



HIGHER EDUCATION & MINISTRY

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

A Liturgy for Peace in Israel, Gaza, and the World

Introduction:

The Siddur Avodat Halev (Jewish book of daily prayer) indicates that the root of the Hebrew word for prayer (tefillah) means to judge, differentiate, clarify, or decide. In life, we constantly sort out evidence from rumor, valid options from wild speculations, fact from fancy. Thus, prayer is the soul's yearning to define what truly matters and to ignore the trivialities that often masquerade as essential. As we pray for peace, we pray for peace abroad and at home. We pray for a cease to violence against Jewish and Palestinians persons in our community and in the world.

Prayer

O God, we confess that we are a fearful people. Each day we grow more afraid of those who are different rather than becoming more open to embracing that difference as the mysterious and marvelous gift you intend it to be. We assume the worst intentions in those whom we meet, and all too often we act in ways that fan further the flames of mis-trust, causing the culture of fear to grow greater each day. **(Rick Ufford-Chase)**

Increase our love. Decrease our fear. Help us so we may courageously move beyond our hatred and into the healing Kin-ship you dream for the world. Help us, beginning this day. **Amen.**

Meditation

A meditation may be included at this point. It should be interactive showing that conflict abroad affects us directly at home. A witness may be shared by a member of the community affected by the war. Participants could fold a piece of paper for every person they know who has suffered directly or indirectly (antisemitism or Islamophobia) due to the war. The piece of folded paper may be shown to others in the room indicating the burdens we carry. Another activity could be writing the names of people who have been affected by war and placing them on a visible map of the world.



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Prayer for Peace

This prayer is divided into three categories: prayers for the Israel-Palestinian War, prayers against Islamophobia and antisemitism in our communities, and prayers for inner peace. The sentences that precede each section ought to be read as part of the prayer.

Let us pray: God of us all, since first the blood of Abel cried to you from the ground that drank it, this earth of yours has been defiled with the blood of many shed by their fellow's hand, and the centuries sob with the ceaseless horror of war. Ever the pride of kings and the covetousness of the strong has driven peaceful nations to slaughter. Ever the songs of the past and the pomp of armies have been used to inflame the passions of the people. Our spirit cries out to you in revolt against it. Break thou the spell of the enchantments that make the nations drunk with the lust of battle and draw them on as willing tools of death. Grant us a quiet and steadfast mind when our own nation clamors for vengeance or aggression. Strengthen our sense of justice and our regard for the equal worth of other peoples and races. (Walter Rauschenbusch, adapted)

Silent Prayers for the People of Israel and Palestine

God of us all, help us transform these agonies of war into agonies for peace, until we yearn for peace so profoundly that we become your channels for its accomplishment. **(Marjorie Suchoki)**

Silent Prayers against Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia in our Community

God of us all, show us the straight path, the path of those upon whom You have given Your Grace, those whose portion is not wrath, and who go not astray. **(Qur'an 1:7)**

Silent Prayers for Inner Peace

God of us all, in our hearts, in our communities and in our world, help us as the prophet Isaiah proclaimed, to beat our swords into plowshares and our spears into pruning hooks so we shall stop rising against one another and see each other for what we are, siblings of equal worth, caring for this Earth. **Amen.**

Departing Blessing

Leader: Lead me from the unreal to the real,

People: Lead me from darkness to light,

Leader: Lead me from death to life,

People: Lead me from falsehood to truth.

Leader: Lead me from despair to hope, from fear to trust.

People: Lead me from hate to love, from war to peace.

Leader: Let peace fill our heart, Our world, our universe.

All: Peace. Peace. Peace.