



Jesus in the Rubble

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You may have seen the photo. A baby Jesus figure, lying amidst the rubble, a piece of black and white checked fabric draped over his body. [This is the nativity scene](#) displayed by the Lutheran Church in Bethlehem. The scene was created to symbolize the reality of the children living and being born in Palestine at this time. “If Christ were to be born today,” [said](#) the Reverend Munther Isaac, “he would be born under the rubble and Israeli shelling.”

The scenes we have witnessed over the past few months in Gaza certainly support this imagery. Photos of children covered in dust, family bent over the bodies of loved ones, aid workers carrying the injured into hospitals that lack the elements needed to offer care. [As of December 7](#), at least 17,177 Palestinians have been killed since October 7, 70% of whom were women and children. The Israeli government has cut off the people living in Gaza from food, water, fuel, and electricity, while continuing to drop bombs across one of the most densely populated areas in the world. The humanitarian catastrophe is massive.

In [a statement released](#) by the Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem, faith leaders in the region encouraged congregations to forgo festive activities this Advent season and to focus instead on the more spiritual meaning of Christmas, to direct our attention to our siblings affected by the violence, and to fervently pray, “for a just and lasting peace for our beloved Holy Land.”

In addition to the call for prayer, the letter from the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem included a call for continued action. Reverend Isaac, from the Lutheran Church in Bethlehem, was one of three Palestinian Christians from Jerusalem and Bethlehem who traveled to Washington D.C. earlier this month, to [deliver a letter](#) urging the Biden Administration and Congress to call for a constant and comprehensive ceasefire.

However you choose to observe Advent and Christmas this year, I invite you to join me in the commitment of continued advocacy for a just and lasting peace. To join in the growing call to Congress and the Administration [to support an immediate ceasefire](#), and for humanitarian assistance to be permitted to enter Gaza. To give financially, as you are able, to the [UCC appeal](#) to support humanitarian aid.

As followers of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, we cannot give up on hope for a better future where all live with dignity and justice. This Christmas, I will be thinking about that photo of Jesus lying in the rubble.

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