

Advent and Christmas in Palestine 2017

Christmas celebrations will take place in a very difficult climate for all peoples in the Holy Land but many individuals and groups refuse to give up hope and are searching for non-violent ways to work for human rights and a just and peaceful future for both peoples.

Please try some of these ideas:

- include prayers for justice, peace and security for Palestine and Israel in your Advent and Christmas services.
 - light a candle for peace in Palestine and Israel each day of Advent.
 - look for ways in which your Advent Services and Christmas crib can show how the people of Bethlehem are living now - perhaps build a wall around or through the crib and discuss who would be inside or outside. Put up a display showing what it is like in Bethlehem in Palestine today. If you need photos please contact us.
 - **See Kairos Palestine Christmas Alert 2017 www.kairospalestine.ps to read personal stories of Palestinians living under occupation.**
 - Advent Project for Primary aged children in school and church: makes the links between the Christmas Story and the reality of Bethlehem today. Olive figures of the Holy Family and a DVD <http://www.paxchristi.org.uk/documents/PeacEd/PrimaryAdventProject.pdf>
The PowerPoint pictures can be downloaded to make a display.
 - Send a peace message to our sisters and brothers in the West Bank and Gaza. Collect messages and email them to palmessages2017@gmail.com and they will be sent to our partners. Add a photo of yourself, family, group, congregation to make it more personal.
 - reflect on Palestinians today attempting to make journeys in Palestine. The checkpoints throughout Palestine and the 30' separation wall prevent Palestinians from travelling freely so Christians and Moslems who live in Bethlehem, totally surrounded by the wall, are separated from their family and friends and cannot leave without a special permit. They are imprisoned by the wall. Christians living outside Bethlehem are usually denied permits to worship there at Christmas. Israeli citizens are denied access to Bethlehem. So if Mary and Joseph were travelling today they would not get in - the crib would be empty!
- Write to your MP and MEP** explaining this and ask that they work for freedom of movement for all people in Palestine and Israel. www.writetothem.com
- adapt Christmas carols to reflect the situation in Bethlehem now. Some are available.
 - Christmas presents of 'Bethlehem Baskets/Boxes' could include olive wood carvings, Palestinian Olive oil, soap, almonds, maftoul, olives see Pax Christi and Zaytoun.
 - For Palestinian olive wood carvings see www.paxchristi.org.uk or email annfarr@phonecoop.coop
 - Pax Christi : <http://www.paxchristi.org.uk/litgy1.php#seasonal>
 - Christian Aid <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/getinvolved/christmas/resources/index.aspx>
 - Zaytoun: www.zaytoun.org Tel: 0781 4477188

For further help with these ideas please contact palmessages2017@gmail.com