

Pastoral Letter in a Time of Solidarity and Fear



Dear Pastors and Church Leaders,

We have entered a difficult season. The political atmosphere has become so toxic, it can feel for some of us that there are potential landmines everywhere we step. At the same time, we cannot stay silent in the face of so much injustice and suffering. For many of us, the task before us at this moment is equal parts overwhelming and threatening. Amid all of that, it can be difficult to keep our attention on parts of the world that seem far away from us, but it is also essential. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, *we are tied together in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. And whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly.* We cannot ignore what is happening to our siblings in other parts of the world, because their humanity is directly tied to our own, and as Desmond Tutu was fond of saying, *we can only be human together.*

At the time of this writing, four members of the UCC MPS (formerly UCC PIN) steering committee have recently returned from the West Bank in Palestine, and one is currently there. What we saw and heard on our trips was heartbreaking. “We are hopeless and demoralized,” said one Palestinian father whose home had been recently demolished. Others expressed feeling abandoned by the rest of the world, and Palestinian Christians who we spoke with feel abandoned by the Church and their siblings in faith.

While we go about our lives here in the states, Palestinians live every day with forced poverty, home demolitions, harassment from soldiers and settlers, night raids, checkpoints, and the threat of arbitrary arrest and imprisonment. And that’s just in the West Bank. We all know that things are far worse in Gaza, where Palestinians continue to be bombarded by air raids, which kill people by the dozens almost every day. Those who survive the bombs are dying slowly and painfully from starvation and untreated illness and injury. If we are indeed all tied together in a single garment of destiny, these attacks on Palestinians are a direct attack on humanity as a whole, and that we cannot abide.

Yes, there is much injustice and suffering to attend to right here in the United States, but it is all connected. Consider how the detention and threats of deportation to student activists is related to the immigration debate. Consider how state violence here is tied to training that American police officers receive from the Israeli military overseas. Or consider how the current administration, amid drastic cuts to essential programs and services at home, continues to send billions of dollars in military aid to a genocidal Israeli government.

Pastoral Letter in a Time of Solidarity and Fear (cont'd)



Palestinian pastor Munther Isaac writes that Palestine is the moral compass of our time. We agree, for if we can't muster the courage to speak out on behalf of children in Gaza, who face relentless bombing and starvation every single day, our moral voice is collectively compromised and loses its integrity to speak on other issues as well. To be "progressive except for Palestine" is not an acceptable stance. Palestinian solidarity is deeply tied to our solidarity with Black Americans, Indigenous Americans, LGBTQ Americans and immigrants. All these justice struggles are interconnected and intersectional.

We cannot ignore injustice in our own country, but neither can we ignore it on distant shores. We must attend to all of it. We know that feels overwhelming, but we must remember that we do not do this work alone. We have each other, and UCC MPS is also here to offer resources and support. Our website has educational resources like the [Crisis in Gaza](#) series, as well as [past webinars](#) that can be used in your congregations. Our [Substack page](#) has liturgical resources that can be used as-is or adapted for your own worship context. If you follow us on Facebook and Instagram, you can access our weekly 'Pause for Palestine'—a prayer that comes out every Thursday which can be used for personal devotions or congregational prayer.

We hope that you will prayerfully discern how you can join us in this crucial work of solidarity and advocacy. If you have questions, or would like to connect further, you can email us at info@uccpin.org.

Sincerely,

United Church of Christ Movement for Palestinian Solidarity Steering Committee
(formerly *United Church of Christ Palestine Israel Network*)

Access this and other resources on our website: uccpin.org | info@uccpin.org



Join "Solidarity with Palestine, Strength in Community: A Supportive Space for Clergy in a Time of Fear"

