

## **EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA**

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### **A NEWS RELEASE**

From the Office of the Bishop

### **BISHOP SCHULTZ CALLS FOR PRAYERS FOR ISRAEL AND PALESTINE**

*Winnipeg, April 4, 2002, (ELCIC)* -- National Bishop Raymond Schultz of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) has added his voice to that of religious and government leaders around the world who have been expressing concern about the current situation in Israel and Palestine. In a letter to be read or reported at worship services throughout the ELCIC on Sunday, April 7, he calls on pastors and congregations of the ELCIC to "pray for the innocent people on both sides of the conflict between Israel and Palestine." He also asks for prayers "that Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat can bring themselves to take the steps that will lower the temperature of the hostilities."

In the letter he notes that "our sisters and brothers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan are under intense stress and live in conditions of extreme danger these days." He cites reports that army tanks in Bethlehem have damaged the home of the Lutheran pastor there, confining them to the second level of their home "where they cringe at the thunder of the cannons and live in fear."

He also states that "the Geneva Convention requiring health care and religious institutions to be immune from attack is being contravened on a daily basis." In Jerusalem, the Israeli army has attempted to enter Augusta Victoria Hospital and is demanding a list of patients and staff. The hospital is owned and operated by the Lutheran World Federation.

"This is also a time for you, the members of this church, to live lives that are dedicated to peace and reconciliation," writes Bishop Schultz. "We are an Easter people. We hold to the promise that present hardships and threats to life cannot prevail over the new creation that God has brought about in raising Jesus from the dead."

For more information, please contact:

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