

Memorial 2025

M-1 Memorial: End the Occupation and Recognition of Palestinian Statehood

Rationale

The Southeast Michigan Synod is a companion synod with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Holy Land. The ELCA in 2005 established the initiative *Peace Not Walls: Stand for Justice in the Holy Land* recently renamed *SUMUD: for Justice in Palestine and Israel*. The name *sumud*, Arabic “steadfastness” was chosen at the suggestion of our Palestinian Lutheran companions. Receiving this word as a prophetic gift from our companions reminds us that God’s steadfastness calls us to steadfastness.

The ELCA’s 2017 social message *On Human Rights* states “The ELCA as a church supports human rights around the globe in its work with global partners. In response to God’s call to comfort God’s people (Isaiah 40) and through the strategy of accompaniment, our church seeks to accompany those among our global partners who suffer human rights violations.”

ELCA has committed itself to uphold and foster human rights as described in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; support international organizations such as the United Nations, including its Security Council and Human Rights Council; be sensitive to the needs of indigenous peoples...practice accompaniment in its advocacy on human rights; and provide members, congregations, and other ELCA entities the resources needed to deepen their understanding of and commitment to promoting human rights.

United Nations Resolutions 446, 452, 465, 471, and 476 have declared the state of Israel’s military occupation of the West Bank is illegal. The occupation includes: restriction of freedom of movement; military incarceration without due process; demolition of homes; restriction of the water usage that is administered by the State of Israel; appropriation of Palestinian homes in Jerusalem; and appropriation of Palestinian land by illegal Israeli settlements.

Resolved that the Southeast Michigan Synod 2025 Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to encourage its members to continue to pray, and advocate for human rights, justice, and peace for all Palestinians and Israelis.

Resolved that the Southeast Michigan Synod 2025 Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 ELCA Church Wide Assembly to request the Presiding Bishop to direct a letter to the President of the United States, to the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House, calling for the U.S. to take action in its foreign policy supporting the recognition of Palestine as a legitimate state in the United Nations, as other United Nations member states have done.

Resolved that the Southeast Michigan Synod 2025 Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly to request the Presiding Bishop to direct a letter to the President of the United States, to the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House, calling for the U.S.

to take action in its foreign policy supporting the human rights of all Palestinians and Israelis by calling for an end of the illegal occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

Submitted by

Pastor Paul Walters, Lutheran Church of the Master, Troy; Pastor Fred Harms, St. Paul, Grosse Pointe Farms; Margaret Harms, St. Paul, Grosse Pointe Farms; Pastor Jack Eggleston, Unity, Southgate.

The Resolution committee recommends this Memorial to the Assembly.