

Devotional Guide + Resources



ADVENT
PILGRIMAGE IN
PALESTINE

Week 1: Who does not have room?

Guiding text | Luke 2:7

Introduction

God sent his only son in human form to take up room in our world and show us what it means to make room for all in God's kingdom. Throughout his lifetime, Jesus showed us what it means to make room for folks who have been told there is no room. In Christ's birthplace of Bethlehem, his hometown of Nazareth and all cities and villages in between, there are Palestinian Christians and Muslims who are told in words and in action that there is no room for them in their homeland.

1. Watch: AJ+ "Christians in the Holy Land" & "Welcome to Sumud: for Justice in Palestine and Israel"

2. Discussion:

- In what ways is there "no room" for Palestinians in Palestine and Israel?
- Rev. Munther says Jesus would be "familiar" with life under occupation, which defines life for Palestinians today. What does he mean by this?
- Illegal Israeli settlements and constraints assert there is "no room" for families like the Lutheran Nassar family in Bethlehem. How does their faith inform them to respond?
- Who might be told there's "no room" in our own country?

3. Testimony:

Join a webinar with Gazan Palestinian Christian Khalill Sayegh on Dec. 5, 7 p.m. Central time.

(see www.elca.org/sumud or find ELCA Sumud on Facebook to join).

Prayer:

Loving God, we lift up all who are told there is "no room" for them in our communities, and in our world. We pray for the Palestinians who continue to have faith while living in a country that insists there is no room for them. We ask you to show us those who need room in our lives, and empower us to invite them in. Amen.



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Week 2: Who is making room?

Guiding text | Matthew 19:13-14

Introduction

Palestinians are repeatedly told (in words and action) there is no room for them. In Gaza, Palestinians face constant displacement, death, and destruction. In the West Bank, unemployment has risen to 39%, and many no longer have savings left. Even in these circumstances, Palestinians, including our partner church the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, make room for the vulnerable in their communities. Education, one of the largest ministries of the ELCJHL, remains a priority for the church, and provides much-needed community for students.

1. Watch: ELCJHL Student Testimony



2. Discussion:

- In what ways might Palestinian youth feel there is no room for them?
- How do schools like the ELCJHL Lutheran schools make room for youth in their society?
- Who is making room in our own communities for those who are told there is no room?
- Why do you think Jesus values making room for the vulnerable?

3. Action Item:

If you feel called, make a donation to the ELCJHL schools [here](#) and/or to the ELCJHL [here](#).

4. Testimony:

ELCJHL Youth Pastor Rodny Said and ELCJHL youth will join us for a panel Dec. 10 12 p.m. Central time. See www.elca.org/sumud or find ELCA Sumud on Facebook to join).

Prayer:

Creator God, we pray for those who hear your calling to make room for all. Please lift up the ministry of all who work for justice as a way of creating room when governments, nations or communities tell them they have none. Help us to recognize who is doing the holy work of making room in our own lives, so we may join and empower them. In your name we pray. Amen.



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Week 3: How can we make room?

Guiding text | Matthew 21:12-13

Introduction

Jesus challenged and disrupted systems he saw as unjust. In this Scripture, Jesus makes room, through action and word, for those he thought should be welcome in the house of God: everyone. Today we, as Christians are called to disrupt unjust systems and attitudes to make room for our neighbors.

1. Watch: Watch the short film “The Present” on Roku TV



2. Discussion:

- In this film, who had room? Who did not?
- What parts of Yusef’s life left him no room? Why?
- How does Yasmine’s action to “make room” for her father compare to Jesus’ disruption at the temple?
- What attitudes or mindsets must be “overturned” to make room for all?
- Where in your life could you or your community make more room for others?

3. Action Item:

Tell us about your community! Fill out our form [here](#) so we can begin mapping Sumud communities in the ELCA.

4. Testimony:

ELCJHL YAGM alums join us for a panel December 17, 7 p.m. Central time. (see www.elca.org/sumud or find ELCA Sumud on Facebook to join)

Prayer:

Dear God, help us to discern which systems or mindsets in our lives must be disrupted to make room for all your children. Help us be “holy disruptions” in our communities and our nation who do not become idle in the face of injustice. Teach us your ways of creative resistance to structures of racism, sexism and bigotry that drive us, your beloved children, away from one another. In your name we pray. Amen.



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Week 4: Jesus came to make room for all

Guiding text | Galatians 3:23

Introduction

Christ is born, and we are free. Christ, in his birth and ministry freed us from separation, from hatred, from violence, from enmity. We are justified by faith to radically love our neighbors and answer our calling to be actors of justice in his name. Jesus' homeland is currently defined by locks and custody. As Jesus made room in his ministry, so too are we called to be aware, to advocate, and to accompany those without room in Palestine and Israel today. Please watch the following video in which children from our partner ELCJHL schools sing and pray for justice and peace in their country. Included in this devotion is a guide to send your representative encouragement to stop using our tax dollars for violence in the Holy Land. Use the following resources, write your own message or lift up the prayers of the children you saw in the video.

1. Watch:

Watch "[ELCJHL Christmas Prayers](#)" on YouTube



2. Discussion:

- Which prayers stood out to you?
- How do you imagine Jesus would respond to the prayers of the children you saw?
- What struck you about the song being sung, "Laylet Eid Milad," and its lyrics?

3. Action Item:

Send Christmas letters to Congress.

Find your congressperson [here](#).

Click [here](#) to send an email, or find a printable PDF [here](#) to send via snail mail.

Prayer:

Dear Creator, you came to us as a small infant who had no room. You showed us who does not have room in society and that, in God's kingdom, there is room for all. In your birth, you gave us the freedom to make room for our siblings of all faiths, races, and backgrounds. Help us become instruments of peace by using our voices to object to what is wrong and work with one another to create what is right. Empower us to see a future of liberation for all. Amen.



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