

Prayer Petitions: December 2017
ACT PALESTINE FORUM
PRAYER VIGIL FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Every day in the month ahead, and particularly on the 24th of the month, we continue to pray with and for our sisters and brothers in Palestine and Israel who have called for an ecumenical prayer vigil across the globe.

A special thanks to the Lutheran World Federation Jerusalem Program for authoring this month's prayers.

December 2017

Prayer Focus: Health Care Access and Christmas Message of Peace

This month, we focus on the challenges facing Palestinians seeking life-saving medical treatment under the difficulties of occupation, and remember the hope and courage that the birth of Jesus brings to a world suffering from injustice and striving toward peace.

In the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt), severe restrictions placed on Palestinians and their families often have serious negative consequences for people seeking healthcare. According to [B'Tselem](#), the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, “the hundreds of physical obstructions and dozens of checkpoints result in very limited access to medical treatment...and is especially grave among residents of villages and outlying areas who need to get to hospitals in the large cities.” Patients from the West Bank and Gaza who need to access medical treatment only found in Jerusalem must obtain Israeli-issued permits for travel into Jerusalem. These permits require documentation proving their illness, confirmation of appointment, and proof that this hospital/clinic is the only place for the patient to receive their treatments.

These struggles are familiar for APF member The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), which owns and operates Augusta Victoria Hospital (AVH) in East Jerusalem. AVH started in partnership with the U.N. Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in 1950 as a major medical facility in Jerusalem to care for Palestinian refugees. Today, most of the patients served by the hospital continue to be in social need and are seeking life-saving specialized care for cancer and kidney failure.

Augusta Victoria Hospital is the only hospital in the West Bank and Gaza providing radiation therapy for cancer patients in the Palestinian territories. AVH is the leading hospital providing treatment for breast cancer among women in the West Bank and Gaza and is also the only medical facility in the West Bank offering pediatric kidney dialysis. On a daily basis, these and other specialty services touch hundreds of lives, both young and old, from communities across the Palestinian territories.

SCRIPTURE: Excerpts from Isaiah 9

¹But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish...²The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them a light has shined.

⁶For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION: Dietrich Bonhoeffer

“Prince of Peace” – where God comes in love to human beings and unites with them, there peace is made between God and humankind and among people...Go to the child in the manger and receive there the peace of God. Come see how God, out of pure love, has become our brother and wants to reconcile us with each other. In the world, power reigns. This child is the Prince of Peace. Where Jesus is, peace reigns.

- excerpt from “Christus Victor” address, November 26, 1939

PRAYERS: Adapted from Evangelical Lutheran Worship

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming nurture our growth as people of repentance and peace. O God, it is your will to hold both heaven and earth in a single peace. Let the design of your great love shine on the waste of our wraths and sorrows, and give peace to your church, peace among nations, peace in our homes, and peace in our hearts.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty and merciful god, we call to mind before you all whom it is easy to forget; those who are homeless, destitute, sick, isolated, and all who have no one to care for them. May we bring help and healing to those who are broken in body or spirit, that they may have comfort in sorrow, company in loneliness, and a place of safety and warmth.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Loving God, your heart overflows with compassion for your whole creation. Pour out your Spirit on all people living with illness, as well as their families and loved ones. Help them to know that you claim them as your own and deliver them from fear and pain.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God, our refuge and strength, your healing power is everywhere about us. Strengthen those who work among the sick, especially the caregivers at Augusta Victoria Hospital and the other institutions of the East Jerusalem Hospital Network. Strengthen them in body and spirit. Refresh them when weary; console them when anxious; comfort them in grief; and hearten them in discouragement. Be with us all, and give us peace at all times and in every way.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

All-powerful and unseen God, the coming of your light into our world has brightened weary hearts with peace. Call us out of darkness, and empower us to proclaim the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Additional Worship Resources:

Hymn: [Come Now, O Prince of Peace](#)

(1) Come now, O Prince of peace; make us one body.

Come, O Lord Jesus; reconcile your people

(2) Come now, O God of love, make us one body.

Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile your people.

(3) Come now and set us free, O God our Savior.

Come, O Lord Jesus; reconcile all nations.

(4) Come, Hope of unity; make us one body.

Come, O Lord Jesus; reconcile all nations.