LDA
Lutheran Diaconal Association

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A Message from the LDA Executive Director

Dear Sister Adrainne,

Thank you for your prayers. My family and I are fine. We are safe, thanks be to God; however, the situation is really bad. Missiles are near, lots of loud explosions in the air, and all the time, the sirens that we hear from the nearby settlements.

On our side (Palestinian territory), we don't have any safe rooms or shelters in our homes. They announced that all cities in the West Bank are closed and we cannot move from one city to another: no gas or fuel, no schools or universities are in session, now. Local people are calling to ask if the church can help them buy some food. Tomorrow I will be at the church to see how we can support the people.

Please pray for peace and better days,

Deacon Rana Z,

Director of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) Diaconal Ministry, a Diakonia World Federation member diaconate, writing from the West Bank.

"I lift up my eyes to the hills.

From where does my help come?

My help comes from the LORD,

the Maker of heaven and earth." - Psalm 121

Keep your eyes on the hills.

People of the diaconate, this season of Lent is difficult in ways that it shouldn't be.

The country has entered a war that, like a bullet, is causing widespread damage far beyond its entry point, causing many to dwell on the question "From where does my help come?" as we watch the scenes of wild, chaotic, seemingly random strikes against humanity.

It is a question that those of us who are Believers had trouble answering this weekend, and frankly, it sometimes seems as if God is absent; God has left this place for our own human destruction.

LDA, friends and supporters, it is imperative that we not remain silent, that we seek, remind, and reclaim the answer and shout it from the mountaintop.

That is our action. As the diaconate, we have been called to pray and mobilize into action against war and its gruesome outcomes; against the irresponsible use of war. World leaders use the tools of the evil one, but never forget, we, the diaconate, use the tools of Jesus Christ. He is the model of peace.

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In your prayers:

- Remember those in Iran, all those who were lost in the protests last month,
- Pray for the lives lost due to the recent violence and deployment of rockets on civilian institutions in Iran and neighboring countries.
- Pray for the countries surrounding Iran that have committed themselves to democracy and have now become the targets of retaliation,
- Pray for all service members, in all countries, the US, Iran, and Israel, who are rapidly being deployed to follow orders of hasty world leaders and authoritarian regimes,
- Pray for churches, mosques, and synagogues in this country that need extra protection for fear of religious hatred, inflamed by the disregard for peaceful measures and processes.
- Pray for our own family and congregation members who are trapped in the Middle East, that they might find safety and return to us whole,
- And, finally, we pray for the diaconate in that region, especially the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), whose diaconal ministry has yet another crisis to attend.
- Let us rejoice that we know Christ, who came to save the world; let us not grow weary in proclaiming this truth. Speak out, be a witness, and move into action in your communities. Make yourselves available because this is the call of the diaconate, and requires nothing less.

For many of you at the LDA, this message is how you have lived your life, how you have conducted your ministries.

I know many of you are at the borders and on the picket lines, constantly in your senators' inboxes and mailboxes, and that the lights in your prayer rooms never go out.

Continue to stand on the picket lines courageously, and in wisdom, prayerfully bring our petitions to the Lord from whom our help comes, and demand that our leaders lead with integrity when deciding to risk the lives and health of civilians, troops, and the economy.

The LDA does not remain silent.

Diakonia is not political; it is a public witness to God with us in the Dark Night of the Soul. Scripture sends us out into the world to follow Jesus.

"For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him." John 3:2

Be well, Be aware.

Deaconess Adrainne J. Gray