

## Bearing Witness to the Prince of Peace

*Bishop Shelley Wickstrom*

In Alaska, few of our congregations are in communities with a Muslim presence, so some might assume we can just ignore Anti-Muslim rhetoric. Whether our community has Muslims in it is irrelevant when news coverage and Facebook can stoke fear in our very local hearts. While in Israel and Palestine last fall, our group asked each presenter what they thought about ISIS. Palestinians and Israelis all responded that they knew it was present in their midst because ISIS is a concept before it is an act.

Alaskan Muslims have not reported the vandalism and threatening behavior Muslim citizens outside have experienced. I am grateful and encourage each of us in our congregations and neighborhoods to build up commitment to a just protection of those most vulnerable right now. We start with attitudes and concepts.

ELCA Presiding Bishop Eaton wrote [an open letter](#) to the Islamic Society of North America and to the National Christian-Muslim Initiative. This particular letter follows the [letter sent](#) to ELCA clergy on November 18 in regard to resettlement of Syrian refugees.

I have sent Bishop Eaton's letter to the Islamic Community Center in Anchorage with a letter stating our concern for our Muslim neighbor's welfare and freedom of religion as citizens of this nation.

Our US history and Alaskan history includes far too many chapters of legislated abuse. Church history includes too many chapters of participation in ethnic slaughter and denigration.

Christ is our peace. The present *hopes and fears of all the years* are met in this one whose birth and return we celebrate. Not to the exclusion of any, but for the love of this wild world. This is a time for Christian witness to the Prince of Peace. Do not allow fear to have the last word. Christ Jesus is God's word on this.