

# United Network for Justice & Peace in Palestine & Israel

---

 [unjppi.org/prayers.html](http://unjppi.org/prayers.html)



---

## Prayers for Personal and Corporate Worship

### National Service of Mourning in Remembrance of those who have died in Palestine and Israel

---

#### Bethlehem Prayer

O Mystery as grand as the universe  
O Mighty Force of all creation,  
O Power beyond all our power,  
You have come to us as an infant.  
Vulnerable, fragile, beautiful.  
You have come to us  
in the midst of poverty,  
powerlessness and longing.

Come again, O Promiser of Peace.  
Come again, to the city of your birth  
mired in fear, oppression and injustice.  
Come again, where bullet holes  
still pock the walls of Sanctuary.  
Come again, where Children dream  
of homes they have never seen.  
Come again, where a single key  
or the number 194 cry out again  
of forced journey to Bethlehem.

#### A Prayer for Courage

God,

You ask for our courage to protect the  
powerless  
but we prefer to remain safe, preserving  
ourselves for future challenges.

You ask us to speak out for justice  
but we whisper, in case we are heard.

You ask us to stand up for what is right,  
but we would rather blend in to the crowd

You ask us to have faith,  
when doubting seems so much easier.

Lord forgive our calculated efforts to follow you,  
only when it is convenient to do so,  
only in those places where it is safe to do so,  
only with those who make it easy to do so.

Be born again in the camps.  
Be born again in stables and homes.  
Be born again in many cities and languages.  
Be born again among nations.  
Be born again in places of injustice.  
Be born again a promise of hope,  
a sign of love and joy to the world.  
Be born again in our hearts,  
that we too might be called  
Makers of peace  
and Children of God.

Amen

*The Right Rev. David Giuliano, Moderator of The United Church of Canada*

Advent worship resources are available on the United Church website: <http://www.united-church.ca/worship>

#### Notes:

- Bethlehem is now walled off from Jerusalem and is home to three Palestinian refugee camps.
- The “single key” refers to the many Palestinians in Bethlehem who still have keys to homes from which they fled in 1948.
- The number 194 appears in many places in Bethlehem, and refers to United Nations Resolution #194 granting Palestinian refugees the “right of return” to their home villages.
- The Church of the Nativity is still pocked by Israeli bullets that ended a 42-day siege in 2002 after Palestinian soldiers had taken refuge there.
- 

© 2008 The United Church of Canada/L'Église Unie du Canada. Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial Share Alike Licence. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.5/ca>. Any copy must include this notice.

Together we pray  
**God forgive us and renew us;  
Inspire us and challenge us  
So that we might risk the journey, to your  
kingdom with you,**

**Amen**

(This is a **Prayer of Confession** from a service at GreenBelt, UK, in 2003, read at a service at Cheltenham Races. It was an opening prayer of a recently held skype meeting of the international Kairos core group.

### **When, my God when**

When I sing  
I will sing of a land rich in history  
The Holy land  
Where Judaism Islam and Christianity share  
A common history, land, and life  
A people seeking God, God of ages  
A land of wounded peoples, wounded earth  
Where diverse voices join in faith  
Seeking a vision of co-existence  
Struggling for justice and peace  
I will sing of life celebrated,  
Grief, anger and fear shared  
People struggling for the freedom to exist  
In this Holy land

### **God give me the words to sing**

When I speak  
I will speak about the power of fear  
Fear of the other, neighbor friend  
Fear, socially constructed to legitimize  
Oppressive actions on behalf of those who are  
afraid  
Afraid of children throwing stones to resist  
occupation  
Fear to share water, land and life abundant  
Fear to call into question structures of power  
Which violate people's rights with impunity  
Fear to name apartheid as racist system

Sustained by western imperialism  
A sin that cannot be justified in this time  
Fear to speak

**God give me a voice to speak**

When I lament  
I will lament the walls and barriers that divide  
Neighbors friends and relatives  
The pain and suffering of families separated  
The everyday humiliation of check points  
Walls and barriers that imprison  
Walls and barriers that impoverish communities  
Cut off from economic life  
Schools, hospitals, freedom and life  
Walls and barriers that confiscate land  
Olive gardens, and villages  
For the building of ever expanding settlements  
I will lament the house demolitions  
The forced removals of indigenous  
communities  
Seeking simply to live  
The pain of a homeless mother  
Girl child who can no longer go to school  
A male young adult turned a suicide bomber  
A child who learns someone on the other side  
Seeks to kill them  
Crying out Why God why

**God give me the courage to lament**

When I hope  
I will hope in the Patriarchs  
Heads of Local Christian Churches  
Rabbis for Peace, Imams  
Despite the obstacles, walls and barriers  
Struggle for the restoration of peace in the land  
I will hope in the IBDAA, Sabeel, Women in  
Black  
Alternative Tourism Group, B'Tselem,  
BatShalom,  
Jerusalem Inter-Church Centre, Jerusalem  
Centre for Women  
Dar al-Kalima College,  
Aida, Deheisheh Refugee Camps  
Christian Peace Teams, Ecumenical

accompaniers  
Men women young adults and children  
The bright stars of Jerusalem  
Cultivating, communicating hope  
Resisting oppression, constructing peace  
God give me the courage to hope

When I pray  
I will pray for justice peace  
for hope everlasting  
That all may have life  
Abundant life  
God hear my prayer

Reflections from a solidarity visit to  
Palestine/Israel

Omega Bula, Spring 2007

By permission.

---