

World Day of Prayer

Prepared by the WDP Committee of Palestine

March 1st, 2024

“I Beg You... Bear With One Another in Love”



RESOURCE BOOKLET

Preparation: Country Notes: Recipes:

Prepared by the WDP Committee of Palestine

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Greetings from the Scottish Convener

“I Beg You... Bear With One Another in Love” Ephesians 4:1-3

As Christians we are called to “lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:1-3)

However, we must accept that we live in a time in which nobody is perfect. We all have good days and bad days and appreciate the support of friends and family who bear with us when we are not at our best. Across the globe we hear of the dreadful challenges many face - wars, periods of isolation, homelessness, sick loved ones, death and financial loss – all of which may contribute to fear for our own health and safety. As a result we may be prone to being anxious, irritable and impatient when really we should try to remember that anxious people are often hurting people and so we should look out for one another and show an extra measure of love and grace. We must try to “make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3)

Learning to love is one of our major tasks in life, and it is tested and thereby strengthened when it does not come easy. We need to give people the benefit of the doubt, assuming the best and dealing with them according to the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12), that they would see in us the love of Christ and be drawn to Him. So, let’s remember: “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, withal humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Ephesians 4:1-3, NRSV).

I must honestly state that members of the WDP in Scotland “Bear With One Another in Love”.

Mary Welsh, Convener, WDP Scotland, UK.

INTENTION

This worship service calls us to bear with each other in love, despite all difficulties and oppression. The liturgy was written by a group of ecumenical Christian Palestinian women in response to the passage from Ephesians 4:1-7. We reflected collectively on this theme from the context of our suffering as Palestinian Christian women. We hope to inspire other women around the world to bear with one another in love during troubled times.

'As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.'

PREPARATIONS

Gather the following symbols of Palestine:

Olive branches or leaf (or a photograph or cutout of olive leaf), olives, olive oil

Olive trees are a sign of everlasting and abundant life because they can live for thousands of years. Some of the olive trees in Palestine today were there during the time of Jesus.

Lemons, oranges, or other citrus fruits

Citrus fruits grew abundantly in historic Palestine and were exported all over the world.

Cactus plants or leaves

Cactus plants are not originally from Palestine, but they have been in the country for many years. Cacti have become natural boundaries between one village and another in Palestine. After the destruction of many villages in 1948, cactus plants still survived in fields where there was nothing else. The cactus plant is a symbol of resilience and survival in the midst of the harshest of circumstances. The cactus plant survives even when everything else perishes. Additionally, the flower and the fruit of the cactus plant are emblems of beauty and sustenance amidst suffering and pain.

Jasmine, poppies, or other flowers

Jasmine and poppy flowers are abundant and meaningful to Palestinians. Jasmine is used to make tea, which soothes and brings people together. And poppies remind Palestinians of loved ones who have given their lives for their country.

Baskets

Baskets will be used to hold citrus fruits, cactus plants or leaves, and flowers. Arrange on a table with cloths of green, black, white & red (Flag Colours)

BEFORE THE SERVICE

Church bells toll as participants are arriving (if available).

Distribute an olive branch or leaf to participants as they enter.

PROCESSION

Instrumental version of *I Urge You* starts playing.

Leaders process carrying baskets with lemons, oranges, olives, olive oil, cactus plants or leaves, and flowers such as jasmine or poppies. They place the objects on the altar or around the space.



Palestine in the World

Country Notes about Palestine

History

This material comes to you from the ecumenical Christian women of the World Day of Prayer Palestine. We worked collectively to inform, pray and act with the rest of the world in 2024, in order to live according to the theme: *"I Beg You...Bear With One Another in Love"* (Ephesians 4:1-7).

This region of the World has witnessed the invasion of various powers throughout its history, from the Assyrians c3000 years ago until the Present day. It's populations bore the persecutions that come with occupation. From Temples to the ordinary population. Some highlights were experienced in the conversion to Christianity of Emperor Constantine's mother, Helena in the 4th century, making the Roman World Christian. There has never been a time when the local population could rule themselves. It is never easy to bear yoke of occupation.

Foreign Office,
November 2nd, 1917.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet

His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country"

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.



In 1918 after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire and the British became the ruling government, they put forward the Balfour Declaration and gave consent for a national home for the Jews in Palestine, but clearly stated that the rights of non-Jewish communities be respected.

The British Mandate ruled over Palestine and Jordan from 1923-1948. During this period, many European Christians supported the Jewish people in immigrating to Palestine, calling it the "promised land" given to them by God. The British planted the seeds of discord by giving agricultural land to others causing displacement of those already living there. Support for the creation of a homeland for the Jews in

Palestine increased after the end of World War II, largely because of the Holocaust. When the British announced they were leaving, the United Nations adopted the Partition Plan of 1947 to set up two states. Until today no sovereign Palestinian state exists.

On May 15, 1948, the State of Israel was created, a day that is called by Palestinians the Nakba, or the catastrophe. Between 1947 and 1949, at least 750,000 Palestinians were expelled from their homes. Zionist forces took control of 78% of historic Palestine, destroyed 530 villages and cities, and killed around 15,000 Palestinians in a series of mass atrocities, including over 70 massacres.

From 1948-1967, the West Bank and East Jerusalem were put under the rule of Jordan, and Gaza under the rule of Egypt, and the rest of Palestine was the new state of Israel. Tensions increased which resulted in another war—the six day war, in which Israel occupied the whole of Palestine.

In 1988, Palestine proclaimed its independence only on the land Israel had occupied since 1967. For the sake of peace, Palestinians agreed to live on only 22% of their original land.

As of July 31, 2019, 138 of the 193 United Nations member states have recognized Palestine as a state, and the Palestinian flag now flies outside of the United Nations.

The four maps to the right show the loss of Palestinian land from 1946-2000



Biblical Sites

When we speak about historic Palestine, we are talking about parts which have become known as the West Bank, Gaza, and Israel. Historic Palestine includes Bethlehem (where Jesus was born), Nazareth (where Jesus spent his childhood), the River Jordan (where Jesus was baptized), and Jerusalem (where Jesus was crucified and rose from the dead). The Mediterranean Sea lies to the west of historic Palestine, where Paul and the apostles travelled on missionary journeys to spread the good news of Jesus the Christ.

Palestine – Gaza and the West Bank

Gaza:

The Gaza Strip, or simply Gaza, is located on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, bordering Egypt and Israel. This area of land has been severely controlled and restricted by Israel since 2006, creating severe strain on the population of 2 million with 47% children. The effective siege by Israel is causing a crisis here with a devastating impact on people and the economy, a crisis that has forced Gazans into inhumane living conditions.

In this strife, approximately 4,000 Palestinians and 100 Israelis have been killed. Despite this trauma, Gazans continue to demonstrate that they not only have a strong will to survive, but also for pursuing, a superior education, creative artistic and cultural initiatives, and agricultural efforts.

Although there are less than one thousand Christians in Gaza, there is a strong feeling of ecumenical belonging and service to the whole community. Gazan Christians belong to Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant churches. And the main hospital in Gaza, al Ahli, is under the supervision of the Anglican Church in the Middle East.

The West Bank:

Oslo II Map
Outlining Areas A, B, and C



In 1967, when Israel occupied the Palestinian territories, Western powers called the region the West Bank, because it was on the west bank of the Jordan River. After the Oslo Accords of 1993-1995, the West Bank was divided into Areas A, B and C.

The Oslo Accords were intended to be a transitional agreement, not exceeding 5 years. The Palestinian Authority was formed in 1994, and was given partial civil control over Areas A and B. Unfortunately, as a result of the Oslo Accords, Israel maintains control over air, land, borders, and the economy. Today, the Palestinian Authority, based in Ramallah, is the practical capital, with seats of government and parliament buildings.

The map to the left shows Areas A, B and C. One of the daily challenges that Palestinians face is the restriction of movement on their own land. In order to travel between any of the areas in the West Bank, Palestinians must go through checkpoints. These checkpoints make life incredibly difficult for Palestinians to reach school, work, religious sites, medical appointments, or to visit family. The long lines and wasted hours experienced at the checkpoints is crippling, and causes many Palestinians to lose hope and consider emigrating from the country if possible.

Another aspect of life in the West Bank is the presence of illegal Israeli settlements. There are approximately 250 settlements, with approximately 700,000 Jewish settlers, spread throughout the West Bank, mostly in Area C. A third of the settlements are in East Jerusalem. These settlements are all illegal under international law, as stated in the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Population

It is estimated that there are over 5 million Palestinians living today in Palestine and Israel. 2% of these Palestinians are Christian, among a majority of Palestinian Muslims. The total number of Palestinians around the world amounts to over 12 million in countries as far as the United States, Canada, Brazil, Chile and Honduras.

Christianity

The Church in Palestine is a living church with a special mission and vocation. It is rich in its heritage and pluralistic in traditions. In the land from which Christianity spread and different denominations were formed, one can find all forms of Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant churches.

Jerusalem is the seat of 13 historically recognized churches in the Holy Land and beyond. 75% of Palestinian Christians are from the Greek Orthodox Church. The other churches are: Apostolic Armenian Church, the Roman Catholic (Latin) Church, the Greek Catholic Melkite Church, the Assyrian Orthodox Church, the Assyrian Catholic Church, the Armenian Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, the Lutheran Church, the Coptic Church, the Ethiopian Church, the Franciscan Custodians of the Holy Land, and the Maronite Church. There is also a Baptist, Presbyterian, and United Methodist presence in Palestine.

Christians in Palestine have worked to develop an ecumenical spirit. This ecumenical spirit does not guarantee a complete lack of power struggles amongst some of the churches, but they have carried out the message of the Resurrection of Jesus uninterruptedly for two thousand years. Since

the 1980s, there has been a monthly meeting of all heads, or representatives, to discuss common concerns, grievances, and stands to take. In addition, Christians have held joint ecumenical services and have issued occasional statements. The Jerusalem Interchurch Office is a joint project of the churches in Jerusalem, the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC). This office helps to coordinate and strengthen ecumenical relationships.

The World Day of Prayer also embodies this ecumenical spirit among women in Palestine. The annual World Day of Prayer worship service is celebrated in a different church every year. The World Day of Prayer National Committee in Palestine collaborates with a variety of church-related organizations, such as the YWCA, the YMCA, Kairos Palestine, Sa-beel Ecumenical Liberation Theology, Al Liqa, the Pontifical Mission, Dar el Kalima, Bethlehem Bible College, the Justice and Peace Commission, and Pax Christi International.

Christians in Palestine continually derive courage from a deeply rooted faith. They strive to live the message of Jesus Christ, who proclaimed equality, justice and forgiveness for all.

The Role of Women

There is a perception/belief around the world that women in the Middle East region are passive, silent, and non-influential. However, the role of women in Palestine (both historically and in modern times) is active and influential. Palestinian women are steadfast, strong and courageous. They are active in tilling the land. When their husbands are imprisoned or killed, Palestinian women become sole providers, protecting their children and homes.

Many Palestinian women have become prominent figures in society participating in Government, Education, Justice and Ambassadorship. All women in Palestine contribute to society, and together they build an open-minded progressive human community.

Although Palestinian women have played an influential role in society, there is still room for better conditions. There must be a greater application of human rights and protection for women and there is a constant need for improvement of Palestinian social and personal laws, as well as an increase in the quota of women participating as decision makers. An area that still needs further progress for women is in religious institutions. Recently, some Protestant churches have progressed on gender issues, such as ordaining Sally Azar as the first Palestinian female pastor in Palestine.

Health

Health services vary from one area to another in Palestine. In general, hospitals in Palestine are well equipped with professional doctors and nurses. Children in schools are taught cleanliness and basic health and nutritional skills to ensure a healthy mind in a healthy body. Some private hospitals are under church supervision, but they are open to all Palestinians, regardless of faith tradition. This strengthens the relationship between members of the community.

However, the Palestinian health care system suffers from a lack of financial support for administration and running costs, as well as State restrictions limiting access to healthcare.

There is still quite a lot to do to ensure quality health care for all.

Water

Water is the most crucial issue in Palestine, as well as the Middle East and the whole world. With the climate crisis, water has become scarce, and people are aware of the dangers, especially with the lack of rain. The most important aquifers are in the West Bank in Palestine, but they are located in area C, which is controlled by Israel. Despite the aquifers being located in Palestine, Palestinians have to buy water from Israel! The illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem use four times more water for swimming pools and luxury irrigation.

Arts and Culture

Arts and culture are crucial for keeping people's spirits strong and vibrant. Creativity shows that no matter how desperate you are, you can still dance, paint, write, and make music. The arts help people continue living with hope.

Arts and culture also keep Palestinian heritage and memory alive. Poetry, visual art, embroidery, *dabkeh* (traditional folklore dancing), theater and cinema portray Palestinian life. This affirms that what Palestinians are experiencing is real, whether it is joy or pain. The arts also allow Palestinians to share who they are with people in other countries all around the world.

The arts have also allowed Palestinians to participate in competitions all around the world. Young people have won numerable prizes, giving them a sense of value and purpose.

Agriculture

Palestinians have tilled, sowed, planted and harvested in the land of milk and honey. They have worked both large and small plots of earth, including gardens and orchards. Herbs, spices, fruits and greens help to feed family and friends. Palestinian women make up a majority of those doing agriculture. Olive tree cultivation is the staple product and despite the interference from the Israeli State Palestinians continue to successfully cultivate the land. Consequently the Olive Tree has become a symbol in our Worship Services

Other crops include the delicious ‘Prickly Pear’ or cactus. In some regions of Palestine, one can also find trees bearing almonds, avocados, chestnuts, and citrus fruits, like oranges, grapefruits and pomelos.

Education

Palestinians place a high value on education, with 95.4% of children enrolled in basic education. Education became even more important after Palestinians became refugees in 1948. Palestinians could not take any of their material goods abroad, but with their education, they could find work and educate others.

There are three different systems of education for Palestinians: Israeli, Palestinian, and the UNRWA schools. Within the Israeli and Palestinian systems, there are public and private schools.

The private schools are mostly run by religious institutions.

Those private schools run by the Christian churches serve children of all faiths in the community. Traditionally, most schools have separated boys and girls, but more



recently, schools have become integrated. The schools run by UNRWA are located in the 19 Palestinian refugee camps.

The World Day of Prayer in Palestine

The international World Day of Prayer movement reached Palestine in the 1950s. Some of women who brought the movement to Palestine were the wives of clergy of various denominations. They started to pray at the YWCA headquarters, and in Protestant churches in Jerusalem, Ramallah, Nablus and the Bethlehem area.

In 1993, Aida Haddad was the first Palestinian woman to be elected to serve on the World Day of Prayer Executive Committee. She served two terms from 1993-2003. This representation at the international level continued with the election of Laila Carmi (Roman Catholic), who served from 2003-2013. Then, Nora Carmi (Apostolic Armenian) was elected to the Executive Committee and served from 2013-2022.

Palestine was chosen to write the worship service in 1994, with the theme, "Come, See and Act." Church leaders in Jerusalem were approached by the World Day of Prayer National Committee. In 1991, representatives were appointed from the Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Armenian, Melkite, Lutheran and Anglican churches to form the writing committee. With the help of local and international theologians and consultants, the theme developed into a worship service. Palestinian women with experience in education, and medical and social services helped to write the prayers, calling for "informed prayer and prayerful action." The worship service caused some controversy because it connected the suffering of Jesus with that of the Palestinian people under occupation. Despite this controversy, the reality of life for Palestinians was highlighted, and the whole world joined Palestine through informed prayer and prayerful action.

Palestine's involvement with the World Day of Prayer movement has allowed Palestinian women to build bridges with over 100 countries around the world. This has strengthened the Middle East presence and witness. After thirty years, Palestine has been invited once again to write the resource materials for 2024. This invitation comes at a challenging time, when the ongoing injustice has not stopped. It is a

time of reflection, self-analysis and living what we believe in. The path is long, but Palestinian women continue to serve as instruments for a better and deeper understanding among the peoples who share this land, trusting and hoping in the humanity of one another.

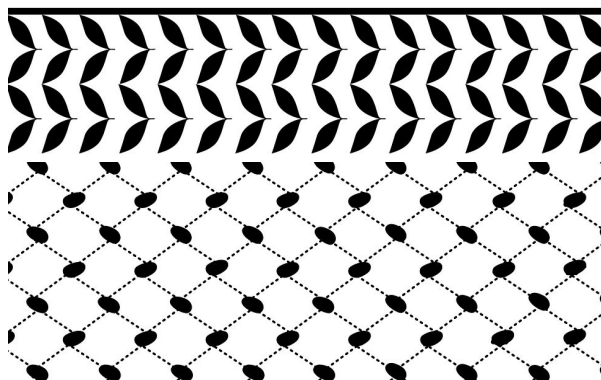
Signs of Hope

Despite all the suffering and injustice in the land of the Holy One, Palestinians have maintained their *sumud* (steadfastness) through mostly non-violent resistance. There is a genuine effort among Palestinian Christians, Muslims, and some Jews, who believe in equal rights, and who advocate and work for justice.



We call upon you, sisters and brothers in every part of the world, to bear with us in love. We call upon you to unite your prayers with ours, for a just and peaceful solution that would bring an end to all human suffering. We call upon you to stand in solidarity with us to achieve security and peace for all people around the world.

Olive tree in the Garden of Gethsemane—Mount of Olives



Keffiyeh—tradition Palestinian headscarf

Recipes

Date & Walnut Cake

- 3 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/2 cup melted butter or oil
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 cup pitted and chopped dates
(about 10–12 pieces)
- 1 cup boiled water
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 1/2 cups flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground clove
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- Pinch of salt
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
- Extra dates for decorating (optional)



Instructions

1. Add baking soda over chopped dates then pour in boiled water, give it a gentle stir, and let sit for up to 30 minutes.
2. Blend well all wet ingredients, start with eggs, then add vanilla, butter, sugar.
3. Gradually add the dry ingredients over the wet mix, starting with flour, baking powder, salt, nutmeg, clove, and cinnamon. Integrate all the ingredients well.
4. Add in the dates mixed with water (by then it turns into a pasty mix), mix well and integrate the walnuts.
5. Pour the mix into a 9" size greased pan.
6. Decorate the dates on the top of the cake (optional).
7. Bake for 30-35 minutes at 350 degrees.

Recipes

Date Slice

- 8 oz chopped dates
- 6 oz sugar.
- 4 oz plain flour.
- 4 oz porridge oats
- 4 oz. Butter/ Marg
- 1 tsp bicarbonate
- 1 tsp baking powder
- Small carton apple juice - 4 Fl oz
- 1 tsp vanilla essence



Instructions

1. Use 8 in. Square tin lined with baking paper
2. Set oven at 180 C
3. Chop dates,
4. add apple juice,
5. cook gently till soft,
6. stir in vanilla essence, then cool
7. Mix, flour, bicarbonate and baking powder, and oats
8. rub in butter till like a crumble mix!
9. Stir in sugar
10. Press half the mixture into tin,
11. add and spread the dates, then press over the rest of flour and oat mixture.
12. Press down
13. Cook 25 - 30 mins till brown. Cut into squares while warm. Enjoy....



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World Day of Prayer (Scottish Committee)

Charity Number SC020446

Website <http://www.wdpscotland.org.uk>