

CLERGY STATEMENT ON JERUSALEM DAY, 2023

As lead clergy representing one-hundred-thirty-five (135) congregations, we applaud our local officials for recognizing the 75th anniversary of the rebirth of the nation of Israel. As their official proclamations indicate, Israel continues to be a present-day miracle. It is our hope our state lawmakers go further to acknowledge Israeli sovereignty.

Israel is a nation that came back into modern existence after nearly two-thousand years, following the slaughter of six-million Jews by Nazi forces, and surviving an attack on the very first day of its rebirth. In that 1948 War of Independence, Israeli Defense Forces were victorious against an invasion of seven surrounding nations despite its army not having a single cannon or tank at the onset of war. As the Prophet Isaiah asked, "Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children."

From the Golan Heights to the drylands of the Negev, GOD's hand of protection has been seen within Israel's sovereign borders and even outside its borders like in the improbable Rescue of Entebbe nearly three thousand miles away. Despite the current boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement, and constant barrage of United Nation condemnations, there is no denying this tiny nation of Israel, made up of only eight thousand square miles has become one of the world's top innovators in medicine, technology, agriculture and cybersecurity.

As the United Nations' General Assembly commemorates Israel's Independence Day by calling it "a catastrophe," (1) and as the U.N. votes to take Israel to International Court for its so-called occupation of its own sovereign land, (2) may Israel be reminded that 'whoever sows injustice will reap calamity.' As the Scriptures say, "Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: He shall preserve thy soul. The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore."

With the Biden Administration interfering in Israeli elections and domestic policy (3), and with the Biden Administration dispatching the FBI to conduct an ill-conceived investigation of the Israeli Defense Forces, (4) the Nation of Israel must be forewarned: the actions by the Biden Administration indicate America is no longer a trustworthy ally. The Star of David is not 'another star on the American flag.' Despite what any nation says, Israel has the moral right to self-governance; and the GOD of Abraham has promised He will be their shield.

To reiterate this profound truth, the 130th Ohio General Assembly formally declared ten-years prior, "Israel has been granted its lands under and through the oldest recorded deed, the Old Testament, a tome of Scripture held sacred and revered by Jews and Christians." (5)

As advocates for the Nation of Israel, we declare the Word of the LORD that says: "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till He establishes, and makes Jerusalem a praise in all the earth."

Furthermore, with the OSU Student Senate unwisely passing its first-ever Israel divestment resolution recently, (6) we as faith leaders representing one-hundred-thirty-five (135) diverse congregations in the Buckeye State are responding by calling on the 135th Ohio General Assembly to pass a concurrent resolution recognizing Jerusalem as the undivided, eternal Capital of Israel.

As the words of Psalm 137 ring out to this day, "If I forget you, O Jerusalem, Let my right hand forget its skill!"

List of lead clergymen representing one-hundred-thirty-five (135) congregations across fifteen counties calling for the 135th Ohio General Assembly to pass a concurrent house resolution recognizing Jerusalem as the undivided, eternal Capital of Israel:

Pastor Russell Stanford, All Believers in Christ
Pastor Robert O'Brian, Mansfield Apostolic Faith
Pastor Dave Parsons, Zion's Refuge Baptist
Pastor Paul Lintern, Oakland Lutheran Church
Pastor Art Kennard, Shelby Maranatha Christian
Pastor Mark Meyer, Lexington Gracepoint
Pastor James Marshall, Ganges Community
Pastor Hank Webb, Belmont Community Church
Pastor Doug Tackett, Taylortown Community
Pastor Chad Hayes, Mansfield Caeserea Baptist
Pastor Dan Zediker, Mansfield Mission Point
Pastor William Cole, Mansfield Recovery Church
Elder Moe Hill, Grace Evangelical Free Church
Pastor Bruce Philippi, Journey Life Center
Pastor Dallas Waggle, Lucas Foursquare Church
Pastor Louis Blevins, Mansfield Latter Rain
Pastor Steve Burkhalter, Ontario Potter's House
Pastor Layton Broome, Lakefork United Methodist
Pastor Rob Ratcliff, North Woodbury Freewill
Pastor John Temple, Loudonville Trinity Church
Pastor Berry Carter, Massillon City Bible
Pastor Walter Moss, Canton Foursquare Church
Pastor Dr. DeWayne Smith, Newton Falls UMC
Pastor William Strader, Bucyrus First Alliance
Pastor Tim Sheets, Middletown Oasis Church
Pastor Matt Potosky, Albion Church of Brethren
Pastor Joe Silvestri, Wooster Bible Church
Pastor Dan Baer, Mansfield Gospel Assembly
Rabbi Bob Bauer, Crestline Beit El Elyon
Rabbi Michel Wolf, Cincinnati Beth Messiah
Pastor Clyde Kerby, Hope & Healing Ministries
Reverend El Akuchie, Godsfield House of Prayer
Pastor Les Vnasdale, Cornerstone Grace Brethren
Pastor Michael Constantino, Girard New Life
Pastor Dave Mahon, Galion Apostolic Assembly
Pastor Brian Snow, Fredericktown First Baptist
Pastor Dan Barker, Cortland Trinity Baptist
Pastor Paul Mathewson, Maranatha Bible Church
Pastor Patrick Bailey, Danville Church of Brethren
Pastor Jason Price, Mansfield Victory Baptist
Pastor George Lewis, Shelby Temple of GOD
Pastor Faron Cole, Eastern Road Church of GOD
Pastor Robert Kurtz, Mansfield Temple Baptist
Pastor Ben Gregg, Plymouth Church of GOD
Pastor Rick Wiseman, Promised Land Fellowship
Pastor Joe Nichols, ARK Empowerment Center
Pastor Mark Galambos, Aurora Awakening Church
Rabbi William Halbrook, Ontario Sar Shalom Ctr.
Pastor Juan Rivera, Youngstown Victory Church
Pastor Matt Smith, Crestline Love Action Church
Pastor Rick Lewis, Shelby Connect Church
Bishop Sylvester Ginn, Hesus Agape Fellowship
Pastor Randy Raynes, Mansfield Fellowship Baptist
Pastor Paul Lintern, Mansfield Southside Christian
Pastor Mark Wireman, Shiloh Pentecostal Church
Pastor J.C. Church, Victory in Truth Ministries
Pastor John Campos, Bowman Street Church GOD
Deacon Darryl Hall, Mansfield Holiness Chapel
Pastor Brian Phillips, New Beginnings Freewill Baptist
Pastor Dink Porter, Mansfield Open Bible Church
Pastor Matthew Pond, Shelby First Freewill Baptist
Pastor Jerry O'Brien, Orville Faith Harvest Fellowship
Pastor Bryan Schatzinger, Calvary Chapel Mansfield
Pastor Emeritus Steve Schag, Shelby Calvary Baptist
Pastor Dave Rentzel, Ontario Abundant Life Tabernacle
Pastor Mark Dettmer, Pleasant Grove Community Church
Pastor Jeff Mills, Mifflin Little Flock Fellowship
Pastor Danny Akers, Victory Rock Praise & Worship
Pastor Layton Broome, Hayesville United Methodist
Pastor John Bouquet, Savannah, Bethel Chapel
Pastor Joe Maggelet, Ashland Fellowship Christian
Pastor David Bates, Galion Unity Freewill
Pastor Dr. DeWayne Smith, Pricetown United Methodist
Pastor LaMont Lindsay, Book of Life Church
Pastor Lucian Baker, Christ the King Church
Pastor Troy Thompson, Lorain Church North Coast
Pastor Wade Hartzell, Shiloh Full Gospel
Pastor Mike Rose, Hope on the Hill Chapel
Pastor Robert Caw, Newark Church Triumphant
Pastor Dr. Ricky Branham, Willard Ripley Chapel
Pastor Floyd Allen, Philippian Community Church
Pastor Taylor Howard, Apostolic Holiness Church
Pastor David Koehler, Loudonville Baptist Temple
Pastor Aaron Rose, Madison Fusion Church
Pastor Matt Merendino, Clear Fork Alliance
Pastors Les & Grace Farley, Lexington Irresistible Church
Pastor Christopher Thomas, Diamond Hills Baptist
Pastor Patrick Bailey, Butler North Bend of Brethren
Pastor Troy Wooten, Christian Life Center
Pastor Jeremy Huff, Church of Jesus Christ
Pastor Steve Brennemen, Awakening Christian Ctr.
Pastor Charles Burgess Jr., West Salem Church of GOD
Pastor Ron Smals, Woodville Grace Brethren
Pastor Bobby Edwards, Jesus is Alive Holiness
Pastor Steven Baldrige, Rome Community Church
Pastor Hank Webb, Belmont 96 Church
Pastor Brad Gentile, Shelby First Baptist
Pastor James Hill, Mansfield Paradise Church
Pastor Joe Smith, Ontario Westside Baptist
Pastor Eric Byrom, Mansfield Grace Fellowship

List of lead clergymen representing one-hundred-thirty-five (135) congregations across fifteen counties calling for the 135th Ohio General Assembly to pass a concurrent house resolution recognizing Jerusalem as the undivided, eternal Capital of Israel (cont'd):

Bishop Gregory Griffith, Willard Church of GOD	Pastor Rich Hurles, Plymouth Lifepoint Church
Pastor Miller Montoya, Kingdom Vision Church	Pastor Larry Hill, Bethel Freewill Baptist
Bishop Eli Miller, Perry Amish District 2	Bishop Andy Keim, Perry Amish District 1
Pastor Chris Spencer, Crestline Grace Baptist	Pastor Kevin Evans, Ganges Liberty Lifesong Ministries
Pastor Joseph Shannon, Living Hope Church	Pastor Duane Hennen, Cortland Maranatha Church
Pastor James Spencer, Mansfield People's Baptist	Rabbi Michael Oyler, Star in the East Messianic
Pastor Emeritus Dan Allen, Ashland Grace Church	Pastor Aaron Boggs, Fredericktown Freewill Baptist
Pastor Dave Natale, Church at Warren	Pastor David Howell, Powerhouse Worship Center
Pastor Jack Williams, Walker Lake Baptist	Pastor John Grimm, Plymouth United Methodist
Pastor John Grimm, Greenwich United Methodist	Pastor Glen Phillips, Hillside First Church of GOD
Pastor Rick Sutter, Shelby Elm Street Freewill	Pastor Justin Lawhorn, New Vision Crestline COG
Pastor Clarence Sanderfer, New Life Baptist	Pastor Denny Nezrick, Lexington Presbyterian
Pastor Larry Whited, Abundant Grace Fellowship	Pastor David Garlich, Hubbard Calvary Baptist
Pastor Nickolas Kelly, North Liberty Community	Elder Henry Bradley, New Community Temple COGIC
Pastor Jim Johnson, Mansfield Grace Temple	Pastor Tim Houston, Mansfield Church of GOD
Pastor Ferlie Yates, Hanna Road Church of GOD	Pastor Joseph Yerger, First Evangelical Presbyterian
Pastor Paul Staton, Honeycreek Baptist Church	Pastor Ed Colegrove, Edison Enterprise Baptist
Pastor Russ Smith, Shiloh Wesley Evangelical	

The above listed clergy co-signers have congregations located in (15) counties throughout Ohio. Counties with the most congregations represented: Richland (82), Crawford (9), Ashland (8), Trumbull (8), Knox (5), Wayne (5), Huron (4), Morrow (4), Stark (3), Warren (2), Licking (1), Lorain (1), Mahoning (1), Marion (1), & Portage (1).

References:

- (1) "UN to Mark 'Nakba Day' - Israel's Establishment as Catastrophe," by Harkov, Lahav, Jerusalem Post, December 1, 2022. <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-723759>
- (2) "UN asks world court to weigh in on Israeli 'occupation' and 'annexation,'" by Luke Tress, The Times of Israel, December 31, 2022, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/un-passes-resolution-asking-world-court-to-weigh-in-on-israeli-palestinian-conflict/>
- (3) "Utterly Disgraceful": Ted Cruz Slams Biden for Shunning Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu," by Kristina Wong, Breitbart News, March 29, 2023, <https://www.breitbart.com/politics/2023/03/29/utterly-disgraceful-ted-cruz-slams-biden-for-shunning-israeli-prime-minister-benjamin-netanyahu/>
- (4) "Israeli defense minister calls US investigation into journalist's killing a 'grave mistake,'" by Yonat Friling, Fox News, November 15, 2022 <https://www.foxnews.com/world/israeli-defense-minister-calls-us-investigation-into-journalists-killing-a-grave-mistake>
- (5) 130th Ohio General Assembly 2013-14 Regular Session, House Resolution 340, sponsored by State Representative Andy Thompson with 70 co-sponsors, <http://archives.legislature.state.oh.us/>
- (6) "OSU students pass first ever Israel divestment resolution," by Jane Kaufman, Columbus Jewish News, Apr 7, 2022, https://www.columbusjewishnews.com/news/local_news/ohio-state-bds/article_f9d9d610-b66e-11ec-a8e4-fb8144a17ea0.html