

Peace, Love, Justice, Hope & Joy:

Churches for Middle East Peace's 2011 Advent & Christmas Reflections

*A Coming
for All People*

O God, I pray
for peace and justice
for all people.

O God, I pray
for love and joy
for all people.

O God, I pray
for all children,
women and men
of the Holy Land.

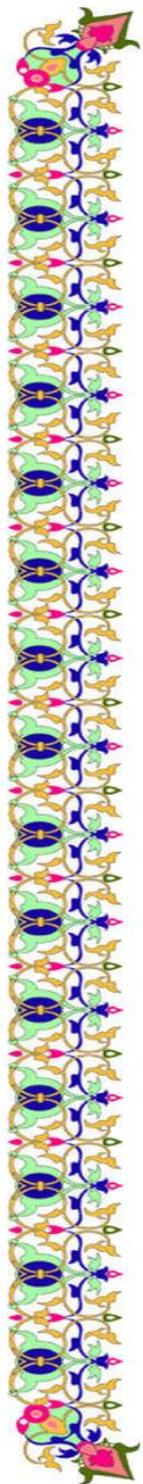
Through my words
and actions this day
help me live as
an instrument of
Your peace
and justice.

Through my words
and actions this day
help me live as
an instrument of
Your love and joy.

Let my expectations
of God with us,
of You with us,
include all people.

Help me to be like
Christ this and every
season.

Amen.



Salt is good, but if salt becomes insipid, with what will you restore its flavor? Keep salt in yourselves and you will have peace with one another. —Mark 9:50

Peacemaking and Peace Art: Keeping Salt in Hebron

One day in Hebron, I was with my friends from the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israeli (EAPPI). We watched a Palestinian employee with UNRWA, the U.N. Agency for Palestinian refugees, denied access through an Israeli checkpoint to his home.

We tried accompanying this Palestinian man —Hashem— through the checkpoint, and this time, the Israeli soldier allowed all of us through. I saw this scenario repeatedly in the West Bank and was struck by the power that we had simply by using this unearned privilege we had as internationals to break through barriers.

Hashem graciously invited us to his house, which is next door to an Israeli settler leader. Hashem showed us his olive trees which Israeli peace activists from Peace Now had tried to help him harvest to deter settler attacks, only to face brutal settler attacks themselves.

Hashem's wife, Nisreen, showed us her oil pastel art, portraying lush olive groves, doves flying over glitter-smudged oceans, and Israelis, Palestinians, and all the people of the world dancing along swirled, turquoise rivers. Nisreen told me that "my art makes me feel peace."

Jesus asked us to keep salt—our own personal connection with God—strong so that we may have peace with one another, as portrayed in Nisreen's transcendent images of justice and peace for all.

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