

*Dear God,*

*Thank you for being with us today.*

*As we watch the current war unfold from the secure comfort of our homes, far from any thought of violence to ourselves, we ask you to be with all peoples who are touched by this war against and from Iran. We ask you, especially, to be with the families of the schoolgirls killed in one of the first attacks, an attack for which no one has yet claimed responsibility. We ask you to be with the families of the other estimated thousand people killed in the aerial bombardment of Iran. We ask you to be with the families of those killed in the United States and Israel and with any middle eastern country affected.*

*We also ask you to be with those stranded by this war far from home in any of the locations where flights have been cancelled and escape is difficult.*

*Could we take a lesson from today's gospel where Jesus, a Jew, has a lengthy conversation with a Samaritan and stays some days with her people. Those two branches of Judaism were fierce enemies but Jesus and the woman were able to transcend their differences. Today, God, we ask you for compassion for and understanding of the differences between people. Perhaps, in our own lives, we could try giving up being afraid of differences for the balance of this Lenten season and try to celebrate them instead?*



*God, today we ask you to support those suffering in Ukraine, in Syria, Sudan, Lebanon and the many other places on this earth where violence and injustice proliferate. We also ask you to be with those who are ill in our own community and also with their caregivers. We ask you to be with those in our community who have recently lost loved ones. Please help them to find the strength to carry on alone.*

*As we go out the door into a new week, let us remember all participants in the current Iranian conflict in our prayers. God, we ask you, especially, for the security of the children, for their safety and for their freedom from fear. We ask you for the security of their parents, that they may not succumb to the many dangers of war but live to protect those who need them so desperately.*

*Amen*