

## **CEASFIRE!**

**By Rev. Dr. Jennifer Leath, 4th Episcopal District**

fellow sufferers  
silence will not protect us  
time to rise is now

*reflecting on ...*

### **land**

freedom at high cost  
where does “do no harm” begin?  
where i am settled

### **suffering**

enduring these days  
heaping mounds of angry pain  
oozing scents of death

### **terror**

taking hostages  
reigning horror all around  
now: feel what i feel

### **dissemblances**

“we won’t take your land”  
“we affirm self-governance”  
“we *had* to strike them”

*manifesting ...*

### **discernment**

who is at fault here?  
how deep are agony’s roots?  
our balm must reach there

### **justice**

it’s just all of us  
needing healing balance

souls: recalibrate

## **peace**

resurrection breath  
it's nothing without justice  
more than a stillness

## **healing**

first: wash off the hate  
showing oppression's faces  
then: apply the cures

## **love**

justice projected  
strong and vulnerable peace  
sacred relations

*AND*

*feel antiblack vibes?  
wonder how the dust settles?  
ceasefire. regardless.*

*AT LEAST* ceasefire!  
accumulated epochs  
end during these days

~

I grieve for each person, each family directly impacted by the violence of 7 October 2023. I pray for the safe return of every Israeli hostage taken on that day. And still: we all know that the terror of that day began long before for all who are involved.

I stand against anti-Semitism. I stand against Islamophobia. I stand against the erasure of Palestinian Christians. I stand against militaristic empires. I stand against fast and slow violence. I stand against the anti-Blackness and anti-queerness that somehow still creeps up in those with whom I stand on these fronts.

And I *\*must\** speak because of those (with whom I now stand) who have recognized *\*my\** suffering – and that of the communities of which I am a part – and have spoken and stood with me. You who have stood with me – Palestinians and Israelis; Jews, Christians, Muslims, agnostics, atheists, and people of other faiths; people of all walks of life: thank you.

And I *\*must\** speak and take a stand because – even if you did *\*not\** stand with me (or wouldn't) – I recognize you as my neighbor crushed under the rubble of whatever bombs or hang-gliders have dropped on you.

I have walked the walls that separate Palestinian territories from Israeli territories. I have experienced the mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical terror and hyper-surveillance that Palestinians endure each and every day firsthand. There *\*is\** an apartheid, Jim Crow, George Floyd murder era familiarity about walking the streets where Palestinians live. There is so much I do not know, but this I know as well as my name: what is happening to Palestinians right now – and what has been happening to Palestinians for decades – is unjust. And this I know as well as the first century Palestinian Jew in whom I believe: there is no justification for the current crushing approach of the Israeli government. And too: there is no justification for the violent amalgamation and targeting of Jews and Muslims who live outside this region.

On 3 November 2023, Adam Serwer published an article titled “Don't Equate Anti-Zionism With Anti-Semitism” in *The Atlantic* (<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2023/11/anti-zionism-not-anti-semitism/675888/>). While Serwer's article does not adequately reflect the dissemblances of those who make the claim that they are anti-Zionist to shield themselves from justified allegations of their anti-Semitism, it does reflect the spirit of so many of us who want to see justice, peace, and a dismantling of empire for all. And though the article leans into the possibility of a single state solution that many have abandoned, most helpfully, it invites us to a broader imagination of the possibilities of just peace. However, another true reason I cite Serwer is that he names the fears that have silenced me.

I only regret not saying more, not saying it stronger, and not saying it sooner. Let us leave regret behind.