



Inviting you to observe



World Day of Prayer 2024 1st March

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

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Order prepared by
WDP Palestine

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for worship order in Indian languages.

ABOUT 2024

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

Program written by the

World Day of Prayer Committee of Palestine for WDP 2024

Ephesians 4:1-3

The World Day of Prayer is an ecumenical movement inspired by the motto “Informed Prayer and Prayerful Action.” We follow the example of Jesus Christ, who prayed from a place of knowledge and care for the world, and who acted from a place of prayer and connection to God.

From Aug 20-27, delegates travelled from around the world to attend the World Day of Prayer International Meeting in Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil. These women came from Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox traditions to pray together, share their stories in community, and make decisions for the future of the movement. It was these delegates who selected the theme and writer committee for 2024.

An ecumenical group of Palestinian Christian women have prayed and reflected together over the past several years to respond to the invitation to write the 2024 program. Their theme is “I Beg You... Bear With One Another in Love,” based on Ephesians 4:1-7. This program calls us to bear with each other in love, despite all difficulties and oppression.

The Worship Service shares stories of three Palestinian Christian women, who witness to the power of bearing together in love. Their stories illuminate the experiences of Palestinian women from three different generations. The symbol of an olive tree is used throughout the worship service. This represents the three generations through the trunk, branches, and leaves of the olive tree.

The Palestinian Christian women who wrote this worship service have invited the world to pray for peace, justice and freedom of religion and freedom of movement. Their prayers specifically call us to pray with women, refugees, persons experiencing homelessness, and all who are sick, dying and grieving. They also call us to confess to our collective role in causing the climate crisis, and to commit to repairing what we have destroyed. Finally, they call us, the global church, to be united in treating all with justice and love.

The Bible Study calls us to ask what it means to bear with someone in love. And it asks us to reflect on why community is important for Christians. The Bible study challenges us to lift up others around us, and allow others to lift us up.

The Children's Program invites children to reflect on how standing together in love makes us all feel stronger and less alone. It encourages children to imagine how the world could be more loving.

The Country Background gives information about the history and culture of Palestine. It mentions places that have significance for Christians, being the birthplace of Christianity. It also reflects on the role of women in Palestinian society, and the history of the World Day of Prayer movement in Palestine.

This program was developed entirely in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Taking on the responsibility of being a writer country is always a rigorous journey, but it was particularly difficult given the changed realities of a world suffering under a global pandemic. We are grateful to our Palestinian Christian sisters for navigating this process with grace and patience.

May God continue to bless the world through our commitment to praying and acting together as a global sisterhood of ecumenical Christian women.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER (A WOMEN LED, GLOBAL, ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT)

PRESS RELEASE

'I beg you, bear with one another in love' The Christian Women of Palestine are calling us to connect with the land from where Jesus came; where he was born, ministered and died – and from where our faith began and is rooted. Despite living in an area of the world where there is ongoing conflict and the future is uncertain, the women of Palestine are sharing with love a reminder that they are there, and they want to give hope to everyone. The theme of the service 2024 'bear with one another in love' seems very appropriate for these women who will not give up witnessing the love of Jesus Christ.

World Day of Prayer is an international, inter-church organisation led by women which enables us to hear the thoughts of those women from all parts of the world: their hopes, concerns, and prayers. The preparation for the day is vast. An international committee is based in New York and there are national committees in each participating country. Regional conferences meet to consider the service and then local groups make their plans. Finally, at a church near you on Friday 1 March 2024 people will gather to celebrate the service prepared by the women of Palestine. The Day of Prayer is celebrated in over 146 countries. It begins in Samoa and prayer in native languages travels throughout the world - through Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe and the Americas before finishing in American Samoa some 38 hours later. For further information and resources, together with details of services in your area, Please contact ncci@ncci1914.com

World Day of Prayer Liturgy

1 March 2024

I beg you ... bear with one another in love

Shortened Version of the Worship Service

Prepared by the Christian Women of Palestine

BEFORE THE SERVICE

- Place a table at the front covered in a white tablecloth. Arrange on the table baskets with lemons, oranges, olives, olive oil, cactus plants and flowers such as jasmine or poppies. These items can also be placed around the space. Leave room on the table for a large, open Bible and candle to be placed.
- Play the instrumental version of I Urge You and show the PowerPoint slides to introduce Palestine. As the congregation arrives distribute an olive branch/leaf (fresh, dried, or cut-out), or downloadable bookmark, to them as they enter.
- The Reader, Narrator and the 3 Women are conveniently seated ready for the worship service to begin.
- Leader 1 processes/enters carrying the Bible and places it on the table, opened at Ephesians 4:1-7. Leader 2 processes/enters carrying a candle, places it on the table and lights it. Both Leaders take their places ready to begin the service.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

OPENING HYMN: Come on and celebrate (sing through twice)

Come on and celebrate!

His gift of love we will celebrate.

The Son of God, who loved us and gave us life.

We'll shout your praise, O King:

You give us joy nothing else can bring;

We'll give to you our offering

In celebration praise.

Come on and celebrate, celebrate, celebrate and sing,

Celebrate and sing to the King.

Come on and celebrate, celebrate, celebrate and sing,

Celebrate and sing to the King.

Patricia Morgan & David Bankhead

WELCOME AND GREETING

Leader 1: Welcome to the 2024 World Day of Prayer worship service.

Salaam. Peace be with you.

All: And also with you

Leader 1: We gather in the Name of the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Leader 1: God be with you.

All: And also with you.

Leader 2: Let us pray.

Loving God, walk with us as we journey through the land where you lived and taught. Open our eyes to see the present suffering of the inhabitants of this land. Grant us the strength and courage to act and pray with all who suffer around the world.

All: Amen.

Leader 1: Let us praise God who brings us together to worship in love and unity.

All: Unifying God, reigning far above our earthly differences in views and theology,

Leader 1: Help us remember these essential qualities of faith: humility, gentleness, patience and love.

All: We confess our weakness and failure to accept others without judging them.

Leader 1: We endeavour to be humble and patient as we face challenges in our families, society, community and church.

All: With gentleness and love we can overcome difficulties. We remain strong in our faith, knowing that we belong to God. Amen.

A STORY OF RESILIENCE

Leader 1: In today's service we will hear three stories from Palestinian Christian women who witness to the power of bearing together in love.

Their stories illuminate the experiences of Palestinian Christian women from three different generations. The symbol of an olive tree represents the three generations through its trunk, branches and leaves.

Narrator: Let me introduce you to Eleonor. She is one of the older generation who, like the trunk of the olive tree, has witnessed many years of wars and violence.

She is a Palestinian Christian, a member of the Greek Orthodox Church in the Holy Land. She comes from an old, deeply rooted Jerusalem family. In the early 19th century, her great-grandfather established St. George's Orthodox Church which enabled Christians living outside the city walls to have a place to worship.

That church remained in existence until 'the Catastrophe', or Nakba, of 1948, when 750,000 Palestinians were forced to flee, disperse and become refugees.

Eleonor: As my brothers and I were growing up, my parents remembered their neighbours graciously as they waited for the big day of return. Sadly, my parents passed away without realising this dream. My parents always spoke with gratitude about their Jewish neighbours and they taught me how to bear with others in love.

As I have gone through life as a Palestinian Christian living in Jerusalem, I have chosen to be fully engaged with all members of the community at local

and global levels. I learned from my parents' example how important it is to co-exist with others, even when life is harsh and difficult.

My commitment to my community started when I was 11 and my Arabic teacher encouraged me to run errands for her humanitarian work. She was gentle and loving, which helped me understand the value of making life better for others.

Later, I implemented humanitarian and development programmes, as well as social and community projects. These programmes and projects served all people, regardless of religion, ethnicity, gender, status or need.

I was also privileged to help hundreds of women in Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank to sustain their families as breadwinners. Many of these projects have grown and spread to other areas, positively impacting many lives.

Since my childhood, I have known that life is fragile, and peace is not guaranteed. However, I firmly believe that we can be strong together if we bear with one another in love.

SCRIPTURE READING – Ephesians 4:1-7

Reader: Therefore I, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you 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 the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift.

Leader 1: Let us reflect now on the ways that God is moving us to bear together with others in love.

[Silent reflection]

A STORY OF TRUTH TELLING

Narrator: Let me introduce you to Lina.

On May 11 2022, Lina lost her Aunt Shireen, a famous journalist who was killed in Jenin. Aunt Shireen was like the branch of an olive tree, resisting the strong winds that threatened to erase the truth of Palestinian experience. When she died, Palestine lost a legend and a famous Al Jazeera journalist. As Lina's aunt, her godmother at baptism and her best friend, Shireen was Lina's role model. She was also a role model to many young Palestinian women. Lina cherishes all the moments spent with her, talking about art, politics and life.

Lina: For 25 years my Aunt Shireen dedicated her life to telling the stories of Palestinian experience, and to being a voice of truth. She entered every house in Palestine and the Arab world through the TV screen. The presence of 500 people on the day of her funeral was proof that she had also entered their hearts.

Many people did not know that my aunt was a Palestinian Christian.

Shireen's faith led her to bear with all in love, despite differences in faith traditions. She stood with all who were being harmed. She campaigned for both Muslims and Christians to have access to the holy sites in Jerusalem.

Her truth telling was even a way of bearing with the occupiers in love.

Although Shireen, like a branch of the olive tree, was cut down too soon, her legacy lives on. Her memory now nourishes the earth, from which we will gain strength to continue telling the truth and working towards reconciliation.

Leader 2: Hearing this story of a woman who dared to speak the truth in love, let us commit ourselves to journey with each other as she did as we sing our next hymn.

OFFERTORY HYMN – Won't you let me be your servant

Won't you let me be your servant

Let me be as Christ to you;
Pray that I may have the grace
To let you be my servant, too.
We are pilgrims on a journey,
And companions on the road;
We are here to help each other
Walk the mile and bear the load.
I will hold the Christ-light for you
In the night-time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you,
Speak the peace you long to hear.
I will weep when you are weeping,
When you laugh I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow
Till we've seen this journey through.
When we sing to God in heaven
We shall find such harmony,
Born of all we've known together
Of Christ's love and agony.
Won't you let me be your servant
Let me be as Christ to you;
Pray that I may have the grace
To let you be my servant, too.

Richard A M Gillard

INTERCESSORY PRAYERS

Leader 1: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, we now pray for women everywhere,
for the world and for those in need. Let us pray:

God of Righteousness, bless us and make us witnesses of peace and justice.

Open our eyes so that we can see things as you do. Protect us from all forms of violence, hurt and revenge. We pray especially for women who are denied education and other basic rights; for women who are abused and suffer violence. We pray that our churches, as well as our governments, will create safe places for women.

Help us to raise our voices and use our gifts and talents to help others.

Lead us into a life worthy of our calling.

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader 2: Refugee God, because your son, Jesus, as a child had to flee a massacre in Bethlehem, you know the plight of refugees and the displaced. Remain with them and help them in these dark and difficult times. Guide and protect them and bring them to places of safety. Open the hearts of those receiving refugees, and guide the actions of political leaders so that all needs will be met.

Lead us into a life worthy of our calling.

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader 1: God our Rock, you have taught us to build our lives on you. We pray for those who are homeless and especially for families whose homes have been destroyed through war or natural disasters. We pray for all who work tirelessly to resolve these situations.

Lead us into a life worthy of our calling.

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader 2: God of Peace, we pray for a peaceful end to the ongoing situation in Palestine. We also pray for the city of Jerusalem, sacred to the three religions of Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Let there be equality, freedom of religion, freedom of movement and freedom of expression. Teach us as Christians to follow the way of Jesus, sharing love with those we meet.

Lead us into a life worthy of our calling.

All: Hear our prayer

Leader 1: God of Unity, your Son, Jesus, prayed that your disciples and followers would be one, as you are one. Teach us, your servants, to treat others justly, fairly and with love even though we may speak, live and pray differently. Bless the global church and bless the faithful women everywhere who share your Good News with others. Lead us into a life worthy of our calling.

All: Hear our prayer

Leader 2: We conclude our intercessions as we join together in the Lord's Prayer. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

A STORY OF FLOURISHING

Narrator: Let me introduce you to Sara.

Sara says she sometimes feels like the leaf on an olive tree, connected through the branches to the roots, nourished from within.

She was born and raised in Jerusalem as a Lutheran Christian, where life has always been challenging. She is glad that things are changing in society as indicated by her church ordaining its first female pastor. Her own family

history is connected with that of Palestine. She wants to share a story with you that shows what it means to be a Palestinian Christian.

Sara: My grandparents used to live in Jaffa. They grew up there before 1948, living alongside other Christians, Muslims and Jews. When the state of Israel was created in 1948, Palestinians who had lived on the land for thousands of years, were displaced. The Israeli forces came to my grandparents' home and forced them out. This caused my grandparents to become refugees in Jordan.

Many years later, my grandparents came for a visit to Jerusalem, and my parents took us on a trip to Jaffa.

They were excited to show us the home they used to live in. Everything had changed except for the trees they planted, which helped us to identify the place but, sadly, those living in the house were hostile to us.

Later, when I visited my grandparents in Jordan, my grandma showed me the keys that her mother had kept when leaving their house. She, like many others, kept their keys with the hope of return, a hope that is passed on through many generations.

I know that the tree from where I came is strong and resilient. I can bear with others in love because they did. Their love is what makes me flourish like the leaf on an olive tree.

Narrator: Today we have been blessed by the stories of three Palestinian Christian women. These stories have shown us the power of bearing together in love.

SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

Leader 2: In the midst of injustices, war and suffering God calls us to bear together in love. When we stay together through difficulties we live in the peace that God promises us.

As we share the peace of Christ, we exchange the olive tokens that were distributed at the beginning of the service.

The peace of Christ be with you.

All: The peace of Christ be also with you.

WORDS OF COMMITMENT

Leader 2: We join together in words of Commitment.

**All: May we commit to working for peace as we stand with all women,
particularly those experiencing oppression, violence, or discrimination.**

May we be faithful advocates in all levels of society and church life.

May we bear with one another in love.

Leader 2: Let us go now and be agents of peace and justice.

BLESSING

Leader 1: The Lord bless you and keep you;

the Lord make his face shine on you

and be gracious to you;

the Lord turn his face toward you

and give you peace.

All: In the name of Jesus. Amen.

Leader 1: We conclude our service as we sing our closing hymn.

HYMN: The day Thou gavest, Lord, is ended

The day Thou gavest, Lord, is ended,

The darkness falls at Thy behest;

To Thee our morning hymns ascended,

Thy praise shall sanctify our rest.

We thank Thee that Thy Church unsleeping,

While earth rolls onward into light,

Through all the world her watch is keeping,

And rests not now by day or night.

As o'er each continent and island

The dawn leads on another day,

The voice of prayer is never silent,
Nor dies the strain of praise away.
The sun that bids us rest, is waking
Our brethren 'neath the western sky,
And hour by hour fresh lips are making
Thy wondrous doings heard on high.
So be it, Lord, Thy throne shall never,
Like earth's proud empires, pass away;
Thy kingdom stands, and grows forever,
Till all Thy creatures own Thy sway.

John Ellerton

Leader 2: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All: In the name of Christ, Amen.

NOTES FOR THE SHORTENED SERVICE

The shortened service is designed for smaller groups, where it is not possible to hold a full service (eg. Residential care homes, prisons etc.) It will not be appropriate in every situation. Sometimes, a short introduction to the World Day of Prayer, a brief PowerPoint presentation, singing or listening to the hymns, followed by the reading and a prayer reflecting the theme will be enough.

If you or anyone who attends the service wishes to make a donation towards the work of the WDP, this can be done:-

All resources are available on our website.

Our in charge can help you with further requests and enquiries: Tel 9455059522 Email: jyoti@ncci1914.com

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