



Grain

"I am still alive." Mahmoud Darwish, Palestinian poet, activist and author of the Palestinian Declaration of Independence

Field

33"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. 34But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly 35like a trap. For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man." Luke 21:33-36

Prayer Note: Knowing that so many Palestinian adults and children have been killed since the below reflection was written in 2018, let us pray for all who grieve over the loss of life in Palestine and for all who live in fear of what will be next. We confess the sin of our country in its role in the tremendous suffering in the Holy Land under both political parties. We pray that beyond the threat of U.S. increased support for an abusive regime, that we are experiencing the birth pangs of a new era that challenges unhealthy nationalism but will not be held back by it. We pray with hope through Jesus. Amen.

Thoughts Written originally for November 26, 2018 by former LOPPW Hunger Advocacy Fellow Kelsey Johnson, now Rev. Johnson in Hinsdale, IL

The first candle of the Advent wreath in Lutheranism traditionally symbolizes hope and expectation. During the season of Advent, the candles from the wreath grow brighter each week, as the days grow darker. I don't know about you, but sometimes I find it extremely difficult to see hope and salvation in our chaotic world. This week's gospel reading is foreboding with gloom and doom but also talks about hope and promise despite it all. So, in the modern world, how do we anchor our voices in hope when there is so much injustice swirling around?

The Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb writes in his book Faith in the Face of Empire, "Hope is living in reality and yet investing in a different one." As Christians and as advocates we are not only still here and living, but we are alive and investing in change.

Our faith creates a lens of advocacy in a chaotic world. The light of hope gives us an anchor when the world around us grows dimmer. Living in Palestine last year, I found the simple words of the poet Mahmoud Darwish as a mantra when there was news of chaos from back in America. "I am still alive." This is the beauty of our faith - we are still alive despite the chaos, and as advocates and people anchored by faith, we have the agency to continue spreading light.

Friends, as we await the birth of Jesus, we ought to spread this light in a world that sometimes seems to only grow dimmer. With faith and hope, the light only grows brighter. We are indeed still alive and have the opportunity to advocate against injustice in the world through the lens of faith. Happy Monday!

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Many blessings upon you,

Former Hunger Advocacy Fellow Kelsey (Pastor Kelsey)