

***Diocese of Olympia***

**Report of the Resolutions Committee to the Convention**

*submitted by the Rev. Josh Hosler, chair*

Members of the Committee: The Rev. Rilla Barrett; Jon Fedele, Emmanuel, Mercer Island; the Rev. Josh Hosler, chair, Church of the Good Shepherd, Federal Way; Micah Kurtz, St. Columba's, Kent; Mary Maxon, St. Luke's, Vancouver.

To reach the Resolutions Committee, email: [resolutions@ecww.org](mailto:resolutions@ecww.org)

Actions of the Committee: Following the 45-day canonical deadline of Sept. 9, the Committee met and reviewed the five submitted resolutions. Below are the committee's recommendations, as well as the full text of each resolution, including any explanation.

**ZOOM FORUM:** The Resolutions Committee will host a Zoom forum on all resolutions, Monday, **October 20, 2025**, at 7 pm. Proposers of resolutions will be on hand to answer questions for clarification and add additional background information as needed. The forum is not a time for formal debate or amendments.

**Recommendations from the Resolutions Committee**

**Resolution #1:** The Committee recommends **DO PASS** on Resolution #1 entitled Fiscal Year 2027 Assessment Rate, submitted by the Diocesan Council. [Page 2]

**Resolution #2:** The Committee recommends **DO PASS** on Resolution #2 entitled Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) to Salary Scale for 2026, submitted by the Personnel Commission of the Diocese of Olympia. [Page 3]

**Resolution #3:** The Committee recommends **DO PASS** on Resolution #3 entitled Humanitarian Aid to Gaza, submitted by the Bishop's Committee for Justice and Peace in the Holy Land. [Page 5]

**Resolution #4:** The Committee recommends **DO PASS** on Resolution #4 entitled Putting Previous Resolutions into Action, submitted by the Bishop's Committee for Justice and Peace in the Holy Land. [Page 8]

**Resolution #5:** The Committee recommends **NO OPINION** on Resolution #5 entitled A Call to Decolonize the Seal of the Diocese of Olympia, submitted by the Rev. Kendall Haynes, rector, St. Andrew's, Seattle. [Page 16]

## **Resolution #1 – Fiscal Year 2027 Assessment Rate**

*Submitted by the Diocesan Council of the Diocese of Olympia*

**Resolved**, that this 115<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Diocese of Olympia approve the diocesan assessment rate factor be set at 14.5% of the Net Disposable Income (NDI).

**Rationale:** In accordance with Canon 7, Diocesan Convention determines the assessment rate for the second year of assessment following determination; thus, the 2025 Convention sets the 2027 assessment rate. In the last two decades, the rate has been steadily reduced to its current rate of 14.5%. From 2004-2006, the rate was 20%. From 2007-2011, the rate was reduced to 18%. In 2012, the rate was 17.5%. From 2013-2015, the rate was 17%. In 2016, the rate was 16%. In 2017 and 2018, the assessment rate was 15%. Since 2019, the rate has been steady at 14.5%.

This recommendation is based on the following factors. First, congregations throughout the diocese continue to contribute their assessments in a timely manner, and with rare exception, congregations pay their assessment balances in full. In addition, diocesan staff continue to be good stewards of the resources entrusted to them by carefully managing expenses of programs that support our new missional framework centering discipleship.

Finally, in planning the 2026 budget, the finance team has received feedback that congregations are generally planning for similar assessment amounts. In addition to income from assessments, the diocese relies on capital gains and use of net assets to fund operations. Use of capital gains and net assets to balance the budget is governed by the Board of Directors in accordance with a long-standing expenditure policy for endowments.

This policy is designed to preserve underlying investment balances while also giving the diocese flexibility to use a portion of those investments to carry out the ministry and mission of the diocese. If actual assessments and other revenue equal or exceed budget and if actual expenses come in under budget, then the use of capital gains and net assets is minimal in a given year. If actual revenue is under budget or expenses exceed budget, larger draws from capital gains and net assets will be necessary.

## **Resolution #2 – Cost of Living Adjustment for 2026**

*Submitted by the Personnel Commission of the Diocese of Olympia*

**Resolved,** That this 115<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Diocese of Olympia set the Cost of Living Adjustment for 2026 parochial clergy salary scale and Office of the Bishop staff salary scale at 2.7%.

**Explanation:** As required by Canon 23, sections 2 and 5, the Personnel Commission, in August 2025, proposes the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for 2026 for the Parochial Clergy Salary Scale and the salary scale for Office of the Bishop staff. The Personnel Commission uses the year-over-year change to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue area to determine the COLA.

For June 2024 to June 2025 the CPI reported an increase in the cost of living of 2.7%. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) measures the average change in prices over time in a fixed market basket of goods and services. The CPI is based on prices of food, clothing, shelter, and fuels, transportation fares, charges for doctors' and dentists' services, drugs, and the other goods and services that people buy for day-to-day living. The Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue metropolitan area comprises King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties.

The diocese represents a diverse economic reality, including three major metropolitan areas as well as rural communities. As we examine the Church's role in creating economic justice for all people, we lead by modeling just wages for those employed by the Church. Wages that take into consideration the higher cost of living in this region are working toward economic justice, something that our Diocese of Olympia has supported since the implementation of the clergy salary scale in 1974. The continuing work of the Commission includes restructuring the clergy pay scale to reflect the geo-economic diversity of the diocese. See the Commission report for more information on our ongoing work.

The proposed COLA raises the wage for clergy and Bishop's staff who are being paid at the minimum rate for their position. The scale increase enacted by the proposed COLA will enable faith communities in our diocese to continue to call the leaders we need in this time that requires vision and agility.

For information purposes, the Personnel Commission offers the parochial clergy salary scale (for full-time positions) adjusted for the proposed COLA. The adjusted scale was calculated by applying the proposed COLA to the mid-point of each grade; the minimum is 80% of the mid-point, the maximum is 120% of the mid-point. Hourly rates for annualized salaries are also provided. Also, grades have been flipped, with Grade E now the first line in the charts, reflecting that the largest number of our parochial clergy are paid in Grade E and Grade D.

### **Proposed 2026 Parochial Clergy Salary Scale**

#### **Annualized Salaries**

Grade	Minimum	Mid-Point	Maximum
E	\$ 82,787	\$ 103,486	\$ 124,184
D	\$ 90,955	\$ 113,694	\$ 136,432
C	\$ 100,034	\$ 125,041	\$ 150,051
B	\$ 110,057	\$ 137,572	\$ 165,087
A	\$ 121,066	\$ 151,332	\$ 181,599

**Hourly Rates for annualized salaries**

Grade	Minimum	Mid-Point	Maximum
E	\$ 39.80	\$ 49.75	\$ 59.70
D	\$ 43.73	\$ 54.66	\$ 65.59
C	\$ 48.09	\$ 60.12	\$ 72.14
B	\$ 52.91	\$ 66.14	\$ 79.37
A	\$ 58.20	\$ 72.76	\$ 87.31

**Mandatory Policies (applies to rectors and vicars):**

1. If church-owned housing is provided, contact the Canon to the Ordinary for information on calculating the value of housing and utilities (for tax and pension purposes) and adjusting cash compensation.
2. Clergy must be paid at least the minimum of the applicable range.
3. Clergy with five (5) or more years of ordained service must be paid at least 90% of the mid-point of their congregation's applicable grade. [See advisory note below.]
4. Clergy with ten (10) or more years of ordained service must be paid at least 100% of the mid-point of their congregation's applicable grade. [See advisory note below.]
5. Exceptions to these policies require the approval of the Bishop.
6. All financial agreements with clergy must be rewritten or amended in their Mutual Ministry Agreement to reflect changes in compensation or provisions and a copy forwarded to the Bishop by January 31 of each year.

**Advisory Policies:**

1. For additional paid clergy (associate, assistant), it is recommended that minimum compensation be established at two salary grades below that established for the parish or mission, depending upon qualifications and experience.
2. A clergy person with less than five (5) years of ordained service should receive pay increases greater than the cost-of-living adjustment so the salary reaches the 90% of mid-point by the fifth year.
3. A clergy person approaching (10) years of ordained service should receive pay increases greater than the cost- of-living adjustment so the salary reaches the 100% of mid-point by the tenth year.
4. If a congregation is moving toward a higher grade, that congregation would be wise to increase toward that new salary grade incrementally.
5. Parishes and missions are encouraged to consider clergy experience and performance when deliberating compensation increases in excess of the COLA.
6. For interim clergy of a parish or mission, it is recommended that compensation be at the grade level of the parish or mission, with consideration for any specialized interim training.
7. Parishes, missions, and affiliated ministries are encouraged to consider providing a COLA adjustment to lay staff in parity with clergy.

**Resolution #3 – Humanitarian Aid to Gaza**

*Submitted by the Bishop's Committee for Justice and Peace in the Holy Land*

**Resolved**, that this 115<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Diocese of Olympia recognize that the basic teachings of our faith and our duty under our Baptismal Covenant require us to respond to people in need; and be it further

**Resolved**, that the Diocese of Olympia laments and condemns the conditions of famine and widespread starvation in Gaza and the withholding of food and famine relief by the government of Israel; and be it further

**Resolved**, that the Diocese of Olympia recognizes the immediate need for food, clean water, fuel, shelter, medical treatment and psychological support for approximately 2 million people in Gaza whose condition is desperate; and be it further

**Resolved**, that the Diocese of Olympia actively responds to Resolution D007 approved by the 81<sup>st</sup> General Convention in 2024 calling for the urgent provision of “comprehensive, substantial humanitarian aid to Palestinians, in particular such vulnerable populations as children, the elderly and those in need of medical care”; and be it further

**Resolved**, that the Diocese of Olympia directs its churches to designate funds for famine relief and humanitarian aid in Gaza or provide for other methods of systematic parish contribution toward ending the suffering there; and be it further

**Resolved**, that the Diocese of Olympia encourages individuals from our community to do the same; and be it further

**Resolved**, that the Diocese of Olympia directs the Bishop's Committee for Justice and Peace in the Holy Land to maintain and distribute a list of appropriate aid organizations for this purpose.

Explanation: In response to the violent Hamas attack October 7, 2023, Israel has conducted one of the deadliest and most destructive military campaigns in recent history, targeting Gazan civilian society. The killing has been indiscriminate and grossly disproportionate. The Gaza Health Ministry reported a death toll of 64,000 as of September 2025,[1] but independent academic scholars have estimated that by January 2025 over 75,000 had died.[2] The majority of those killed are women, children and the elderly. The dead include more than 400 aid workers, over 1,000 health workers and approximately 250 journalists.[3]

Repeated airstrikes and controlled demolitions have largely destroyed Gaza's infrastructure. Over 90% of Gaza's housing units have been destroyed or damaged, along with more than 90% of Gaza's hospitals, including the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem's Ahli Hospital. Over 90% of the population has been displaced, sometimes many times.[4]

Delivery of adequate humanitarian aid has been cut off for months by the Israeli Defense Forces, and severe shortages of food, water, medical care, fuel and other humanitarian necessities are systematically destroying conditions necessary to sustain Palestinian life.[5]

International aid organizations have collectively and consistently highlighted the extreme urgency for an immediate and full-scale humanitarian response given the escalating hunger-related deaths, rapidly worsening levels of acute malnutrition and plummeting levels of food consumption.[6]

As of July 2025, acute malnutrition was rising at an unprecedented rate. One-third of the population was not eating for days. More than 500,000 people faced death from starvation. Over 320,000 children, the entire population under 5 in the Gaza Strip, were at risk of acute malnutrition, with thousands suffering from severe acute malnutrition, the deadliest form of undernutrition.[7]

By August 2025, a full-scale famine was declared by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, UNICEF, the United Nations World Food Programme and the World Health Organization, using the standard international scale for measuring food insecurity around the globe. Famine is the most extreme

condition on the scale and is reached only when numerous specific conditions are met. More than half a million people in Gaza are now trapped in famine and aid organizations warn that without immediate, adequate aid, death by starvation will increase exponentially.[8]

On August 22, 2025, the United Nations Children’s Fund, World Food Programme, World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization issued a joint statement calling for immediate ceasefire and unhindered humanitarian access to stave off acute malnutrition and escalating death by starvation in Gaza.[9]

Aid delivered during the summer of 2025 by the US- and Israeli- backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation has been limited to only four sites in all of Gaza and has proved so inherently unsafe that nearly 1,400 Gazans have been killed trying to obtain food, many after being shot by military forces as they neared the sites.[10]

In 2024, the Episcopal Church called for an end to the destruction of Gaza’s health care system and speedy restoration of humanitarian aid.[11] In July, 2024, the General Convention of the Episcopal Church called for comprehensive, substantial humanitarian aid for Palestinians in need.[12] The 2024 General Convention also recognized and affirmed the moral and legal obligations of the United States to the people of Gaza, given the role of the United States in providing military aid and diplomatic support for the war.[13]

In July of 2025 the Most Reverend Sean Rowe, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church in the U.S., called for an end to the siege of Gaza, an end to the bombing of hospitals and the restoration of humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza.[14]

Our Baptismal Covenant requires that we proclaim the Good News of God in Christ by both word and deed.

---

[1] <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/palestinian-death-toll-in-gaza-passes-64000-officials-say-after-ceasefire-talks-break-down>

[2] <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2025.06.19.25329797v3.full>

[3] <https://www.rescue.org/uk/press-release/palestinians-make-almost-one-fifth-aid-workers-killed-records-began>

<https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/remembering-our-colleagues-killed-gaza>

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/08/1165719>

[4] <https://www.rescue.org/crisis-in-gaza>

<https://www.savethechildren.org/us/charity-stories/life-for-children-growing-up-conflict-gaza>

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/04/un-expert-condemns-attack-al-ahli-hospital-gaza>

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/one-of-gazas-last-functioning-hospitals-empties-out-amid-fears-it-may-be-engulfed-in-fighting>

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/04/28/hospitals-in-ruins>

<https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/our-response-israel-gaza-war>

<https://www.who.int/news/item/22-05-2025-health-system-at-breaking-point-as-hostilities-further-intensify--who-warns>

<https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/how-year-war-has-devastated-gazas-civilian-infrastructure>

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/08/1165719>

[5] <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cj6ynz22871o>

<https://apnews.com/article/gaza-israel-hamas-palestinians-aid-explainer-ecc0e70d5ff1120a04bf36626dfd96f4>

<https://www.nbcnews.com/world/middle-east/israel-faces-international-court-justice-gaza-aid-blockade-rcna203251>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jul/31/the-mathematics-of-starvation-how-israel-caused-a-famine-in-gaza>

[6] <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/our-response-israel-gaza-war>

[7] <https://www.wfpusa.org/news/whats-happening-gaza-faq-hunger-humanitarian-aid>

<https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-situation-report-182-situation-gaza-strip-and-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem>

[8] <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipcinfo-website/countries-in-focus-archive/issue-134/en/>

<https://www.who.int/news/item/22-08-2025-famine-confirmed-for-first-time-in-gaza>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/aug/22/ipc-declares-famine-gaza-city>

<https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/oxfam-reaction-ipc-report-confirming-famine-gaza-governorate>

[9] <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/famine-confirmed-first-time-gaza>

[10] <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/us-backed-aid-distribution-points-gaza-are-sites-orchestrated-killing>

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/08/un-experts-call-immediate-dismantling-gaza-humanitarian-foundation>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=72aZhsNMOWk>

[11] <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ogr/episcopal-church-calls-for-end-to-destruction-of-gaza-healthcare-system/>

[12] [https://digitalarchives.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts\\_generate\\_pdf.pl?resolution=2024-D007](https://digitalarchives.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_generate_pdf.pl?resolution=2024-D007)

[13] [https://digitalarchives.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts\\_generate\\_pdf.pl?resolution=2024-D009](https://digitalarchives.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_generate_pdf.pl?resolution=2024-D009)

[14] <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/publicaffairs/letter-from-presiding-bishop-sean-rowe-on-crisis-in-gaza/>

**Resolution #4 – Putting Previous Resolutions into Action***Submitted by the Bishop's Committee for Justice and Peace in the Holy Land*

**Resolved**, that this 115<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Diocese of Olympia acknowledges that both the Diocese of Olympia and the General Convention of the Episcopal Church have previously passed resolutions addressing the realities in Israel/Palestine, including resolutions that:

- call for an immediate cease-fire in Gaza (Resolutions: 2024-D007, 2024-D013)
- call for the release of all Hamas-held hostages and of Israeli-held unjustly detained Palestinian prisoners (Resolutions: 2024-D007, 2024-D013)
- call on the United States government, through the Office of Government Relations, to provide necessary and comprehensive humanitarian aid to Palestinians in Gaza, including that which is needed to rebuild for the future (Resolutions: 2024-D007, 2024-D009, 2024-D013)
- recognize the moral and legal obligations of the United States to the people of Gaza, given the role of the United States in providing military aid and diplomatic support for the war (Resolutions: 2024-D009, 2024-D056)
- condition U.S. military aid on the provisions above and ensure that U.S. military assistance and arms sales not be used to perpetuate conflict, violate human rights, or contribute to violence (Resolutions: 2024-D012, 2018-D027, 1991-D008)
- deplore antisemitism but distinguish it from criticism of the Israeli government's policies and actions (Resolution: 1991-D122)
- condemn the increasing seizure of land and the escalating military and settler violence against Palestinians living under Israeli military occupation in the West Bank (Resolution: 2024-D007)
- call for an end to Israel's military occupation of and control over Palestinians, upholding the principle that no people's right to self-determination should be exercised at the expense of another's (Resolutions: 2024-D007, 2024-D012, 2018-D018, 1988-D053)
- urge the President of the United States and the U.S. Congress to take action to oppose Israeli laws and practices that result in unequal rights for two peoples, and to work to assure equal rights, freedom, security and self-determination for all (Resolutions: 2024-D007, 2022-C039, 2018-D018, 2021-Diocesan-9)
- invite all Episcopalians to work for a durable and just peace through parish education, philanthropy, study, advocacy, investment in Palestinian enterprises, and divestment from all firms doing business with settlements in the West Bank (Resolutions: 2024-D013, 2018-B016, 1991-D008, 2021-Diocesan 8); and be it further

**Resolved**, that the Diocese of Olympia recognizes that these existing resolutions represent the policies of the Church and should guide our actions; and be it further

**Resolved**, that the Diocese of Olympia direct its leadership and churches to implement the provisions of these resolutions, thereby following the instructions of our Church and fulfilling our baptismal covenant and teachings of our faith.

**Explanation:** The following are resolutions passed by the General Convention of the Episcopal Church:

D007 [Call for Peace Through Equal Rights in Israel/Palestine](#) Passed by General Convention 2024

D009 [Call for U.S. Accountability in the Rebuilding of Gaza](#) Passed by General Convention 2024

D012 [Condition U.S. Government Aid to Israel/Palestine on a Negotiated Peace](#) Passed by General Convention 2024

D013 [Affirm Hope for a Palestinian State](#) Passed by General Convention 2024

D056 [Call for Ceasefire in Gaza](#) Passed by General Convention 2024

C039 [Urge Congress to Oppose Inequality in Israeli Laws](#) Passed by General Convention 2022



- D018 [Commit to a Negotiated Solution to Israeli-Palestinian Conflict](#) Passed by General Convention 2018
- D027 [Call on US Government to Cooperate with Investigations into Israeli and Palestinian Human Rights Violations](#) Passed by General Convention 2018
- B016 [Develop Investment Criteria for Israel and Palestine Based on a Human Rights Screen](#) Passed by General Convention 2018
- D008 [Urge a Peaceful Resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict](#) Passed by General Convention 1991
- D122 [Distinguish Between Criticism of Israeli Policy and Anti-Jewish Prejudice](#) Passed by General Convention 1991
- D053 [Affirm Goals of Justice, Peace and Reconciliation for Israelis and Palestinians](#) Passed by General Convention 1988

The following are resolutions passed by the Diocese of Olympia:

2021-8 Peace in the Holy Land – Striving for Justice. Passed by the Diocese of Olympia 2021

2021-9 Justice and Peace in the Holy Land – Our Call to Action. Passed by the Diocese of Olympia 2021

*Text of the Diocesan resolutions follows.*

### **2021 Resolution #8: Peace in the Holy Land – Striving for Justice**

*Submitted by the Bishop's Committee for Justice and Peace in the Holy Land, Diocese of Olympia*

ACTION: Adopted as submitted

**Resolved**, that this 111<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Diocese of Olympia urge education in congregations about Israel's ongoing military occupation of the West Bank and blockade of Gaza, and Israel's separate, inequitable laws and unequal treatment of Palestinians, listening to the voices of Palestinians and encouraging travel to the Holy Land; **and be it further Resolved**, that the Secretary of Convention provide copies of this Resolution and Explanation to congregations for the purpose of raising awareness, facilitating education, encouraging discussion and promoting advocacy in both church and secular circles on behalf of Palestinians whose voices are not being heard, as we are called by our faith to do; **and be it further Resolved**, that the Bishop's Committee for Justice and Peace in the Holy Land serve as a resource to congregations in this work and as a source for educational materials, curricula, films, speakers and guidance.

#### Explanation

**Statement of Beliefs:** We lament and condemn all acts of violence in Israel/Palestine regardless of perpetrator, and the loss of life, the injury, the fear and the enmity they engender. We recognize and condemn the increasing acts and attitudes of antisemitism in the United States and in our Diocese and offer support to all who are targeted for their faith or identity. We also recognize the right of Israel to exist and God's love for the people who live there and for all who consider it a sanctuary and refuge from a history of brutal persecution. We recognize the duty of Christians and our right as U.S. citizens to speak out against unjust acts committed by others, including those of the government of Israel, and we reject the conflation of advocacy for Palestinian rights with antisemitism. We join concerned people of all faiths in peaceful protest to address injustice.

**Human Rights:** Palestinians living within Israel and in the Israeli Occupied Territories are subject to different laws, policies and practices than their Israeli Jewish counterparts, constituting a categorically discriminatory form of systemic subjugation that severely limits the freedom, health, welfare and lives of Palestinians.<sup>1</sup>

The State of Israel was formed in 1948 with more than 700,000 Palestinians expelled or forced to flee from their homes, beginning a pattern of inferior rights that exists through today. Since the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967, the government of Israel has continued to destroy Palestinian homes and sanction the confiscation of Palestinian land for the establishment of Jewish-only settlements in the West Bank, both actions considered illegal under international law. Throughout this time, Israel has demolished an estimated 55,000 homes in

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>  
[https://www.btselem.org/publications/fulltext/202101\\_this\\_is\\_apartheid](https://www.btselem.org/publications/fulltext/202101_this_is_apartheid) this is apartheid  
 These two publications document much of the information in this Explanation and are recommended for further study.

the West Bank and Gaza, and approximately 500,000 Israeli settlers now live on Palestinian property in the West Bank. Violence against Palestinians by settlers is common and severe.<sup>2</sup>

For over 50 years, the Israeli government has assigned different sets of rights to two peoples -- one set inordinately superior to the other, one people free and the other severely restricted, one people's rights determined by the other, one people holding power and the other imprisoned under it.<sup>3</sup>

The international Nobel laureate Human Rights Watch and the widely respected Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem both issued reports in 2021 documenting decades of legal and human rights abuses against Palestinians by the State of Israel and concluding that Israel's ongoing discriminatory and oppressive treatment of Palestinians constitutes apartheid, a word that derives its meaning from the simple concept of apartness. Both organizations found these abuses to be extreme, pervasive, entrenched, intentional and longstanding.<sup>4</sup>

Palestinians have been increasingly deprived of self-determination, equal rights, natural resources, freedom of movement and peaceful dissent. Palestinians in the West Bank are subject to roadblocks, checkpoints, inspections, middle-of-the-night arrests of children in their homes and daily degradations at the hands of armed Israeli forces. Palestinians living within Israel do not have rights equal to their Jewish Israeli neighbors. While Jews outside of Israel are able to immigrate and become citizens, Palestinians are not.<sup>5</sup>

In 2018 Israel passed the Nation-State law, declaring Israel a nation-state of the Jewish people and stating that the right to exercise national self-determination belongs solely to the Jewish people. The law declares Jewish settlements on Palestinian land a national value and promotes their growth. Additionally, the law states that the nation's official language is Hebrew. This law was upheld by the Israeli Supreme Court in July 2021.<sup>6</sup>

Palestinians in the West Bank live under an Israeli military legal system that provides significantly fewer rights and protections than the civilian legal system governing Jewish Israelis living in the same area. This is particularly harmful to Palestinian children who are routinely incarcerated without charges being filed, subjected to solitary confinement and harsh interrogations, transferred across borders in contravention of international law and convicted at a rate of 95%.<sup>7</sup>

Israel controls water from West Bank aquifers, diverting the majority of it to Israeli citizens. Israeli per capita water consumption is approximately four times that of Palestinians, so that Israelis living in settlements sometimes enjoy irrigated agriculture, green lawns and swimming pools while Palestinians, on whose land the settlers live, receive water allotments below World Health Organization standards. Palestinians are often forced to buy from Israel water that Israel has taken from Palestinian aquifers.<sup>8</sup>

Palestinians living in Gaza have been under blockade since 2007, preventing the free movement of people, medical supplies and goods across the border. As a consequence, Gazans face endemic poverty, unemployment,

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/05/the-meaning-of-nakba-israel-palestine-1948-gaza/560294>  
<https://icahd.org/2020/03/15/end-home-demolitions-an-introduction>  
<https://ifamericansknew.org/stat/settlements.html>  
[https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle\\_east/netanyahu-approves-settlement-building/2021/01/11/0e009b08-541c-11eb-acc5-92d2819a1ccb\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/netanyahu-approves-settlement-building/2021/01/11/0e009b08-541c-11eb-acc5-92d2819a1ccb_story.html)

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/04/1089752>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>  
[https://www.btselem.org/publications/fulltext/202101\\_this\\_is\\_apartheid](https://www.btselem.org/publications/fulltext/202101_this_is_apartheid)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>  
[https://www.btselem.org/publications/fulltext/202101\\_this\\_is\\_apartheid](https://www.btselem.org/publications/fulltext/202101_this_is_apartheid)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.afsc.org/resource/restricted-movement-occupied-palestinian-territory>  
[https://www.btselem.org/publications/fulltext/202101\\_this\\_is\\_apartheid](https://www.btselem.org/publications/fulltext/202101_this_is_apartheid)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>  
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/israeli-supreme-court-upholds-contentious-jewish-state-law-jewish-israelis-supreme-court-jerusalem-arabic-b1880719.html>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.dci-palestine.org/military\\_detention](https://www.dci-palestine.org/military_detention)  
[https://www.btselem.org/topic/administrative\\_detention](https://www.btselem.org/topic/administrative_detention)  
[https://www.dci-palestine.org/palestinian\\_children\\_in\\_the\\_israeli\\_military\\_detention\\_system](https://www.dci-palestine.org/palestinian_children_in_the_israeli_military_detention_system)

[https://www.btselem.org/publications/summaries/201803\\_minors\\_in\\_jeopardy](https://www.btselem.org/publications/summaries/201803_minors_in_jeopardy)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2017/11/the-occupation-of-water>  
[https://ifamericansknew.org/cur\\_sit/water.html](https://ifamericansknew.org/cur_sit/water.html)

physical and mental health deterioration and extreme hardship. Basic necessities including food, safe drinking water, electricity, fuel, sewage disposal and medical care are in insufficient supply. Ninety to 97% of the water is unsafe for human consumption and requires filtration for which equipment is frequently unavailable.<sup>9</sup>

Over the years, violence has persisted. The bombing of Gaza in May of 2021, triggered by threats to evict Palestinians from their homes in East Jerusalem and other events, ended with 256 Palestinians killed, 66 of whom were children. Thirteen Israelis were killed. In Gaza, extraordinary damage was inflicted on homes, hospitals, schools, infrastructure and access to health care and basic services including water, hygiene and sanitation.<sup>10</sup>

**Previous Episcopal Resolutions:** Over the past several years the General Convention of the Episcopal Church has passed numerous resolutions critical of Israel's denial of Palestinian human rights including resolutions that seek to oppose the settlements and home demolitions, protect Palestinian children from military court mistreatment, restrict the use of U.S. aid in violation of human rights, restore international aid to Palestinians and in other ways to promote basic rights.<sup>11</sup>

**Impediments to Peaceful Protest:** Palestinians are not permitted to peacefully protest in the Occupied Territories, and Palestinians and their supporters in the United States have been impeded in their advocacy by prohibitions against peaceful protest. Legislation exists in approximately 35 states penalizing or criminalizing efforts to support the nonviolent Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement, and numerous institutions including colleges and universities have adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of antisemitism which effectively and dangerously equates criticism of Israel with antisemitism.<sup>12</sup>

**Commandments of Our Faith:** The Episcopal Church has become increasingly aware of the injury done by systemic racism in our own country, and the depth of harm it inflicts. In 2020, the Diocese of Olympia joined many other Dioceses to endorse the Anti-Racism Covenant, identifying and condemning racism in our midst and calling us to action: to study, pray and work for racial justice.<sup>13</sup>

As Episcopalians, we are compelled by our faith to stand up to injustice, to be peacemakers and to help the oppressed. Our Baptismal Covenant calls on us to "strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being." We recognize that Israel's ongoing military occupation and its separate, discriminatory laws and treatment of Palestinians are antithetical to the Gospel message, and that silence in light of them contravenes the pledge of our Baptismal Covenant.

Kairos Palestine and Global Kairos for Justice (a worldwide ecumenical Christian coalition) write in Cry for Hope, "The very being of the church, the integrity of the Christian faith, and the credibility of the Gospel is at stake . . . We cannot serve God while remaining silent about the oppression of the Palestinians."<sup>14</sup>

**Our Role as US Citizens:** The United States gives Israel approximately \$3.8 billion each year in military aid, which constitutes roughly 59% of total U.S. foreign military financing. The U.S. further supports Israel's unjust and discriminatory policies and practices in other ways, including vetoing actions at the United Nations. Several existing U.S.

---

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.unrwa.org/activity/health-gaza-strip>

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/water-crisis-may-make-gaza-strip-uninhabitable-by-2020>

<https://www.afsc.org/resource/restricted-movement-occupied-palestinian-territory>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/article/israel-gaza-what-we-know.html>

<https://www.unocha.org/story/daily-noon-briefing-highlights-occupied-palestinian-territory-and-israel-0>

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/05/26/world/middleeast/gaza-israel-children.html?searchResultPosition=9>

<https://www.ochaopt.org/poc/24-31-may-2021>

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts\\_search.pl](https://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_search.pl)

1994-D065, 2003-D008, 2018-B016, B021, C038, D027

<sup>12</sup> <https://law.acri.org.il/en/protestright-subject/freedom-of-expression-and-protest>

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/erdan-asks-35-us-states-to-activate-anti-bds-laws-against-ben-jerrys>

<https://www.ajc.org/us-campus-adoption-of-the-working-definition>

<https://palestinelegal.org/redefinition-efforts>

<https://jewishcurrents.org/states-are-moving-to-class-criticism-of-israel-as-antisemitism>

<sup>13</sup> <https://ecww.org/a-covenant-to-root-out-racism-2>

<sup>14</sup> <https://cryforhope.org>

laws prohibit the provision of U.S. aid to countries that don't meet human rights standards, however these standards are not always applied to Israel, nor is the aid process transparent enough to be adequately monitored.<sup>15</sup>

**Our Role in the Episcopal Church:** We have a role to play in the tragedy of the Holy Land because we are called by our faith to stand up to injustice; because of our historical and theological connections to the region and its people; and because the United States provides tremendous monetary and other support to Israel's ongoing mistreatment of Palestinians.

It is our belief that peace can never be achieved while one people systematically controls the rights of another and that violence will not end until equal rights are established.

The Bishop's Committee for Justice and Peace in the Holy Land was created to raise awareness and facilitate understanding of the challenges facing all who live in the Holy Land, including our Episcopal brothers and sisters in the Diocese of Jerusalem as they struggle to maintain a Christian presence under increasingly difficult conditions imposed by the Israeli occupation.

As a longstanding Companion of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, the Diocese of Olympia stands in solidarity with our Episcopal brothers and sisters in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza. We commend and support the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem in their efforts to minister to the spiritual, health and educational needs of the Palestinian people.

Our members pray and deeply believe that peace will come to the children of Abraham when Jews and Palestinians share a land that guarantees equal human and civil rights for all.

### **2021 Resolution #9: Justice and Peace in the Holy Land – Our Call to Action**

*Submitted by the Bishop's Committee for Justice and Peace in the Holy Land, Diocese of Olympia*

ACTION: Adopted as submitted.

**Resolved**, that this 111<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Diocese of Olympia submit the following resolution to the 80th General Convention of The Episcopal Church: **Resolved**, that we recognize the right of the State of Israel to exist and we condemn the continued occupation, segregation and oppression of the Palestinian people; **and be it further Resolved**, that the Convention urge the President of the United States and the U.S. Congress to take action to oppose Israeli laws and practices that result in unequal rights for two peoples.

#### **Explanation**

**Statement of Beliefs:** We lament and condemn all acts of violence in Israel/Palestine regardless of perpetrator, and the loss of life, the injury, the fear and the enmity they engender.

We recognize and condemn the increasing acts and attitudes of antisemitism in the United States and in our Diocese and offer support to all who are targeted for their faith or identity. We also recognize the right of Israel to exist and God's love for the people who live there and for all who consider it a sanctuary and refuge from a history of brutal persecution.

We recognize the duty of Christians and our right as U.S. citizens to speak out against unjust acts committed by others, including those of the government of Israel, and we reject the conflation of advocacy for Palestinian rights with antisemitism. We join concerned people of all faiths in peaceful protest to address injustice.

**Human Rights:** Palestinians living within Israel and in the Israeli Occupied Territories are subject to different laws, policies and practices than their Israeli Jewish counterparts, constituting a categorically discriminatory form of systemic subjugation that severely limits the freedom, health, welfare and lives of Palestinians.<sup>16</sup>

The State of Israel was formed in 1948 with more than 700,000 Palestinians expelled or forced to flee from their homes, beginning a pattern of inferior rights that exists through today. Since the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967, the government of Israel has continued to destroy Palestinian homes and sanction the

<sup>15</sup> <https://usafacts.org/articles/how-much-military-aid-does-the-us-give-to-israel>

<https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/05/12/bringing-assistance-to-israel-in-line-with-rights-and-u.s.-laws-pub-84503>

<https://ifamericansknew.org/stat/usaid.html>

<https://fmep.org/resource/israel-palestine-the-role-of-congress-an-accelerated-learning-series>, Part 1

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>

[https://www.btselem.org/publications/fulltext/202101\\_this\\_is\\_apartheid](https://www.btselem.org/publications/fulltext/202101_this_is_apartheid)

These two publications document much of the information in this Explanation and are recommended for further study.

confiscation of Palestinian land for the establishment of Jewish-only settlements in the West Bank, both actions considered illegal under international law. Throughout this time, Israel has demolished an estimated 55,000 homes in the West Bank and Gaza, and approximately 500,000 Israeli settlers now live on Palestinian property in the West Bank. Violence against Palestinians by settlers is common and severe.<sup>17</sup>

For over 50 years, the Israeli government has assigned different sets of rights to two peoples -- one set inordinately superior to the other, one people free and the other severely restricted, one people's rights determined by the other, one people holding power and the other imprisoned under it.<sup>18</sup>

The international Nobel laureate Human Rights Watch and the widely respected Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem both issued reports in 2021 documenting decades of legal and human rights abuses against Palestinians by the State of Israel and concluding that Israel's ongoing discriminatory and oppressive treatment of Palestinians constitutes apartheid, a word that derives its meaning from the simple concept of apartness. Both organizations found these abuses to be extreme, pervasive, entrenched, intentional and longstanding.<sup>19</sup>

Palestinians have been increasingly deprived of self-determination, equal rights, natural resources, freedom of movement and peaceful dissent. Palestinians in the West Bank are subject to roadblocks, checkpoints, inspections, middle-of-the-night arrests of children in their homes and daily degradations at the hands of armed Israeli forces. Palestinians living within Israel do not have rights equal to their Jewish Israeli neighbors. While Jews outside of Israel are able to immigrate and become citizens, Palestinians are not.<sup>20</sup>

In 2018 Israel passed the Nation-State law, declaring Israel a nation-state of the Jewish people and stating that the right to exercise national self-determination belongs solely to the Jewish people. The law declares Jewish settlements on Palestinian land a national value and promotes their growth. Additionally, the law states that the nation's official language is Hebrew. This law was upheld by the Israeli Supreme Court in July 2021.<sup>21</sup>

Palestinians in the West Bank live under an Israeli military legal system that provides significantly fewer rights and protections than the civilian legal system governing Jewish Israelis living in the same area. This is particularly harmful to Palestinian children who are routinely incarcerated without charges being filed, subjected to solitary confinement and harsh interrogations, transferred across borders in contravention of international law and convicted at a rate of 95%.<sup>22</sup>

Israel controls water from West Bank aquifers, diverting the majority of it to Israeli citizens. Israeli per capita water consumption is approximately four times that of Palestinians, so that Israelis living in settlements sometimes enjoy irrigated agriculture, green lawns and swimming pools while Palestinians, on whose land the settlers live, receive water allotments below World Health Organization standards. Palestinians are often forced to buy from Israel water that Israel has taken from Palestinian aquifers.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/05/the-meaning-of-nakba-israel-palestine-1948-gaza/560294>  
<https://icahd.org/2020/03/15/end-home-demolitions-an-introduction>  
<https://ifamericansknew.org/stat/settlements.html>  
[https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle\\_east/netanyahu-approves-settlement-building/2021/01/11/0e009b08-541c-11eb-acc5-92d2819a1ccb\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/netanyahu-approves-settlement-building/2021/01/11/0e009b08-541c-11eb-acc5-92d2819a1ccb_story.html)

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/04/1089752>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>  
[https://www.btselem.org/publications/fulltext/202101\\_this\\_is\\_apartheid](https://www.btselem.org/publications/fulltext/202101_this_is_apartheid)

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>  
[https://www.btselem.org/publications/fulltext/202101\\_this\\_is\\_apartheid](https://www.btselem.org/publications/fulltext/202101_this_is_apartheid)

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.afsc.org/resource/restricted-movement-occupied-palestinian-territory>  
[https://www.btselem.org/publications/fulltext/202101\\_this\\_is\\_apartheid](https://www.btselem.org/publications/fulltext/202101_this_is_apartheid)

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>  
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/israeli-supreme-court-upholds-contentious-jewish-state-law-jewish-israelis-supreme-court-jerusalem-arabic-b1880719.html>

<sup>22</sup> [https://www.dci-palestine.org/military\\_detention](https://www.dci-palestine.org/military_detention)  
[https://www.btselem.org/topic/administrative\\_detention](https://www.btselem.org/topic/administrative_detention)  
[https://www.dci-palestine.org/palestinian\\_children\\_in\\_the\\_israeli\\_military\\_detention\\_system](https://www.dci-palestine.org/palestinian_children_in_the_israeli_military_detention_system)  
[https://www.btselem.org/publications/summaries/201803\\_minors\\_in\\_jeopardy](https://www.btselem.org/publications/summaries/201803_minors_in_jeopardy)

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2017/11/the-occupation-of-water>  
[https://ifamericansknew.org/cur\\_sit/water.html](https://ifamericansknew.org/cur_sit/water.html)

Palestinians living in Gaza have been under blockade since 2007, preventing the free movement of people, medical supplies and goods across the border. As a consequence, Gazans face endemic poverty, unemployment, physical and mental health deterioration and extreme hardship. Basic necessities including food, safe drinking water, electricity, fuel, sewage disposal and medical care are in insufficient supply. Ninety to 97% of the water is unsafe for human consumption and requires filtration for which equipment is frequently unavailable.<sup>24</sup>

Over the years, violence has persisted. The bombing of Gaza in May of 2021, triggered by threats to evict Palestinians from their homes in East Jerusalem and other events, ended with 256 Palestinians killed, 66 of whom were children. Thirteen Israelis were killed. In Gaza, extraordinary damage was inflicted on homes, hospitals, schools, infrastructure and access to health care and basic services including water, hygiene and sanitation.<sup>25</sup>

**Previous Episcopal Resolutions:** Over the past several years the General Convention of the Episcopal Church has passed numerous resolutions critical of Israel's denial of Palestinian human rights including resolutions that seek to oppose the settlements and home demolitions, protect Palestinian children from military court mistreatment, restrict the use of U.S. aid in violation of human rights, restore international aid to Palestinians and in other ways to promote basic rights.<sup>26</sup>

**Impediments to Peaceful Protest:** Palestinians are not permitted to peacefully protest in the Occupied Territories, and Palestinians and their supporters in the United States have been impeded in their advocacy by prohibitions against peaceful protest. Legislation exists in approximately 35 states penalizing or criminalizing efforts to support the nonviolent Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement, and numerous institutions including colleges and universities have adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of antisemitism which effectively and dangerously equates criticism of Israel with antisemitism.<sup>27</sup>

**Commandments of Our Faith:** The Episcopal Church has become increasingly aware of the injury done by systemic racism in our own country, and the depth of harm it inflicts. In 2020, the Diocese of Olympia joined many other Dioceses to endorse the Anti-Racism Covenant, identifying and condemning racism in our midst and calling us to action: to study, pray and work for racial justice.<sup>28</sup>

As Episcopalians, we are compelled by our faith to stand up to injustice, to be peacemakers and to help the oppressed. Our Baptismal Covenant calls on us to "strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being." We recognize that Israel's ongoing military occupation and its separate, discriminatory laws and treatment of Palestinians are antithetical to the Gospel message, and that silence in light of them contravenes the pledge of our Baptismal Covenant.

Kairos Palestine and Global Kairos for Justice (a worldwide ecumenical Christian coalition) write in Cry for Hope, "The very being of the church, the integrity of the Christian faith, and the credibility of the Gospel is at stake . . . We cannot serve God while remaining silent about the oppression of the Palestinians."<sup>29</sup>

**Our Role as US Citizens:** The United States gives Israel approximately \$3.8 billion each year in military aid, which constitutes roughly 59% of total U.S. foreign military financing. The U.S. further supports Israel's unjust and discriminatory policies and practices in other ways, including vetoing actions at the United Nations. Several existing U.S.

---

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.unrwa.org/activity/health-gaza-strip>

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/water-crisis-may-make-gaza-strip-uninhabitable-by-2020>

<https://www.afsc.org/resource/restricted-movement-occupied-palestinian-territory>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/article/israel-gaza-what-we-know.html>

<https://www.unocha.org/story/daily-noon-briefing-highlights-occupied-palestinian-territory-and-israel-0>

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/05/26/world/middleeast/gaza-israel-children.html?searchResultPosition=9>

<https://www.ochaopt.org/poc/24-31-may-2021>

<sup>26</sup> [https://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts\\_search.pl](https://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_search.pl)

1994-D065, 2003-D008, 2018-B016, B021, C038, D027

<sup>27</sup> <https://law.acri.org.il/en/protestright-subject/freedom-of-expression-and-protest>

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/erdan-asks-35-us-states-to-activate-anti-bds-laws-against-ben-jerrys>

<https://www.ajc.org/us-campus-adoption-of-the-working-definition>

<https://palestinelegal.org/redefinition-efforts>

<https://jewishcurrents.org/states-are-moving-to-class-criticism-of-israel-as-antisemitism>

<sup>28</sup> <https://ecww.org/a-covenant-to-root-out-racism-2>

<sup>29</sup> <https://cryforhope.org>

laws prohibit the provision of U.S. aid to countries that don't meet human rights standards, however these standards are not always applied to Israel, nor is the aid process transparent enough to be adequately monitored.<sup>30</sup>

**Our Role in the Episcopal Church:** We have a role to play in the tragedy of the Holy Land because we are called by our faith to stand up to injustice; because of our historical and theological connections to the region and its people; and because the United States provides tremendous monetary and other support to Israel's ongoing mistreatment of Palestinians.

It is our belief that peace can never be achieved while one people systematically controls the rights of another and that violence will not end until equal rights are established.

The Bishop's Committee for Justice and Peace in the Holy Land was created to raise awareness and facilitate understanding of the challenges facing all who live in the Holy Land, including our Episcopal brothers and sisters in the Diocese of Jerusalem as they struggle to maintain a Christian presence under increasingly difficult conditions imposed by the Israeli occupation.

As a longstanding Companion of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, the Diocese of Olympia stands in solidarity with our Episcopal brothers and sisters in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza. We commend and support the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem in their efforts to minister to the spiritual, health and educational needs of the Palestinian people.

Our members pray and deeply believe that peace will come to the children of Abraham when Jews and Palestinians share a land that guarantees equal human and civil rights for all.

---

<sup>30</sup> <https://usafacts.org/articles/how-much-military-aid-does-the-us-give-to-israel>  
<https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/05/12/bringing-assistance-to-israel-in-line-with-rights-and-u.s.-laws-pub-84503>  
<https://ifamericansknew.org/stat/usaid.html>  
<https://fmep.org/resource/israel-palestine-the-role-of-congress-an-accelerated-learning-series>, Part 1

**Resolution #5 – A Call to Decolonize the Seal of the Diocese of Olympia**

*Submitted by the Rev. Kendall Haynes, Rector, St. Andrew's, Seattle*

**Resolved**, that this 115<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Diocese of Olympia retire the current Seal of the Diocese of Olympia concurrent with the final day of the 116<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Diocese of Olympia; and be it further

**Resolved**, that this 115<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Diocese of Olympia establish a Seal Commission directed, overseen and managed by the Office of the Bishop comprised of no fewer than four members of the Ethnic Ministries Circles of Color with the tasks of designing a New Seal to be adopted at the 116<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Diocese of Olympia and presenting within the resolution of adoption a budget proposal to implement the New Seal's physical and virtual deployment (i.e., internet presence, stationery, banners, signet ring, etc.) beginning in budget year 2027.



Explanation: For Episcopalians, signs and symbols matter. They tell our stories, they herald our truths, and they confirm our identities. A quick internet search regarding the meaning of the Seal of the Diocese of Olympia not only reveals inconsistencies of history for the seal itself (was it adopted at the founding of the diocese in 1910 or later in 1913?), it also promotes, celebrates, and romanticizes White Supremacy and Christian Nationalism weaving historical inaccuracies and truths under the banner of what can only be inferred as being the will of God.

There are currently two pages on our Diocesan website that describe the seal, both of which promote the history of the diocese written in 2010:

1. <https://ecww.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/HistoryofDioceseofOlympia.pdf>
2. <https://ecww.org/history-diocese-of-olympia-overview/#:~:text=Overview,tailwind%20propels%20the%20ship%20forward.>

The seal is also most recently described in a book published by the diocese in 1989 entitled *More than 100 Years of Ministry: The Episcopal Church in Western Washington* on page 17. Both histories describe the ship on the seal as being associated with Capt. Robert Gray, a New England merchant who was one of the first of a



wave of White sea captains who sailed to this region for the purposes of commercial exploitation of natural resources and territorial expansion of the United States.

In the 2010 history, the ship is described symbolically as being the *Lady Washington*, “the bark in which Capt. Gray sailed into the Columbia River in 1788, building the case for the United States to claim the Pacific Northwest”. Despite the fact that Gray did not successfully enter what is now known as the Columbia River in 1788 because in its attempt the ship both ran aground and was attacked by native people who were likely defending themselves from the perceived threat of the crew, the 2010 history goes on to infer a divine aspect in the ship’s depiction by associating the wind, a biblically supported reference to the Holy Spirit, with the worldly success of the venture as it unfurls the flag on the stern and the banner on the mast: “A tailwind propels the ship forward.”

This concept of the “tailwind” is significant for the 2010 history as it serves as the symbolic foundation of the telling of the evangelistic and worldly successes of the diocese from its beginning directly tying the church’s evangelistic mission to colonial expansion, a key aspect of the now repudiated Doctrine of Discovery (General Convention 2009, Resolution D035). Furthermore, it glosses over the fact that Gray did not successfully enter the Columbia River until 1792 (a point that is accurately recorded in the 1989 history) on the ship *Columbia Rediviva*, during a murderous voyage where dozens of indigenous people were killed and several indigenous villages were destroyed, all while engaging a mission of plunder to steal fur skins that at the time had gone up significantly in market value.

In addition to the ship and the tailwind, when applying any rudimentary standards of Art Historical analysis and inquiry, other problematic symbols include:

1. The banner with the star on top of the mast symbolizing the secular statehood of Washington and the expansion of the nation of the United States.
2. The flag of St. George, both an ecclesiastical and temporal symbol of England, in reference not only to our Anglican heritage but our heritage of comfort with the principles Christian Nationalism in the melding of Church and State.
3. The flag and the banner being unfurled in concert with the wind cementing with pride both Christian Nationalism and Manifest Destiny.
4. The sail depicting the personal crest of George Washington himself, who despite being both a primary figure in the history of the United States and a fellow Episcopalian, was an unapologetic slave holder.
5. The ironic muting of the presence of water, a primary Christian symbol of hope and salvation, reducing it to being merely a backdrop for the image of the ship.
6. The oversized miter draped atop the entire scene connoting that the ship and its activities are not only sanctioned by the Church but are overseen and guided by the Church.

Of course, lest we guess what the symbols fully mean, we need only look to the words of the designer himself, Pierre la Rose of Cambridge, Massachusetts, as recorded in the history of the diocese published in 1967 entitled, *Pioneering God’s Country* (pp. 35-36):

*It is based upon the voyage of Captain Gray which conserved the Territory of Washington to the United States, just as now the Church will conserve it to the Kingdom of Christ. The sail of the heraldic ship is charged with the arms of George Washington, in honor of whom, of course, the state is named. And to indicate the state rather than the city of Washington, D.C., I have charged the pennant at the masthead with the single star of an American state. Had it been the city I should have used a “mural crown” instead of a star. So much for the sail and pennant. The flag is charged with the St. George Cross, which in ecclesiastical arms is constantly used to symbolize the Anglican Communion. The colors of the whole should naturally fall into a patriotic combination of the American colors. And I think that even without knowledge of Gray’s voyage and the analogy involved, the whole symbolism of the Diocesan coat will be clear to the least instructed.*

Histories that romanticize events while ignoring atrocities serve only as propaganda for injustice. The seal overtly glorifies White Supremacy as a divinely inspired enterprise. The fact that it is wrought with historical inaccuracies in its most recently published descriptions also points to the glorification of White histories that ignore atrocities against People of Color at the expense of truth and historical accountability. We are simply left to accept the “truth” without the expectation of critical thinking in order to avoid uncomfortable realities such as the Church’s complicity with evil.

In summary, the Diocese of Olympia is long overdue in its institutional repentance as a primary agent of White Supremacy and Christian Nationalism in this land as promoted by the seal. It is also to be noted that, although the Diocese of Olympia geographically represents the most racially diverse region of the Pacific Northwest, no other diocese of the Pacific Northwest (including Idaho) has a seal that celebrates Whiteness and the false teaching of God’s favor through colonialism as this diocese does. Furthermore, the seal serves as an impediment to mission and the creation of authentic community partnerships as there is a commonly held policy amongst many indigenous groups and allies of refusing to work with any entity that fails to condemn, let alone promote, the Doctrine of Discovery. The time has come to retire the seal and claim a just symbol that truly reflects the diocese for what it is: a diverse and complex people of dignity under God and in accordance with the Gospel and person of Jesus Christ.