



Dear Pastors, Congregations, Partners in Ministry, Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

In the wake of the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas, which is also emerging in other parts of the region, our hearts are heavy with sorrow and concern for the people and the nations involved. An abrupt offensive led by Hamas, has resulted in an escalation of violence that has caused abhorrent suffering for countless individuals, families, and communities.

The North American Lutheran Church (NALC) unequivocally condemns the violent actions of any terrorist group, as well as all forms of antisemitism found throughout the world. In contrast, we advocate for peace, justice, and the sanctity of all human life. We believe in the power of prayer and the potential of human hearts to move towards reconciliation and peace under the divine guidance of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We stand with all those in the region who yearn for peace. We pray for the safety and wellbeing of all its inhabitants, remembering that we have brothers and sisters in Christ living in Israel, as well as in other Arab nations including Palestine, who find themselves in dire circumstances amidst the turmoil.

We are mindful of the complex history and deep-rooted tensions that permeate the region. Yet, we ardently pray for an end to the hostilities and for a sustainable resolution that honors the dignity, security, and rights of all individuals. We call upon the leaders involved to act with wisdom, compassion, and a genuine desire for lasting peace.

We invite our pastors, congregations, and partners in ministry to unite in fervent prayer for peace in Israel, Gaza, and the surrounding region, for the illumination and guidance of the leaders involved, and for humanitarian aid to reach those in desperate need. Let us all be praying for a future where enmity is replaced with understanding, oppression with justice, and despair with hope, under the sovereign grace of our loving and Triune God.

I encourage our congregations to be places where our doors are open for comfort and prayer for all of God's people, and where the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, revealed to us in His life, death, and resurrection from the dead for our sin are abundantly present and found.

The following prayer is offered for your use, individually, as families, and in your congregations:

Gracious God, in a world overshadowed by sin and strife, we come before You with heavy hearts, seeking Your divine mercy and peace for the people living in Israel, the Gaza Strip, and the surrounding regions. We pray for the leaders of the nations, that their hearts may be stirred towards justice, reconciliation, and the well-being of all people.

We pray for those whose lives have been lost, for those torn from their homes and families, as well as for those who are being held hostage in this brutal conflict.



We pray for comfort, protection, and healing for wounded spirits and bodies, knowing that all true healing is found in You alone. Lord, may Your boundless love lead us through these dark times towards a horizon of hope, understanding, and enduring peace.

Help us to never lose sight of the promises we have in Jesus and to never lose hope in the One who, through His cross and resurrection from the dead, has secured our lives eternally. In the holy and precious name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” – John 16:33 NIV

In Christ’s service,



The Rev. Dr. Daniel W. Selbo
Bishop, North American Lutheran Church



How to Pray

In light of the ongoing crisis in Israel and the Gaza Strip, we invite you to join us in fervent prayer, imploring God's mercy, healing, and peace over the distressed lands and peoples:

1. **For the Wounded:** Pray for all those who have been injured by rocket fire or terrorist gunfire, that God's healing hand may rest upon them, bringing physical, emotional, and spiritual healing.
2. **For the Kidnapped:** Uphold in prayer more than 130 reportedly kidnapped Israelis, including men, women, children, soldiers, and civilians. Pray for their safe return and for God's comforting presence with their anguished families.
3. **For the Grieving Families:** Pray for God's grace and comfort to be with all grieving families, especially the many children who are caught up in the horror of these events. May the Lord provide for their physical needs and restore their peace.
4. **For Our Servant Leaders:** Ask for perseverance, wisdom, and calm for our mission partners as they serve amid fear and uncertainty. Pray for safe passage and divine protection for all who are in or traveling to the affected areas.
5. **For Upcoming Mission and Travel Engagements:** Pray for discernment for those in the NALC with upcoming trips scheduled to visit the region—for wisdom on how to proceed amidst the volatile circumstances.
6. **For Our Leadership:** Pray for the leadership at NALC as they continue to assess how best to respond to the unfolding situation, seeking God's guidance in every decision.
7. **For Our Youth and Responders:** Especially intercede for young people from local communities who are part of response teams serving as soldiers or medics in harm's way.
8. **For the Residents of Gaza:** We have heard countless stories of individuals who are frightened and fearful for their lives. Pray for God's protection, peace, and provision for them amidst the turmoil.
9. **For Border Peace:** Pray that the borders will remain secure, and that steps towards lasting peace will prevail over forces of destruction and despair.

May our earnest intercessions rise as a pleasing aroma before the throne of grace, and may God's peace, which surpasses all understanding, guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.



Israel-Hamas War

Crisis Relief and Aid Organizations

In these trying times, many have inquired about organizations providing relief in the midst of the Israel-Hamas conflict. We highlight **Lutheran World Relief (LWR)**, a current mission partner of the NALC. However, it is vital to note that other listed organizations have not been vetted by the NALC or its Executive Council. The practices or views of these organizations may not align with those of the NALC, its leadership, or its congregations. We present this list for individual and congregational discernment, recognizing each entity's presence and efforts in this crisis.

1. [Lutheran World Relief \(LWR\)](#)

- **Overview:** LWR is a Lutheran-based organization that has been dedicated to saving and improving lives in the poorest parts of the world since 1945. It is currently a mission partner of the North American Lutheran Church.
- **Relief Efforts:** They focus on supporting rural economies and agricultural livelihoods, promoting sustainable farming practices, and providing humanitarian assistance in response to natural disasters and complex crises. LWR has an [ongoing appeal](#) to assist civilians caught in the danger of the Israel-Hamas conflict. The organization encourages donors to share their spirit of Christian love with neighbors enduring crises, emphasizing that caring for others is an expression of faith in Jesus Christ. They aim to show families in Israel, Gaza, and globally that they are loved, and they're requesting donations to provide lifesaving support.

2. [International Committee of the Red Cross \(ICRC\)](#)

- **Overview:** The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was established in 1863 and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. It operates globally, assisting those impacted by conflict and promoting international humanitarian laws, primarily the Geneva Conventions of 1949. The ICRC is an independent and neutral body, with over 21,000 employees in more than 100 countries. Its mission is to protect and assist victims of armed conflict and violence. The organization is governed by an Assembly and a Directorate, and funding comes mainly from voluntary donations from governments, societies, and other entities.
- **Appeal for Israel and Occupied Territories:** The recent hostilities since October 7 have caused significant suffering to civilians on both sides. Over 180,000 people in the Gaza strip are displaced due to military strikes. The ICRC is urgently [calling for assistance](#) and has been active in providing medical supplies, supporting essential infrastructure, assessing damage to water and sewage systems, assisting detained individuals, and locating missing persons. The organization emphasizes the protection of ambulances, health workers, and facilities at all times.



3. [The Church's Ministry Among Jewish People \(CMJ\)](#)

- **Overview:** CMJ is an Anglican-based organization birthed from the early joint missions sent by the Church of England (Anglican) and the Evangelical Church in Prussia (Lutheran), resulting in a united Anglo-German evangelical church in the Holy Land—now the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and the Episcopal (Anglican) Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East. Today, CMJ's mission focuses on teaching the Jewishness of the New Testament, combating antisemitism, and building bridges with Jewish communities.
- **Relief Efforts:** CMJ is [offering aid and shelter](#) to those displaced due to the Israel-Hamas war. A number of Israeli CMJ missionaries have now been called into active-duty military service.

4. [Fellowship of Israel Related Ministries \(FIRM\)](#)

- **Overview:** FIRM focuses on transforming lives in Israel through Gospel-centered ministries. Rooted deeply in Christian faith, FIRM aspires to be the hands and feet of Jesus, connecting supporters to trusted ministries in Israel while keeping Jesus central to every project. Based in Jerusalem, FIRM supports a network of 60+ ministries in Israel with a passion for reaching people with the Gospel.
- **Emergency Appeal:** FIRM has initiated an [emergency crisis response fund](#) to provide aid for families across Israel that have suffered losses and displacement, asking supporters to show the love of Jesus to those hurting.

5. [International Christian Embassy Jerusalem \(ICEJ\)](#)

- **Overview:** Established in 1980, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) was inaugurated in Jerusalem with the attendance of 1,000 Christians from 32 nations to celebrate the biblical Feast of Tabernacles. Today, the ICEJ is represented in over 90 nations and supporters in more than 170 countries. They engage in various initiatives, from assisting Jewish immigration to Israel to supporting embattled communities, emphasizing comfort, reconciliation, and practical love towards every community in Israel. ICEJ has a proven track record of reaching out in genuine Christian love and concern to every community in Israel – whether Jewish, Arab, Christian, Muslim, Druze or Bedouin. At the same time, the ICEJ has a distinct calling to be a ministry of comfort to the Jewish people, particularly in response to the tragic legacy of Christian antisemitism.
- **Relief Efforts:** ICEJ is on the frontlines [providing essential supplies and shelters](#) to vulnerable Israeli communities during the Israel-Hamas conflict.

6. [Bridges for Peace](#)

- **Overview:** Founded in 1976 by Dr. G. Douglas Young, Bridges for Peace is a Christian organization committed to nurturing Christian-Jewish relationships



- worldwide, and supporting Israel both in times of peace and crisis. Their mission emphasizes educating Christians about Israel's biblical roots and actively countering anti-Semitism. Through diverse programs, they provide publications, prayer groups, assistance projects, and Bible study tours in Israel. Advocacy for Israel's divine right to exist is central to their endeavors. They invite global Christians to become active "bridge-builders", promoting peace and understanding.
- **Relief Efforts:** They are urging people to help Israel during the war by giving to their [Crisis Fund](#), which aims to demonstrate the love of God by blessing the people of Israel during this challenging time.

7. [Shevet Achim](#)

- **Overview:** Shevet Achim (inspired by Psalm 133:1) is a faith-based international community that collaborates with advanced medical centers in Israel to assist children with congenital heart defects. Established in 1994, the organization has its roots in the shared recognition that every life is created in the image of God. Historically, their primary focus was on children from the Gaza Strip, but breakthroughs in later years expanded their reach to Iraq and Syria as well. The organization's foundation story revolves around the plea of a mother in 1994 who came to Israel with her son, seeking life-saving treatment, and asking a simple, heartfelt question: "Will you help us?" This plea led to the formation of a compassionate community that works to save children's lives by facilitating heart surgeries in Israel.
- **Relief Efforts:** Congregations can support Shevet Achim's on-the-ground relief efforts by [sponsoring individual children](#) from conflict regions like Gaza, Iraq, and Syria, who need urgent heart surgeries. By sponsoring a child, congregations can receive regular updates on the child's progress and even have the opportunity to meet the child during their stay in Israel.

For support to the Jewish community in North America, and especially care and evangelistic efforts, consider supporting:

1. [Apple of His Eye Mission Society](#)

- **Overview:** The Apple of His Eye Mission Society is a Lutheran-based organization that actively explores the theological intersections between Jewish and Christian beliefs, such as the Jewish roots of Jesus and questions about the nature of God from both perspectives.
- **Domestic Efforts:** The organization's primary aim is evangelization, focusing on reaching out to the Jewish community in North America with the message of the Gospel. They engage in various outreach programs and educational activities to foster understanding and build bridges between Jewish and Christian communities, all while emphasizing the importance of sharing the Christian faith.

