



The United Church of Canada

It is the season of Easter, where we move from the despair and hopelessness of Good Friday—when it seemed that death and destruction triumphed.

In their grief and numbness, the women went to the tomb. Together. And together they encountered hope, new life, resurrection.

On the road to Emmaus, the disciples walked with a stranger. They prayed together, broke bread together, and they also met hope, new life, resurrection.

Sometimes I despair. I lose hope, especially after watching or reading the news, or hearing reports from global partners. I think of Palestine, and the sheer number of people who have died, or been injured or displaced. The destruction of everything they know as home, and the threat of another ground invasion, with nowhere safe for them to go.

I think of Israeli hostages who have not yet been released. I think of collective warmongering that pours fuel on the fire of this conflict at the peril of all in the region.

We need a lasting and just peace in the region—and that seems so desperately far away. But then I remember the words of Jesus: “Wherever two or three are gathered in my name, I am there.”

The power of accompaniment and of radical solidarity is a long-term commitment to knowing and walking beside. There are simple actions for us to take to radically accompany partners in Palestine and Israel. As members of KAIROS Canada, we join with others across the country, and indeed across the world, in joining the [Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage](#).

We track the distances we walk in prayerful solidarity. If you are unable to move with us, please wear white, and take a photo to share on social media and with [your MP](#), urging Canada to join in the [call for a permanent ceasefire](#).

On April 18, I will start my walk with ecumenical partners in Manhattan, New York. And on May 22-23, I will join church leadership from KAIROS Canada members to walk in

Ottawa. We will bring our prayers and concerns to the Government of Canada and Parliamentarians, urging them to take immediate and sustained steps to advance and promote a just and lasting peace in Palestine and Israel. If you can, please join us in Ottawa on May 22.

For specific actions, resources and other ways to witness, please refer to the special edition of E-ssentials (April 18), or to the [news update](#).

I ask you to join me, and the countless many faithful who continue to walk. To gather together—in twos and threes, in tens, twenties, hundreds, and thousands—in prayer, in solidarity, in radical accompaniment, for Palestine and Israel. Gather together, even amid your despair and hopelessness, to roll, walk, move together.

Let us pray:

As relentless as the rising sun,
may we, steadfast God,
pray relentlessly,
 until the violence, war and bloodshed in Gaza ends.
Give us the fortitude to pray, without ceasing,
 until the safety, well-being and dignity of all people is cherished and held as sacred;
and until elected officials and those in positions of power safeguard the most vulnerable
and protect the human rights
Give us the courage to pray boldly with
 our hearts, our words, our actions and our resources
until all people in Palestine and Israel can enjoy freedom, justice and peace in abundance.
May it be so,
Amen

This is how we can be neighbours to those far away.

This is how we can be pilgrims—disciples—together.

Together in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carmen". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letter 'C' being particularly large and stylized.

The Rev. Dr. Carmen Lansdowne
Moderator of The United Church of Canada