



## Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

November 26, 2012

The President  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

In September of last year, I wrote to you about the pending Palestinian application for admission as a Member State of the United Nations. Informed by our Church's relationship with our Christian companions in the region, I remain committed to seeking a just peace for Israelis and Palestinians.

With the present Palestinian effort to seek observer state status in the United Nations, the U.S. has another opportunity to demonstrate its support for self-determination and freedom. The U.S. should support these announced plans by the Palestinians when they come before the General Assembly later this month.

Over the past year, we have witnessed efforts to restart talks with the objective of achieving a two-state solution. We have also witnessed worrying developments on the ground which have inhibited those efforts, mainly the continuing expansion of illegal Israeli settlements and the increased displacement of Palestinians from their homes and villages. U.S. support for observer state status at the UN for the Palestinians would be an important signal to the parties that reaching a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement, where both communities may live in peace and security is still the fervent goal of our government.

Advocating for observer state status for the Palestinians does not preclude the necessity for returning to confidence-building measures and negotiations that support a just peace. We should support both paths.

It is my hope the U.S. will act in its own best interest as well as the interest of all people in the region by supporting observer state status for Palestine in the General Assembly.

Thank you for your consideration. My prayers are with you and all who work for peace with justice for both peoples.

In God's grace,

The Rev. Mark S. Hanson  
Presiding Bishop  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America