Endorsement of “Declaration for a Just Peace Between Palestine and Israel”
by Rabbi Brian Walt

As a rabbi, and as part of an increasing number of Jews and rabbis who stand in solidarity with the Palestinian call for justice, equality and freedom, I wholeheartedly support the United Church of Christ’s proposed Declaration for a Just Peace between Palestine and Israel. The document is an inspiring and courageous articulation of the prophetic call to justice so deeply rooted in both Judaism and Christianity. It also reflects the Jewish understanding that at the heart of Torah is the idea that all human beings are created in the image of God (B’telem Elohim) and that all are entitled to compassion, justice, equality and dignity.

With great sadness, I have witnessed with my own eyes the shocking systemic inequality between Jews and Palestinians in Israel/Palestine that is documented in the Declaration. This systemic inequality violates the core principles of Judaism and the historical legacy of our people. I support equality for Palestinians not in spite of being Jew, but because I am Jew and Judaism requires it of us.

The accusation that support for Palestinian rights is antisemitic is simply an attempt to silence those who are courageous enough to speak out. This use of the false charge of antisemitism to silence anyone who supports the inherent rights of Palestinians is itself a manifestation of anti-Palestinian bigotry.

To my brothers and sisters in the church, I stand with you in faith and courage. May God bless your efforts.

Rabbi Brian Walt grew up in South Africa and was an anti-Apartheid student. He is the founder and rabbi emeritus of Congregation Mishkan Shalom, an activist congregation in Philadelphia, and was the founding executive director of Rabbis for Human Rights – North America. He was a fellow of the Dorothy Cotton Institute and led a delegation of American civil rights leaders to the West Bank in 2012. He is a member of the Rabbinical Council of Jewish Voice for Peace.