

ELCA 2026

LENTEN SERIES:

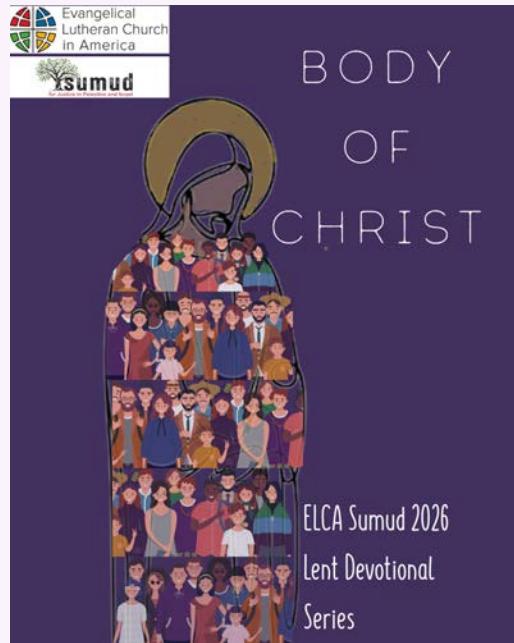
BODY OF

CHRIST

Week 2: “Shared Life”

Passage: Romans 5:12-19

Bishop Tim Graham of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod



Paul reminds us in Romans 5 that through one, sin and death spread to all, and through one (Jesus Christ), grace and life are poured out for the many. This is not only about individual salvation but about a shared life that binds us across borders and histories. In Christ, we do not belong to ourselves alone but to one another.

Our connection to Palestinians is, first and foremost, a human one. The brokenness Paul names—violence, fear, displacement—is a daily reality in Palestine. At the Lutheran Dar al-Kalima School which we visited as part of our Bishops Solidarity Visit, ninth-grader Hannah described to us her daily journey from the Dheisheh Refugee Camp. School, she told us, is not a chore but “a way of resistance.” She spoke with joy about after-school clubs and the library, where her love of reading is encouraged. Yet the road to this “second home” is often dangerous: raids and roadblocks delay or prevent students from reaching school, and some days buses are turned back. Still, Hannah will not let these obstacles keep her from learning or from her right to speak and create. In her determination, we glimpsed the steadfastness—in Arabic, “Sumud”—of Palestinian Christians who cling to hope amid fear and constraint.

Our connection runs even deeper with our Christian siblings in Palestine. Through baptism, Palestinian Christians and we are joined to the same crucified and risen Lord. As the ELCA accompanies the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, we have witnessed grace in their steadfastness: in worship that proclaims hope amid injustice, in

schools and ministries that serve children and families, and in leaders who keep showing up. Sharing this grace with our siblings in Palestine is to let Christ's reconciling love move us from distance to solidarity: to listen to their stories, resist indifference, and advocate for justice and durable peace for all who dwell in the land. In this Lenten season, we trust that where sin and suffering abound, God's grace in Christ abounds still more.