gaza and incursions into Jenin and other West Bank communities.
- Strategic land seizures and forced displacement of Palestinian residents from areas identified by international law as occupied Palestinian lands, including in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem.
- Arbitrary withholding and/or limitation of natural resources such as water, electricity and internet capacity from Palestinian communities.
- Systemic deprivation of other internationally recognized human rights.

**SATELLITE IMAGE OF THE DAMAGE TO COMMUNITIES & CREATION**



# Week 1: THE NOAHIC COVENANT: A COVENANT FOR ALL PEOPLE AND ALL CREATION

## Reflect

When people think of Lent, Noah's Ark is usually not the first thing to pop into their minds. But there is an essential connection — and it goes beyond 40 days and 40 nights. We begin the forty days of Lent with the memory of a previous 40 days when sin was cleansed from the face of the earth. This occurred through a flood which spared only 8 people – Noah & his companions on the ark. This gives us a hint about the meaning & purpose of Lent and its mysterious link to baptism.

It is precisely the kind of covenant that God proposed to Noah and, through Noah, to all of humanity and the earth. God's promise invites us to reflect on the need to be respectful and vigilant about the agreements and commitments we make to one another and to our environment. After the grace shown by God in the rainbow (Genesis 9:13), Noah and his family assumed responsibility for making sure humanity would live their lives differently, taking on not only individual commitments but also collective ones. It is the same kind of commitment we are called to make as a Christian community to care for the people and resources God has given to us.

## Pray

*God of promise, thank you for the hope and grace you proclaim to the world, from setting the rainbow in the sky to sending your son, Jesus. May we respond by keeping our promises to the people of Palestine and Israel. May we especially be committed towards understanding and advocating for the humanitarian needs of the people of Gaza. Open our hearts and minds to care for, shelter and protect them as you have done with Noah his family and all the animals. **Amen.***

1. The ark was a place of refuge for Noah and the animals amidst the storm. Where do you find refuge amidst the storm? Where can the people of Palestine find refuge today?
2. As a Christian, I can read the Noah passage and be comforted, knowing the rainbow is a sign of God's promise to never destroy the Earth with water. Yet we witness the destruction of God's people and God's creation in the Holy Land. What solace can we offer the people of Palestine and Israel who have lost loved ones to the violence? What comfort can we offer the people of Palestine who have lost everything? What kind of companionship or accompaniment can we offer?
3. This first covenant reading emphasizes that God's covenant is with all people and all creation. How does God's cosmic covenant and faithfulness contrast with the current destruction of the land and the people in Palestine?

## Sing

785 It is well with my soul  
666 What wondrous love is this  
715 Christ be my light