



## **Statement on Palestine/Israel, McFarland UCC, May 2025**

**(drafted By Harriet Taylor, Marcus Murphy, and Bryan Sirchio)**

We, the members of McFarland UCC, are called to action by Old and New Testament teachings and by our strong commitment to loving our neighbors to take a stand in support of Palestinian justice and fairness. Micah 6:8 calls us to “love mercy, and act justly.” Isaiah condemns accumulation of property at the expense of justice and righteousness (Is 5:8) Throughout his ministry, Jesus directed us to care for our neighbors: feed the hungry, heal the sick, free the oppressed, release the captives, bring justice to all.

We are deeply aware of the long-term injustices the Palestinian people in Gaza and the West Bank have faced:

- For over 70 years, Palestinian refugees have been refused the right to return to the lands they owned prior to the establishment of the State of Israel;
- For over 50 years, the State of Israel has occupied the West Bank, establishing control of or interfering in all parts of Palestinian lives
- Israeli settlers have flooded the West Bank with what are, by international agreements, illegal settlements taking over Palestinian lands and resources
- In recent statements the Israeli government has declared the intention to annex the West Bank to Israel and to displace the Palestinian citizens while Gazans will be deported or isolated to a small area of Gaza under Israeli military control
- Gaza has been under de facto Israeli control of borders, imports, electricity, permission to work in Israel... or outright military occupation or war for 50 years. Now it is under siege and the population is suffering immensely from malnutrition, destroyed infrastructure and demolished medical systems.

We are aware of the horrors of the Hamas attacks from Gaza on Israelis over a decades-long period and especially in October 2023. We condemn these attacks. We believe the current Israeli hostages in Gaza and Palestinian prisoners held without charge in Israeli prisons should be released immediately. We urge an immediate long-term ceasefire.

We affirm that all people, Israeli and Palestinian, are created in the image of God and that all are sacred and equal in God's eyes. From this belief comes our call for a just peace between the State of Israel and the Palestinian people.

To quote the Jewish co-director of the movie "No Other Land", upon receipt of the Oscar award, *"There is a different path. A political solution without ethnic supremacy, with national rights for both of our people. ...? Can't you see that we are intertwined? That my people (Jews) can be truly safe if Basel's people (Palestinians) are truly free and safe? There is another way. It's not too late for life for the living. There is no other way."*