SECURITY, JUSTICE, AND PEACE FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE HOLY LAND

WHEREAS, the prolonged Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the ongoing illegal Israeli settlement building in the West Bank and East Jerusalem are obstacles to peace, add fuel to violence that threatens people’s security and create much suffering for Israelis and Palestinians; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA gives thanks for our special relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, which is marked by mutual love and concern for lasting peace with justice, and rejoices that our Palestinian brother in Christ, Bishop Munib Younan, is president of the Lutheran World Federation; and

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, under the leadership of the Working Group on the Middle East, has for nearly two decades adopted resolutions at past assemblies encouraging its members to learn about, advocate for, and support Lutheran institutions in the Holy Land as well as to view what is happening in the Holy Land through a lens of both justice and security; and

WHEREAS, the 2011 Churchwide Assembly passed a resolution supporting positive investment in Palestinian goods and services and commending the “ELCA Economic Social Criteria Investment Screens” to its members, congregations, synods and agencies; and

WHEREAS, the 1995 Social Statement For Peace in God’s World, passed by an overwhelming majority, reminds us that seeking peace with justice is the church’s proper work, and recognizes that in pursuing just political structures “the responsible use of [economic] sanctions may on occasion be the most effective and least harmful measure to lead states to stop [oppressive behavior]”; and

WHEREAS, on October 5, 2012, fifteen U.S. Christian leaders, including ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson, signed a letter urging Congress to “undertake careful scrutiny to ensure that our aid is not supporting actions by the government of Israel that undermine prospects for peace”; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that we affirm Peace Not Walls as the means by which the ELCA implements its strategy for engagement in the Holy Land, and be it further
RESOLVED, that we affirm our support for sisters and brothers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land as they remain faithful to the Gospel amid the oppression of Israeli military occupation; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly urge each congregation, drawing on the resources of the synod’s Working Group on the Middle East and the ELCA’s Peace Not Walls, 1) to organize educational settings to study and listen to the cries of our Palestinian sisters and brothers as declared in the Kairos Palestine document; 2) to encourage viewing and discussing documentary films dealing with the situation such as the academy award nominated films Five Broken Cameras and The Gatekeepers; and 3) to seek and share those resources that provide reliable and current information about creating a shared future in which all the people of Israel/Palestine experience security, justice, freedom, dignity, peace and reconciliation; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the request to Congress contained in the October 5, 2012, letter signed by 15 Christian leaders be endorsed by this Assembly and that the Illinois Delegation in Congress be notified of this action; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly memorialize the Churchwide Assembly to commit to socially responsible economic practices by encouraging individuals to invest in Palestinian economic endeavors and to avoid products and services by companies that benefit from or support Israel’s occupation of Palestinian territory.

Submitted by:

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