



Pastor Enno's Weekly Message

Dear Friends,

I got to listen to Rev. Calvin Konop's sermon on the war between Israel and Hamas last Sunday when playing for the Blue Grass Service over at Bethlehem Lutheran. One of the things I appreciated was that he was very clear to make the distinction between the Israeli government and the people of Israel, and the Hamas fighters/government and the people of Palestine. There were many of us who disapproved of the war against Iraq 20 years ago, even though most of our government leaders were gung-ho. There are peace protests occurring by Israeli people in Israel and around the world wanting bombing of civilian areas in Gaza to stop. There are so many calling for peace around the world.

If we have learned nothing over the past century, or I should put it, what we should have learned over the past century (and much farther back) is that an occupying nation using mostly force to secure its protection always fails. I absolutely condemn the Hamas attack and killing of civilians and I absolutely condemn the Israeli government, IDF, bombing of civilian areas, especially when the Israeli government tells the people to go there because it will be safe and then bombs them anyway.

We, as Christians (and Americans), are on the side of justice for all, not picking one side or another. The United States government has not been an honest broker. We have always favored the Israeli government over Palestine, though we have been a little more honest than others in helping to restrain Israel in the past. Exodus 21:23-25 states 23 If any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, 24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 25 burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. This is a call for justice, not vengeance. If you lose an eye, you cannot take both eyes or their life. In this long, long lasting conflict, for about every 1 Israeli person who is killed, roughly 10 Palestinian persons are killed. Now, food, fuel, and water have been disconnected from Gaza because the Israel Government controls all of Gaza's 2 million persons access to the basics of life. These numbers have the potential to be much, much worse.

Almighty God, may a cease-fire on all sides come quickly, may access to life-giving basics be restored, and may a just peace come to bless all the people and the land. Amen!

Peace