

PUBLIC STATEMENT – 2024 World Week of Prayer for Peace in Palestine and Israel

The National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) continues to grieve the lack of peace and justice in Gaza and Israel and the continuing lack of commitment of all parties to ending the conflict and suffering with a permanent ceasefire.

NCCA President, Rev John Gilmore says, “We invite all Australians to join with people and churches across the world to pray, advocate for peace with justice, and stand in solidarity with people in the Holy Land during the [World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel](#), that is being observed on 16-22 September 2024.”

NCCA will host an online lunchtime prayer service on Wednesday 18 September 2024 during the 25th annual World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel organised by the World Council of Churches.

In response to the cry of Palestinian Christians to the global church, Rev Gilmore says that “our sustained prayer is needed to bring an end to the violence and humanitarian catastrophe of the displaced and detained people in Gaza who are enduring daily deadly bombing and destruction, lack of shelter, unclean water, injury, sickness and infection and food shortages.”

The theme of the 2024 week of prayer for peace is the words of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew – “whatever you did ... you did for me.” (Matt. 25:40) The seven sub-themes for every day of the week are accompanied by data and testimonies of current realities, bible verses, prayers, and daily reflections, that cover – human loss, injured and disabled, the displaced, Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners, women and children under fire, the international community and, lastly, looking forward to the reconstruction needs, challenges and future path for Gaza.

Act for Peace, the humanitarian aid agency of the NCCA, continues to partner with the Middle Eastern Council of Churches Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR) as it has done for over 15 years in supporting their health clinics and community services in Gaza. With buildings reduced to rubble, the DSPR staff are currently running mobile services to try to meet the needs of the injured, sick and traumatised populations who are constantly being moved on by evacuation orders.

“We also pray for those Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem who are enduring violence against their communities, property and land and restricted access to religious sites and places of worship”, says Rev Gilmore.

“We need to re-focus our efforts in faith-filled prayer”, says Rev Gilmore. “We must open our hearts for empathy and prayerfully support all those suffering death and destruction in the Holy Land with faith in our God of reconciliation.”

We are encouraged to join our prayers with that of Catholic Patriarch Emeritus Michel Sabbah: ‘God of reconciliation, send your spirit of wisdom and prudence in the hearts of those in power that a just and sustainable peace with room for a good life for both Palestinians and Israelis may become possible, Amen.’

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