Sabeel Wave of Prayer
Dec 14th, 2023

This prayer ministry enables local and international friends of Sabeel to pray over regional concerns on a weekly basis. Sent to Sabeel's network of supporters, the prayer is used in services around the world and during Sabeel's Thursday Communion service; as each community in its respective time zone lifts these concerns in prayer at noon every Thursday, this "wave of prayer" washes over the world.

Since the end of the temporary pause in fighting, the Israeli army has widened its attacks in southern and central Gaza, with some of the heaviest aggressions since the 7th of October. Many homes sheltering displaced Palestinians have been bombed, refugee camps have been hit, and more people have been internally displaced, bringing the total number of those displaced to over 1.8 million. The weather is becoming colder, food, humanitarian aid, and shelters remain scarce, and the population density where the displaced are seeking refuge is high. Humanitarian professionals in Gaza are describing the situation as "Apocalyptic."

- **Sovereign God, you are the creator and sustainer of this world. No prayer fully expresses our suffering, and no statement says all that can be said. As the suffering in Gaza is described as "Apocalyptic," we hold on to the mystery of our faith that your justice and mercy will redeem all suffering, and all evil powers and agents will be accounted for. We acknowledge your presence in Gaza through our actions of solidarity and our work to end all forms of injustice around the globe. Lord in your mercy… hear our prayer**

On the 10th of December, Christians across the globe marked the second Sunday of Advent by lighting the candle of "Faith". While the world is celebrating the Christmas season by decorating trees and holding Christmas parties, in Palestine, we are commemorating Christmas by foregoing the usual celebrations, waiting for God to deliver us from 75 years of settler colonial violence. Indeed, we are living out the reality of the Christmas story.

- **Emmauel, your incarnation took place in our land 2000 years ago; like those in the nativity story, we await your saving presence. Lord, this year, help us to deeply understand the meaning of your incarnation, which promises liberation and justice for the oppressed. May we proclaim Mary's prophetic words this Christmas, "He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty" (Luke 1:52-53).**

Since October 7th at least 266 Palestinians have been killed, and more than 3,365 Palestinians have been injured by Israeli forces and settlers in the West Bank. Settler attacks against Palestinians and their properties are on the rise, causing the displacement of 1000 Palestinian families, including 388 children. Furthermore, Israel has increased the incarceration of Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem with no charge or trial, making them hostages.

- **God of the oppressed, we do not have enough time to properly mourn as the suffering continues. The pressing realities of death and sin have crushed our spirits, broken our hearts, and changed the fabric of our being. O Lord, you seem to have forsaken us, where are you in these times? As we lament, we proclaim that, "The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble" (Psalm 9:9).**

Horrific videos and images have emerged of at least 100 Palestinian men detained by Israeli forces who were forced to be stripped to their underwear, blindfolded, and made to kneel on a street in northern Gaza. These Palestinian men were reportedly taking refuge in two schools affiliated with UNRWA and the images, which were widely circulated on social media, have been confirmed by the Israeli army.

- **Crucified Christ, you were publicly humiliated and naked on the cross. You are familiar with the experience of many Palestinians who have been humiliated by imperial powers. Lord, restore the dignity of the oppressed. Redeem this world by ending all structures and systems of sin and bring about the restoration of relationships. Lord in your mercy... hear our prayer**

On the 8th of December, Sabeel organized the monthly meeting of Palestinian Christian civil society organizations in Jerusalem which also included Christian clergy. This meeting was held in the Armenian Quarter of Jerusalem as an act of solidarity with the Armenian community, who are struggling to preserve the Christian presence in the Old City of Jerusalem and keep their precious lands from being sold.

- **Divine creator, we are all overwhelmed with the immense struggles and suffering we are facing. Like Christ, we are weeping over the situation in Jerusalem and the rest of Palestine. Help us, O Lord, to do more than regret our circumstances, but to act with unity and zeal. Lord, we pray that the cries of the Armenian community in Jerusalem will be heard by you and that your justice will rain down, quenching our thirst for justice. Lord in your mercy... hear our prayer**

On the 8th of December, the United Nations Security Council voted on a resolution demanding an immediate humanitarian ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. The vote came after UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres made a rare move on the 6th of December to formally warn the 15-member council of the global threat from the two-month-long war. 13 members voted in favor of the ceasefire resolution, the United Kingdom abstained, and unfortunately, the United States vetoed the demand for a ceasefire.

- **All-knowing God, we are baffled by the United States' veto and the United Kingdom's abstention. God, as each day passes, you are the only one who knows how many lives could have been saved if there were a ceasefire. Let the outrage over these decisions increase global efforts for a ceasefire. Lord, as we struggle for justice, we remember the words of the apostle Paul, "Be angry but do not sin" (Ephesians 4:26). Lord in your mercy... hear our prayer**

- **We join with the World Council of Churches in their prayer for the countries of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam.**
  Lord in your mercy... hear our prayer