

From the Rector on the Violence in the Holy Land

From Rector Mike Kinman:

I've been asked repeatedly over the past few days when I/All Saints Church will be "making a statement" about the violence in Palestine/Israel.

I am realizing how easily I am drawn into being reactive instead of reflective ... and that when that happens I am neither at my best self or providing my best leadership for others. I also recognize that the opportunity to step back and reflect is a privilege that in every situation (and certainly this one) many people do not have. And ... when I do have it, I am trying to take it and use it for the greater good.

What I am doing this week is listening deeply to those I know who are most impacted by the atrocious violence that has been happening and that is happening in this Holy Land that so many of us share. I am occasionally amplifying voices (with their permission) that I believe provide an alternative to the militarized extremes that seem to be attracting more and more people and that seem to dominate the media coverage and certainly the social media expressions. (such as this piece I posted yesterday from our dear friend Rabbi Heather Ellen Miller – **scroll below to see that)

I am particularly grateful to All Saints' Middle East Ministry for helping me to hear some voices I have not previously heard ... and to our historic ministry partners like Heather Miller, Ken Chasen, Salam Al-Marayati ... and longtime friends like Rabbi Susan Talve who have opened their hearts and minds to me or expressed a willingness to do so.

There is so much wisdom and so much love from people like these who have spent their lives working for the kind of justice that brings lasting peace ... they ... and so many of you ... is what keeps me in a place of hope rather than despair.

There is no shortage of people who have been grieving in and about Israel/Palestine for generations unto centuries ... and that grief is taking new and raw forms. This week, I will be endeavoring to listen, to show up, to hold hands, to wipe away tears.

This Wednesday evening at 6 pm, our weekly Taize worship service will be offered with special intention for the justice from which true peace springs in this Holy Land. I encourage you to come or to pray where you are.

I encourage you to examine the role media/social media consumption is playing in your life ... spiritually, emotionally and physically. Be aware if what you are consuming makes you more compassionate and understanding, more curious of and loving toward those with whom you might disagree ... or makes you feel hatred and anger toward them. Does it lead you to humanization or dehumanization. And be honest with yourself about how that fits in with who and how you want to be.

I encourage you to embrace the anger and pain you are feeling. It is righteous and justified. And I hope we can create and find spaces where we can express our anger and pain in ways that do not demonize and continue the traumatization of the other but that leave room for us meeting in the kind of mutually respected honesty from which true healing can spring.

I encourage you to take whatever time you are comfortable spending in silence (and maybe add a few seconds beyond that comfort level) and — however you pray — to invite peace to be the air you breathe in and the air you breathe out, to let the words you are hearing and the tears you are wiping away (including your own), rest on your heart and listen for God's still small voice in your heart, in the spaces between words and on the lips of one another.

And ... if you would like to talk and/or pray with me ... please reach out.

I am certain I will have much to say about what I am hearing and the fruits of me trying to do all these things above in my preaching this Sunday. In the meantime, know I am holding you in prayer and solidarity and ask you to do the same for me.

Blessings and love.

Mike Kinman

Rector, All Saints Church