



## World Council of Churches

### Christmas Message from the World Council of Churches

*‘For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end.—Isa 9:6-7*

**A**s we eagerly await Christmas and the birth of the Prince of Peace, we are even more keenly aware of the violence and destruction that are tearing our world apart, sundering families and nations, posing an affront to all the values of God’s reign on earth. Wars in Ukraine, Gaza, Lebanon, and the Sudan especially have taken tens of thousands of lives and ruined countless others, causing endless grief, loss, pain and suffering.

We know that these intractable wars and persistent violence are but the presenting symptom of wider dangers. In today’s world, so many crises—of climate, democratic governance, food insecurity, racial injustice, forced migration, gender-based violence, poverty and inequality—are flowing together, leaving us anxious for the present and fearful of the future. Where is the personal “perfect peace” promised by Isaiah? Where is societal peace, to dissolve conflict, diffuse hatreds, and overcome division? And where is peace among nations, to halt the violence, preserve lives, and restore safety, dignity, and well-being to all?

Where is peace in all this? Where is God in all this? In the birth of Jesus, we are given not only a sign of hope but also the advent of God’s redemption and a call to new life, hope and peace in him.

In the birth of the child Jesus, we realize that God is right here, identifies with us, shares our vulnerabilities, and elevates our capacity to restore peace and do justice. At Christmas we celebrate God’s incarnation, our dignity, and the advent of hope and courage to search tirelessly for the angels’ promised peace among all people.

As Christians, we are called to condemn war and violence and work for peace. In the World Council of Churches and among its 352 member churches, that legacy and the quest for peace drive so much of what we do. We work tirelessly for peace in Ukraine and the Middle East, in Sudan and Columbia and Korea, and so many other places. We campaign boldly against violence against women and children. We collaborate widely to create a more just international order, devise a more equitable financial structure, and build interfaith understanding and solidarity with other traditions.

As disciples of Jesus, we practice his nonviolent way, the true path to peace. We resist the powers that threaten peace and challenge boldly the lies and falsehoods that pit people against each other. We pray for peace, we nurture peace in our hearts and our communities, we act and advocate for peace every day. Isaiah’s announcement of the Prince of Peace is true for us even today amidst all the challenges. Immanuel – God is with us forever.

So as we celebrate the birth of Jesus this year, let us continue to pray, hope, and work for just peace and righteousness in our world, no matter how hopeless it may sometimes seem, let us know fully well that the Prince of Peace is with us. May this knowledge give you hope, joy, and strength in your daily

struggles and suffering and bring joy to the world! Uplifted and enlivened by our celebrations of the birth of the Saviour, may we ever walk his path of peace and realize its promise for our time and in our world!

The Peace of Christ be with you now and always,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pillay". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'P' and a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

*Rev. Prof. Dr. Jerry Pillay*  
General Secretary