

Sabeel-Kairos

Taking Action for Palestine

ORDER OF SERVICE

In Partnership with Sabeel-Kairos UK – Voices from Palestine

Focus: The Living Stones of Palestine and the Prophetic Call of Kairos II

Part 1: Gathering

1. Prelude & Gathering Hymn

The service opens with music that grounds us in themes of justice, exile, and peace.

- **Arabic Christian Chant:** "Kyrie Eleison" (Middle Eastern arrangement)
- **Hymn of Peace:** *Yarabba Ssalami* (God of Peace)
- **Traditional Hymn:** "O Day of Peace That Dimly Shines" (*Jerusalem*)
- **Scriptural Song:** "The Steadfast Love of the Lord Never Ceases"

2. Opening Prayer & Call to Worship

Leader: We gather today to worship the God of justice and peace—the God who does not turn away from suffering, but who intimately hears the cry of the oppressed. As we begin this service, we intentionally turn our hearts, our minds, and our collective focus toward the land where Jesus walked. We come together to bear witness to a land that is holy, yet deeply fractured. We come to lift up our Palestinian brothers and sisters, the "living stones" of the global church, who have kept the flame of faith alive through generations, but who are suffering under the crushing weight of systemic injustice, occupation, and violence today.

Congregation: God of mercy, open our eyes to see, our ears to hear, and our hearts to break for what breaks Yours. As we enter this space, clear away our distractions and our hesitations. Give us the courage to look honestly at injustice, and the grace to stand in solidarity with those who long for dignity, freedom, and true peace.

Leader: Today, we choose to break the silence. We gather to confront realities that are often ignored: the daily indignities of occupation, the loss of land and freedom, the uprooting of olive groves, and the ongoing displacement of families in Gaza and the West Bank. We recognize that when cruelty and inequality become normalized, speaking out for justice and practicing active compassion becomes a radical, necessary act of faith. We pray that this service will be a space of deep listening, holy lament, and awakening.

Congregation: Holy Spirit, prepare our hearts for what we will hear and reflect on today. Shake us from complacency and ignite within us a passion for active, non-violent peacemaking. May our worship today transform into tangible solidarity tomorrow, as we commit to walking alongside our global family until all people in the Holy Land can live in freedom and equality.

All: In the name of Christ, who stands always with the broken-hearted and calls us to be seekers of justice. Amen.

Part 2: Hearing the Reality

3. Concrete Realities: Voices from the Ground

A designated reader or the worship leader presents these brief, objective insights to ground our service in reality.

- **The Reality in Gaza:** Decades of blockade followed by Israel's ongoing genocide have devastated life in Gaza. According to UN agencies, Israeli forces have completely decimated civilian infrastructure—including ancient churches, hospitals, and schools—displacing over 80% of the population and subjecting them to severe shortages of water, medicine, and food. UN data shows that Israeli military action killed over 70,000 Palestinians between October 2023 and the end of 2025, with killings continuing into 2026.
- **The Reality in the West Bank:** The Israeli military occupation relies on a restrictive system of military checkpoints, permits, and an expansive separation wall that severely impedes basic freedom of movement, dividing families from their lands and livelihoods. The annexation of land and the expansion of illegal settlement building have accelerated rapidly over the last 12 months, accompanied by an unprecedented rise in settler violence causing death, displacement, and injuries.
- **The Reality in East Jerusalem:** Human rights organizations like Amnesty International document systemic home demolitions, forced evictions, and the expansion of illegal settlements. The Israeli government routinely strips Palestinian Jerusalemites of their legal right to live in their native city—revoking

their residency status, demolishing their homes, or allowing settlers to take them over to forcibly expel Palestinian families from their ancestral lands.

- **The Status of the Church:** Palestinian Christians represent an unbroken presence dating back to Pentecost. Today, due to these extreme pressures, military occupation, and economic isolation, their numbers have plummeted to less than 1–2% of the population, threatening the survival of the Christian community in its historic birthplace.

Please check for up to date statistics and information:

<https://www.unocha.org/occupied-palestinian-territory>

<https://reliefweb.int/updates?list=occupied%20Palestinian%20territory%20%28oPt%29%20Updates&advanced-search=%28PC180%29>

<https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/media/3hqlbiio/nakba2026e.pdf>

<https://www.btselem.org/>

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/middle-east/palestine-state-of/>

<https://justpeacecoalition.com/learn/>

<https://www.sabeel-kairos.org.uk/>

Field Code Changed

4. Hymn of Lament

- **Traditional:** "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded" / "Abide with Me" / "God of Grace and God of Glory"
- **Global & Liturgical:** "Kyrie Eleison" (*Taizé or Middle Eastern chant*) / "In Labor All Creation Groans"

Part 3: The Word

5. Scriptural Reading

- **Amos 5:24:** *"But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."*
- **Luke 4:16-21:** *Jesus' manifesto of setting the oppressed free.*

6. The Sermon: Reframing the Text

Inspired by Rev. Dr. Munther Isaac's historic address, "Christ in the Rubble / Sermon to the West."

Sermon to the West: <https://youtu.be/fhUqbNd7Zag?si=WUN61P-RLUKkmdTd>

Key Themes: Rev. Dr. Munther Isaac's address to the Western church deliver a sharp prophetic indictment against Western Christian silence, moral hypocrisy, and theological complicity in Palestinian suffering. At the heart of his message is the assertion that God is not aligned with imperial power but is found directly among victims of violence and oppression. He forcefully critiques the Western church for relying on "empire theology" and Christian Zionism—systems that sanitize colonial violence, dehumanize Palestinians, and weaponize Scripture—while prioritizing comfortable, balanced neutrality over costly solidarity. He emphasizes that in the face of ongoing injustice and genocide, neutrality is a form of complicity, warning that the credibility of the Gospel is broken when Western Christians choose institutional self-preservation over the prophetic mandate to loosen the chains of injustice

Christ in the Rubble: <https://youtu.be/aEGiANa0-ol?si=ilRIAA8RhTGy120i>

Key Themes: Christmas and the Gospel are not Westernized, romanticized commercial stories. They are Palestinian stories born under the shadow of a brutal empire, checkpoints, and displacement. We are challenged to see Jesus where he belongs: *in the rubble with those who suffer*. In a time of structural injustice, silence is not peace—it is complicity. True Christian hope is a defiant, steadfast resilience (*Sumud*).

7. Introduction to the Kairos II Document

In 2009, Palestinian Christian leaders issued the historic *Kairos Palestine* document—a word of faith, hope, and love from the heart of suffering. Meeting again in Bethlehem, they issued an urgent second manifesto titled: **“A Moment of Truth: Faith in a Time of Genocide.”** In November 2025.

It outlines a theology of comprehensive, non-violent resistance, urging the global church to move beyond vague prayers for peace and take an active moral stance against occupation and apartheid. It calls for **"costly solidarity,"** asking churches to review their theology, engage in political action, and stand alongside the Palestinian Church.

Suggested quotes from the document:

Palestinian Christians:

2.9 Our message to ourselves as Palestinian Christians is this: We feel the weight of history upon our shoulders, and we are determined to preserve the Christian witness in this Holy Land. To all Palestinians, we say: The preservation of the Christian presence is both a national cause and priority. We are neither simply a number nor merely a type of diversity within our society. We are indigenous citizens who embody human values and seek to work and build our homeland alongside all our partners within it. 2.10 In

addressing ourselves, we say: We are the sons and daughters of the first Church—descendants of the apostles and the saints of the first Christian centuries—those who cultivated this land, built its cities and villages and drank from its waters. We do not live on the margins of this land. We are woven into its fabric. We carry its history and heritage. Its very soil knows us as its own. Many empires have passed over this land and disappeared, buried in the dust of history, yet the bells of our churches continue to ring—bearing witness to the truth and proclaiming resurrection every day.

Genocide:

Genocide is a cumulative process—one that began in the minds of the settler-colonial powers of Europe when they denied the image of God in others and legitimized death, domination and slavery. We consider the State of Israel, established in 1948, to be a continuation of that same colonial enterprise built on racism and the ideology of ethnic or religious superiority. This project settled Palestine and worked to displace the indigenous people of Palestine from the time of the Nakba until today. Our present Palestinian reality is the inevitable outcome of Zionist ideology and the supremacist settler-colonial movement, itself a product of the imperial mindset.

On costly solidarity:

3.11 More than ever, now is a time for costly solidarity. By its very nature, true solidarity is costly. It has a price. It is a faith-based stance, a human commitment and a moral responsibility. True solidarity is also the embodiment of our shared humanity and fraternity. Either we live together—or we perish together. Today it is Palestine. Tomorrow it will be other marginalized and oppressed peoples.

Hope for the future:

4.5 From the heart of pain, genocide and displacement, we raise this cry, a prophetic cry of steadfastness. We declare our commitment to work for the good of this land and of all humanity on the basis of our shared humanity until the day we live free in our land together with all the inhabitants of the land in true peace and reconciliation justice and equality for all God's creation, where mercy and truth meet, and righteousness and peace kiss each other (Psalm 85:10).

4.3 Our aim is to live as sons and daughters of God in our homeland without barriers, walls, military occupation and apartheid—but in a world in which justice, fairness and equality rule. We envision a future in which our world is free of war, death, sectarianism and tribalism, where the word of truth rises above the word of power, where legitimacy belongs to peace and justice. We draw our hope from the Word of God and from the faith alive in our hearts.

These are only suggested readings, the whole text is rich and I would suggest reading all of it as it's so beautifully written if there was time!!

Kairos II document: <https://www.sabeel-kairos.org.uk/new-kairos-ii-faith-in-a-time-of-genocide/>

To order free copies (only pay p&p) of the printed Kairos II booklet to give to your congregation before the service go to:

sabeel-kairos-uk.sumupstore.com

Part 4: The Response of the Church

8. Poetry of Steadfastness

A reader recites a selection from a Palestinian writer to offer an artistic window into the soul of the community. (To respect copyright laws, these items are read aloud but not fully printed in the text).

- **Poetry Options for the Reader:**

- *Mahmoud Darwish: "Earth Poem",* <https://www.poemist.com/mahmoud-darwish/earth-poem> "Think of Others" <https://www.poemist.com/mahmoud-darwish/think-of-others> , or "On This Land There Are Reasons to Live" <https://readalittlepoetry.com/2025/10/06/on-this-land-by-mahmoud-darwish/>
- *Refaat Alareer: "If I Must Die"* <https://ifimustdie.net/>
- *Khaled Juma: "Oh Rascal Children of Gaza"* <https://thisweekinpalestine.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/315-004.pdf>
- Please see the selection of poems on Najwan Darwish' website to choose from. <https://www.najwandarwish.com/poems.html>

9. The Sabeel Wave of Prayer

Sabeel is a Palestinian Christian liberation theology centre in Jerusalem. Their "Wave of Prayer" ministry links global Christians in regular spiritual solidarity.

<https://sabeel.org/wave-of-prayers/>

Leader: Lord, we join the global community in the Sabeel Wave of Prayer, washing over the world from Jerusalem to our pews. We lift up the land where Your Son walked. Lord, in Your mercy...

Congregation: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for the Christians of Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem. Strengthen them in their *Sumud*—their steadfast resilience. Keep their hope alive when all around them feels like darkness. Lord, in Your mercy...

Congregation: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for an end to the systems of occupation, the dismantling of apartheid walls, the stopping of home demolitions, and the cessation of warfare. Comfort the mothers holding their children and the communities mourning their dead. Lord, in Your mercy...

Congregation: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for the Western church. Forgive us for our ignorance, our selective theology, and our convenient silences. Grant us the courage demanded of us by the Kairos II document to act justly and stand boldly with the marginalized. Lord, in Your mercy...

Congregation: Hear our prayer.

Additional Act of Repentance: Examine & Return

Call to Self-Examination

The congregation is invited into a period of deep, silent introspection. As we face the realities of our world and our history, we look inward, allowing the Holy Spirit to reveal where we have been complicit or silent.

Leader: The Kairos II document calls the global church to a moment of truth and a deep examination of conscience. Repentance is more than an apology; it is a turning around, a commitment to systemic change. Let us sit in silence and gently consider our own hearts, our heritage, and our churches, bringing these areas before God:

- Our Shared History: The legacy of the British Empire, the consequences of the Balfour Declaration, and the ways we have supported, minimized, or excused colonial oppression ("I didn't do it," "It's not my fault").
- Theology as a Weapon: Spiritual abuse—the twisting of Biblical narratives and holy texts to justify supremacy, segregation, or structural oppression.
- The Shadows Within: Subconscious or conscious racism, selective blindness, and a willful ignorance that chooses not to look at painful truths.

- The Comfort of Inertia: Apathy, fear of division, cowardice in the face of injustice, selfishness, and the deep exhaustion that leads us to give up.

(A prolonged period of complete silence is kept for personal confession and the naming of faults.)

Prayer of Repentance

All: Lord, I am truly sorry. Loving Father, you are the source of all goodness and love, and you never refuse to forgive those who come to you with repentant hearts. Give me the strength to acknowledge my failures and see how I can change my ways. Look with kindness upon me and forgive me for all my deliberate or accidental faults and omissions, which I name before you now:

[Space for Silent or Spoken Confessions]

I pray in Jesus' merciful name. Amen.

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The Lord's Prayer

Part 5: Sending Forth

10. Closing Hymn

- "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah"
- "Show Me How to Stand for Justice" (*Tune: Dim Ond Jesu / StF 713*)

11. Blessing & Commissioning

Leader: Go forth from this place, not as those who are blind to the world's pain, but as those commissioned to speak truth to power. Read the words of our siblings in Christ from Palestine. Stand with the living stones. And may the blessing of God Almighty—the Creator who demands justice, the Christ who dwells in the rubble, and the Holy Spirit—be with you now and forevermore.

Congregation: Amen.

Further resources:

- **Read the Document:** Scan the QR code or follow the link to read the full **Kairos Palestine II Document (*A Moment of Truth: Faith in a Time of Genocide*)**.

<https://www.sabeel-kairos.org.uk/new-kairos-ii-faith-in-a-time-of-genocide/>

- If you wish to order free hard copies (only pay p&p) of the Kairos II document; please go to:

sabeel-kairos-uk.sumupstore.com

Liturgical Resources:

The Just Peace coalition has also produced a liturgical resource for churches which you may also find useful, please see below.

<https://justpeacecoalition.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Time-to-Act-Worship-Resource.pdf>

- **Join the Movement: Sabeel-Kairos:**

- <https://www.sabeel-kairos.org.uk/header/join-us-become-a-member-of-sabeel-kairos/>
- Sabeel-Kairos is a campaigning Christian charity that works for human rights, justice and equality for Palestinians in partnership/solidarity with the Christian community in the Holy Land.
- We journey with our partners, [Sabeel Jerusalem](#) and [Kairos Palestine](#) on the long road to justice, offering steadfast solidarity with Palestinian Christians as they seek to remain a Christian presence in the Holy Land, under the extreme pressures of the Israeli apartheid system. We amplify their voices and calls to the Western church for repentance and action.

- The Just Peace Coalition: **Time to Act Campaign:**

<https://justpeacecoalition.com/>

- Kairos Palestine documentary '**The Silent Genocide**'

https://youtu.be/3ANNWr_8du8?si=_izq7PwEBAhSX9XG

- Kairos II document **Study guide:**

<https://www.kairosresponse.org/kp2guide.html>

- Please let us know if you would like us to send literature promoting the work of SKUK for you to distribute during your service.

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