



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

December 6, 2017

I am deeply disturbed to learn of the Trump Administration's plans to move the U.S. Embassy in Israel away from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The ELCA has long held the view that a negotiated, final status agreement, including a "shared Jerusalem", must be reached without unilateral actions by any party that would prejudice the outcome of negotiations.

This unilateral action would not support the cause of peace and a two-state solution but rather unnecessarily create further tensions and possible violence that would make efforts to bring them back together for talks much more difficult. As my brother in Christ and colleague, Bishop Munib Younan of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, has often said, the security of Israelis depends on the freedom of Palestinians and the freedom of Palestinians depends on the security of Israelis. This proposed action would make both more insecure.

To proceed with this plan will only further isolate our nation from the global movement for a just peace for Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike in the region and our church's policy that seeks an end to the occupation, an end to terrorism and violence, and, ultimately, the establishment of a viable, contiguous Palestinian state. Since the announcement is one of intentions, I call upon the President to rescind this plan and instead continue to focus on our nation's ability to contribute constructively toward a peaceful settlement of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. Along with other inter-religious partners, I continue to stand ready to discuss with the President ways to reach a peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Sincerely,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America