THE EMPTY CHAIR

World Week of Prayer for Peace in Palestine and Israel (WWPPPI) 2026

Prayer Resource for Churches-Sunday, 20 September 2026

For use in the main Sunday service. Requires: one empty chair placed visibly at the front of the sanctuary/altar before the service begins.

Introduction of the Symbol

(Leader, before the chair is placed)

"This week, churches across India join the World Council of Churches' World Week of Prayer for Peace in Palestine and Israel. Today we place an empty chair before us. This chair is empty because a child is missing. In Gaza, thousands of children are unaccounted for-lost under rubble, separated from their families, or gone in the chaos of war. This chair holds their place, so that we do not look away.

As we look at this chair, we are also asked to look around us-at the children of Dalit, Adivasi, and tribal communities in our own country, who too often go missing, unseen, and unheard. The empty chair is theirs also."

(The chair is carried in and placed at the front.)

Litany of Intercession

Leader: God of life, we hold before you children in Gaza and the West Bank whose lives have been taken or endangered by occupation and war, and children in India whose lives are shortened by caste violence, by neglect, and by conflict within India. May every child be recognised as precious and worthy of protection, without exception and without condition.

All: **God of life, protect every child.**

Leader: God of peace, we pray for children who have known occupation, checkpoints and military presence before they have known peace, in Gaza, the West Bank, and in India. Turn the instruments of war toward the sustaining of life. May children everywhere sleep without fear.

All: **God of peace, protect every child.**

Prepared for the Kairos India Partnership (KIP)

Leader: God of belonging, we remember Palestinian families forced from their homeland, and families in India who are also displaced alike, separated by ethnic violence, their children still out of school and out of home. Protect every child's right to belong, to have a home, and to know the love of family and community.

All: **God of belonging, protect every child.**

Leader: God of justice, we remember children detained and harmed in Palestine and Israel, and children in India who carry the weight of caste-based violence and the trauma of growing up under sustained conflict. Bring healing to children carrying visible and invisible wounds. Strengthen all who work to protect them.

All: **God of justice, protect every child.**

Leader: God of compassion, we remember children in Gaza whose hospitals have been destroyed, and children in Dalit communities across India who are denied equal access to healthcare and adequate nutrition. Strengthen healthcare workers, humanitarian workers, and caregivers everywhere.

All: **God of compassion, protect every child.**

Leader: God of wisdom, we remember children in Gaza and Jerusalem whose schools have been damaged or closed, and Dalit and Adivasi children across India denied an equal place in the classroom because of caste. Bless teachers who continue to nurture children's knowledge, imagination and hope.

All: **God of wisdom, protect every child's right to learn.**

Leader: God of justice and hope, we pray for Palestinian and Israeli children, and for children in India whose futures are shaped by caste and structural inequality. Teach us to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with you.

All: God of hope, protect every child's future.

Prayer of Commitment

(said together)

> *God who sees every empty chair before we do, we confess that we grow used to loss that is not our own. Forgive our silence in the face of Gaza's missing children, and our silence in the face of our own country's missing children. Give us the courage to keep this chair before us- not as decoration, but as demand: that no child, anywhere, should have to disappear, for us to notice they were never safe. In the name of Christ, who welcomed the child and named the least among us as himself.*
>
> *Amen.*

For Further Details:

Member churches/core group partners and other organisations wishing to participate, request additional resources or assistance for prayer resources, or share feedback are invited to contact the Kairos India Partnership: Rev. Asher Noah through kip@ncci1914.com or cod@ncci1914.com.