

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Like many of you, I have been deeply troubled by the news this week from Syria. First, there was the horrific chemical weapons attack on civilians. Then the U.S. missiles being used against the Syrian airbase understood to have perpetrated the earlier attack. In both instances, the lives of precious children of God have been lost. Lord, have mercy.

The psalmist reminds us not to put our “trust in princes, in mortals, in whom there is no help,” but rather reminds us to place our hope in the Lord our God. He recalls that “the Lord watches over the strangers; he upholds the orphan and the widow, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin” (Psalm 146).

It is a time for prayer – for peace, and for those seeking refuge during this time when there is no peace in Syria.

Still, acknowledging our brokenness in sin, we recall that God created humans in God’s image “made for life in community” and that our social statement, *For Peace in God’s World*, encourages us to “pray for forgiveness, and for the faith that in love acts for earthly peace,” and to work for it.

In situations of civil war, the statement notes, questions arise “about what, if anything, the international community can and should do in the face of internal conflicts.” In deciding about wars, “we face conflicting moral claims and agonizing dilemmas” about the ways to help and protect the neighbor in the face of injustice and aggression.

While the path to peace remains unclear, our commitment to it should not waiver. We have been and will continue to assist Syrians in need through the Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch in Syria, through the Lutheran World Federation assisting refugees in Jordan and through our Global Mission partners in Europe.

Let us continue to pray, assist those in need, offer refugee to those fleeing violence, and encourage all efforts toward peace for all of the children of God created in God’s image. We continue to place our hope in the Lord our God, the Prince of Peace.

In Christ

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton

Presiding Bishop