

Brothers & Sisters,

For well over a hundred years now, Anglican Churches around the world have taken up an offering on Good Friday for the work of the Gospel in Jerusalem. The Apostle Paul writes, "*Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem ... For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to do them a service also in material things.*" (Rom. 15:25-27) In this and other passages, and in the writings of the Church Fathers, it is evident that the Body of Christ in the Holy Land remained of particular interest to the early Church as it spread around the world.

Christ Church in Jerusalem is part of the *Church's Ministry Among Jewish People* (CMJ) which began its work in the Holy Land in 1823 and built Christ Church in 1849 **making it the oldest Anglican/Protestant church in the Middle East**. Our ministry also has a presence in Jaffa/Tel Aviv, the Galilee, and conducts ministry in other parts of Israel.

I have lived and worked in Jerusalem for 43 years and **I have never seen such opportunities for the ministry of the gospel as we are seeing today!** There is a great openness and spiritual curiosity among both Jews and Arabs. Many come to Christ Church and want to know more about the hope we have in Jesus, and every year thousands of pilgrims from around the world come to worship with us while visiting Israel. From our mercy ministry, worship services in English, Arabic, and Hebrew, to our museums which are host thousands of locals who come to hear the good news of the Gospel, everything we do is made possible because of your Good Friday Offering. Your faithful partnership helps us continue our witness of Jesus the Messiah, *the glory of Israel and the light to the nations*.

Over the past few years, we have expanded the work of our Mercy Fund which helps needy Jews and Arabs, providing much needed legal help. We have events and services in English, Hebrew and Arabic, and our online ministry footprint continues to grow. Many around the world engage with us in lectures, Bible studies, worship, and more.

As I write, **Israel is going through a very difficult time**. The nation is being torn apart by numerous controversial issues. On the surface it centers on the reform of the court system, but it has deeper roots concerning the nature and identity of the Jewish State. At the same time Israeli-Palestinian relations are going from bad to worse with the possibility of yet another round of explosive violence about to occur.

Will you also **partner with us in prayer** as we pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Ps.122:6) during this Lenten season? Pray for the Jews, Arabs and other people groups who call this city home. Pray for the peace of the Lord to fall upon our city. Pray that the body of Christ in the Land will, first and foremost, continue to find its identity and strength in Christ.

We are grateful for your partnership and for your continued prayers at this time as we strive to be a beacon of hope that we find in Jesus the Messiah. Thank you for your partnership and for standing with us as we continue to be salt and light in the Holy Land. We look forward to welcoming you and your parish here at Christ Church.

Shalom from Jerusalem,

**The Rev. David Pileggi,
Rector, Christ Church Jerusalem**

