



## Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

October 20, 2023

Dear members of the ELCIC,

Your bishops are writing to you today with heavy hearts, full of concern for the war between Israel and Hamas. We grieve deeply with the people of Israel and Gaza whose lives have been horrifically impacted by unspeakable violence.

As you may know, we were all in the region last January. We are concerned for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, a church whose Bishop Ibrahim Sani Azar, pastors and people we have come to know and care for. We are concerned for other churches in the region especially the Anglican Diocese of Jerusalem.

But today, we are particularly concerned for the people of Gaza and the West Bank who are receiving harsh reprisals as a result of the horrific massacre by Hamas in Israel. We are concerned for hospitals that are being bombed, most tragically the Al Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza, run by Diocese of Jerusalem with partnerships in cancer care from The Lutheran World Federation's (LWF) Augusta Victoria Hospital in East Jerusalem.

[The LWF, with member churches around the world including in the Holy Land, released a statement](#) condemning all attacks by all parties on civilians in Israel and Palestine. They expressed grave concerns about the targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure, called for a release of hostages, urging all parties to uphold International Humanitarian Law.

We are concerned about the rise in antisemitic and anti-Islamic words and actions in our communities and across the world. We pray that all people of faith may embody peace rather than incite hate.

Please join us in prayer and concern for the region. For those who mourn their dead on both sides of the conflict. For the hostages and their families, afraid for their lives. For those who have been maimed and injured. For those who have lost their homes. For those who have not been able to move to safety. For the opening of a humanitarian corridor into Gaza. For a peaceful solution to this war. That the war may not escalate into neighbouring countries.

*God of peace, we pray for peace between Israel and Hamas. We pray for leaders on both sides that their hearts would be changed and there would be a peaceful ending to this war. God of comfort and strength, we pray for all those who have suffered in this war – those who mourn, the injured, those who live in fear. We pray for those who continue to try to provide aid and medical care – workers who risk their lives. Bring us all hope, bring us all strength, bring us all peace. In your holy and life-giving name we pray, Amen.*

Yours in Christ,

+ 

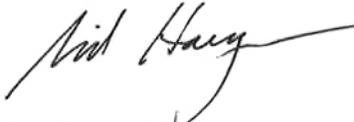
Rev. Susan Johnson  
National Bishop, ELCIC

+ 

Rev. Kathy Martin  
British Columbia Synod

+ 

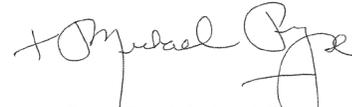
Rev. Dr. Larry Kochendorfer  
Synod of Alberta and the Territories



Rev. Dr. Sid Haugen  
Saskatchewan Synod



Rev. Jason Zinko  
Manitoba/Northwestern  
Ontario Synod

+ 

Rev. Dr. Michael Pryse  
Eastern Synod