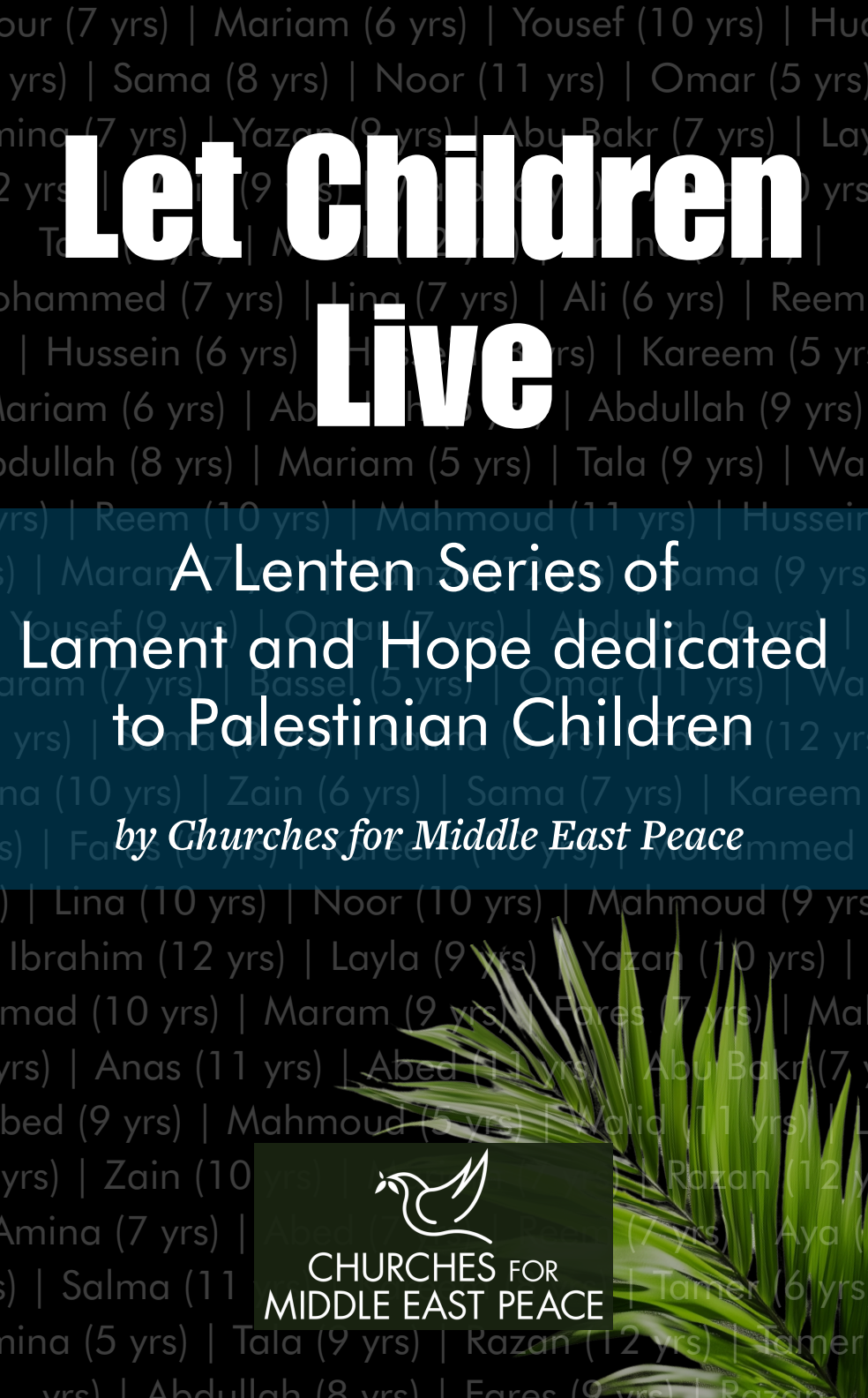
Let Children Live

A Lenten Series of Lament and Hope dedicated to Palestinian Children

by Churches for Middle East Peace



INTRODUCTION

Hopeful Optimism - Our Work Continues

by Fayelle Ewuakye

Digital Media Manager

The Let Children Live campaign began in the summer of 2025, and many of you joined right away, praying for Palestinian children by name. It was and still is not only a cry of lament - it is also a declaration of hope. We embrace that hope while knowing, even though promises of ceasefire have arrived, our work is far from over. There is still much to be done. We at Churches for Middle East Peace have hopeful optimism.

Hopeful optimism means believing that peace is possible and preparing for it with action. It is choosing to pray, rebuild, and advocate so that every child can grow, dream, and live fully. Even as world's attention fades, we will remain, lifting up their names, telling their stories, and believing that love can outlast any war, fear, or hatred.

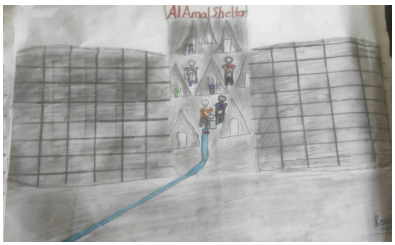
The children of Palestine will still need safety as violence is not over. They need healing, safety, clean water, and a future free from fear.

This Lent, we have been gifted the privilege to share drawings of Palestinian children who have had to endure such heartache and fear for over 800 days. The violence continues and so do the effects. And so will our work.

We ask that you join us to keep the children of Palestine close in your mind and your heart. These drawings from Remas (15), Enas (13), and Retal (11)*, while heartbreaking, are begging for witness. Let us not turn away. Let us embrace renewed strength. Let us take our broken hearts and turn it into action.

We continue to elevate the voices of the children and those who care for them. We continue to advocate for holistic peace on their behalf and all in the Middle East. We continue to pray.

And we continue to ask for you to join us.





We offer our gratitude to Heather Layton (www.heatherlayton.com) and the beautiful children of Palestine for sharing their heart

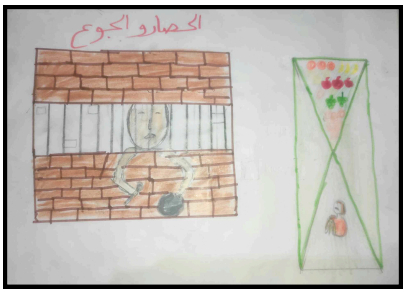
Ash Wednesday

by Giselle Soares

Ambassador Warren Clark Fellow

Isaiah 58:1-12

On Ash Wednesday, the Catholic faithful of the Holy Land begin their Lenten journey. May Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who for our salvation fasted forty days in the wilderness, receive our repentance and have mercy upon us sinners. On Ash Wednesday, we become mindful that we are dust and to dust we shall return. May this Lenten season grant us contrite hearts, watchful minds, and hearts turned towards the Savior. As we enter the season of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, may Our God deliver us from empty rituals and self-righteousness. May God teach us the fast which He has chosen, which will loosen the bonds of injustice, break off the yoke of oppression, feed the hungry, house the stranger, and clothe the naked. May the faithful look with compassion upon the Palestinian children of the Holy Land. May the Lord preserve their lives, defend their dignity, and grant them a future rooted in hope and peace. May our prayers strengthen us to bear one another's burdens. May our fasting bear the fruits of justice and mercy, to the glory of God's Holy Name. Amen.



1st Sunday of Lent

by Rubin McClain

Ambassador Warren Clark Fellow

Psalm 32

For the first Sunday of Lent, we remember those suffering in Gaza and the West Bank. We turn our attention, and our intercession, toward those in need. We recall the psalmist's declaration that you, Lord, are our hiding place and a protection against trouble (Ps 32:7). We pray for the vulnerable in shelters, awaiting salvation from pain, destruction, and tragedy. We ask your protection for all who seek shelter, and for refugees fleeing violence, who have lost homes and family and who struggle to draw meaning from their plight. We remember the hope you bring through your life, death, and resurrection. You gather the nations into your redeeming purposes, where righteousness prevails and darkness is defeated. Amen.



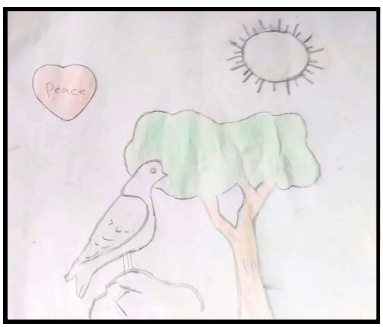
Second Sunday of Lent

by Giselle Soares

Ambassador Warren Clark Fellow

Psalm 121

We can meditate on Psalm 121, which speaks of the mountains in the Holy Land. We can lift our eyes to the mountains where the Psalmist writes that one can connect to Our God, the Maker of Heaven and Earth. In the mountains of Galilee, Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Jerusalem, Our God walked as human flesh. While looking towards the mountains of the Holy Land, we cry for the help of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for these same mountains bear restrictions, checkpoints, and detours. Our Holy Land now stands as a place that is sacred ground, yet also marked by a sacrificial experience. May the faithful turn our hearts towards Our God this Lenten season, because help does not come from human power, but from God who made heaven and earth. Look with mercy on the families in Palestine, whose coming and going is burdened by the delays, denials, and painful separation from their families and holy sites. Preserve their lives, guard their steps, and sustain them with steadfast love. As Holy Easter approaches, let us remember that Your Son led us from the despair of the tomb into the light of His Holy Resurrection. God alone is our refuge and deliverance. Amen.



Third Sunday of Lent

by Rubin McClain

Ambassador Warren Clark Fellow

Romans 5:1-11

For the third Sunday of Lent, we lift our prayers for all who are oppressed. As we pray for those suffering in occupied Palestine, we echo their cries to be free from oppression and geopolitical instability, and we ask for the hope of a peaceful and righteous future. As we reflect on Jesus' life and ministry, we remember that turning enemies into friends is difficult, and peacemaking comes at a cost. Yet we trust that hope does not put us to shame, because you are at work in the world and your love has been poured into our hearts through Christ (Rom 5:5). We lift up all who suffer across the Middle East. Grant them strength to endure, and courage to continue anticipating your justice. Amen.



Fourth Sunday of Lent

by Giselle Soares

Ambassador Warren Clark Fellow

John 9:1-41

On the Fourth Sunday of Lent, we remember when Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, opened the eyes of the man born blind. May the Savior have mercy and illuminate our hearts. Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, did not explain away the blind man's suffering or attribute guilt to him. Instead, He met the afflicted with compassion and revealed God's holy work through human suffering. May we be granted humility in order to confess our spiritual blindness, since if "we see" our guilt will remain with us. May we be delivered from the hard-heartedness of the Pharisees, from self-assurance that blinds us from God's truth, and from indifference to the suffering of others. As Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, healed the eyes of the blind man with water and clay from the Pool of Siloam, may the Savior also wash away our prejudice, fear, and indifference. May we truly learn to behold the Image of God in every person. May our Lord and Savior look upon the suffering in the Holy Land, both Muslims and Christians, who are living under displacement, checkpoints, and the violence of war. Preserve them, strengthen them, and keep them alive in the hope of the Holy Resurrection. Lord Jesus Christ, make us witnesses of Your healing, friends of the marginalized, and defenders of the oppressed. Amen.



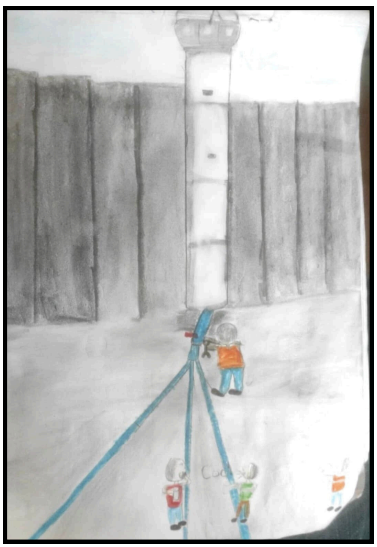
Fifth Sunday of Lent

by Rubin McClain

Ambassador Warren Clark Fellow

Psalm 130

For the fifth Sunday of Lent, we lift up those who live at barriers of partition, and those who cannot envision a future beyond the walls of oppression. We pray for all who bear the constant weight of injustice, and for those who see these physical walls as signs of a broken future, without hope. Lord, lighten their burdens and lift their hearts to trust that you bring justice to a fallen world. Grant all who suffer the hope to wait for your justice and righteousness. May they wait for you, Lord, more than watchmen for the morning (Ps 130:6). Amen.



Palm Sunday of Lent

by Giselle Soares

Ambassador Warren Clark Fellow

Psalm 118: 1-2; 19-29

On Palm Sunday, the faithful can meditate upon Psalm 118. Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, became the stone rejected by the builders. The stone which was rejected became the Cornerstone of salvation, which opened to us the gate of righteousness. As the pilgrims who sang at the threshold of the Temple, we stand before Our God, remembering Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Gaza, which are the holy places where Our God walked as flesh. Our Lord and Savior entered Jerusalem in humility, hailed with palm branches, but soon was cast aside. He was betrayed, abandoned, and crucified as a criminal. What the world discarded, God the Father raised in glory. Death was turned into life by His Holy Resurrection. Remember, Our God, the Christians of the Holy Land — in ecumenical union — who walk on these sacred streets amid division, occupation, and sorrow. When they are overlooked and dismissed, reveal to them Your love. "This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." May Our Lord grant us a joy that does not deny suffering, but refuses to lose hope in the face of despair. Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ's empty tomb, is a reminder that Death does not have the last word. May Your Church proclaim on Holy Easter from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth that Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, is risen from the dead!



Maundy Thursday of Lent

by Fayelle Ewuakye

Digital Media Manager

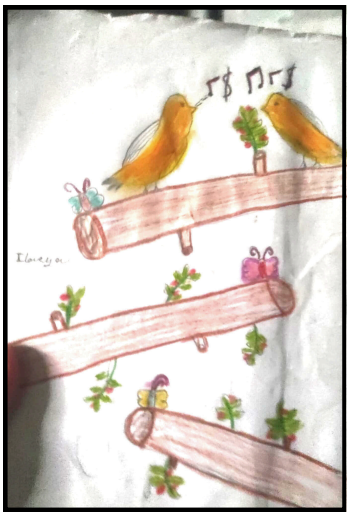
Psalm 118: 1-2; 19-29

Holy God,
everlasting light
breath that never fails

You placed the height and depth and breadth of glory
into your Son
He washed dust-stained feet
He offered mercy without limits
He loved beyond measure
He offered Himself as the Prince of Peace

Teach us to love, God
to speak a language of never ending mercy
to carry hearts that break like yours
to embrace the hungry, the cold, the suffering
to hear and sing a song of peace

Amen



Good Friday of Lent

by Fayelle Ewuakye

Digital Media Manager

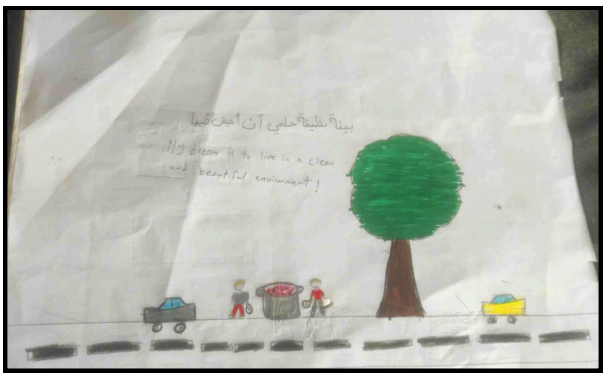
Psalm 22

Heavenly Father, we come before You in this time of distress - weary, much like the psalmist who cried out to You. As we bring the innocent before you in desperate prayer, help us to remember that even when it seems evil will win, you are intimately present in the suffering. Thank You, Lord, that You are not a God who despises or ignores the cries of your beloved children.

We pray for all who feel abandoned or overwhelmed. Help us all to remember that You have not hidden Your face. We trust, even in the darkest times, that Your unwavering compassion and mercy never fails.

In the name of Jesus, who also bore affliction and understands pain, we ask for Your strength be with the children of Palestine. And we ask for the stamina and invigoration to continue working on their behalf.

Amen



Holy Saturday of Lent

by Fayelle Ewuakye

Digital Media Manager

Lamentations 3:1-9, 19-24

Holy Saturday is a quiet day, one of reflection. Try this breath prayer today:

- Find a quiet place.
- As you inhale, silently pray the first half of the phrase.
- Pray the second half of the phrase as you exhale.

INHALE: Lord, I come to you,
EXHALE: Focus my mind and heart
INHALE: Lord, I offer up my ache for the oppressed
EXHALE: Remind me of your love
INHALE: Lord, I believe your hope and redemption is true
EXHALE: For all the children of Palestine

Repeat 3 or 4 times and close your time of prayer by praying the Lord's Prayer.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen



Easter Sunday

by Destiny Magnett

Programs and Outreach Manager

Acts 10:34-43

Hallelujah! He is risen!

In the midst of a despairing world, the Lenten season always arrives right on time, inviting the body of Christ into a process of reflection, lament, and repentance. The past forty days have been a holy time where each of us enters into a space close to suffering, personified through Christ's sacrifice and crucifixion. Today, though, on Easter Sunday, we emerge and are reminded that at the end of death there is resurrection– that in the midst of suffering there is hope.

In this year's CMEP devotional series, every scripture, every child's drawing, and every prayer invites us to bear witness, through the life of Jesus, to the pains of our world. We are compelled to weep with the children who draw checkpoints, falling bombs, and raids on aid trucks, lamenting the innocence of childhood that has been taken from them. In these drawings and prayers, though, there are also images that showcase an imagination for a new world to come. One where children are safe and are not forced to ask,

"Will it be bread or bombs falling from the sky today?".

Easter tells us that each of us has a role to play in bringing about this kind of world, and inspires in our hearts the kind of hope that drives us to action. In her 2024 talk at Christ at the Checkpoint, "Still, Hope" Dr. Lamma Mansour reflects on hope in this vein, saying:

Hope gives us the power to be bold. This hope gives us courage. Our hope declares that the seeming victory of oppression is temporary, and, in doing so, hope defies the arrogance of oppressors who build walls and drop bombs...Our hope defies evil. It resists evil. Christ rose from the dead and defeated evil, ushering in the kingdom and freeing us to join in building it.... Hope draws us from passive comfort into costly solidarity. Hope draws us into a life of love.

It is this kind of hope that Easter brings us. Not passive, but active. Not driven by evil or revenge, but by overcoming evil in the name of Christ's love.

And so on Easter Sunday, I leave you with this prayer:

God of resurrection:
As we rejoice in the life and ascension of your son, Jesus Christ,

Give us strength to bear courageous witness in troubled times,
seeking to bring voice to the voiceless and compassion to the oppressed

Help us to see each child as our own,
precious, created in your image, and deserving of abundant life

Bring us closer to your justice,
showing us the ways we might build your Kingdom here on Earth

And, above all, fill our hearts with hope–
Hope that transforms and expands our hearts
Hope that celebrates joy and values rest
Hope that challenges us to be more like Jesus
Hope that carries us in our darkest days
Hope that helps us to imagine a liberated world
Hope that inspires costly solidarity.

In your love and mercy we ask these things,

Amen.

With the Hope of Easter,

Destiny Magnett

Destiny Magnett
Programs & Outreach Manager





About Churches for Middle East Peace

CMEP is a coalition of more than 35 national Church communions and organizations in Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, and Evangelical traditions. Efforts center on encouraging US policies that actively promote a comprehensive resolution to conflicts in the Middle East with a focus on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, and also mobilizing US Christians to embrace a holistic perspective and to be advocates of equality, human rights, security, and justice for Israelis, Palestinians, and all people of the Middle East.

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Thank you for reading CMEP's 2026 Lenten devotional resource. If you are compelled to support the creation of more resources like this or the work of CMEP more broadly, please donate online by visiting www.cmep.org/donate or you may mail a check to:

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