Facilitator Notes: Vigil to mourn a year of heightened violence in the Middle East

TO PREPARE:

- ✓ Projection and sound equipment
- ✓ Candles and matches/battery candles – one per person, or a collection at the front of the gathering.
- ✓ Volunteers to read the two readings (if not being read by the facilitator)
- ✓ You may choose to use some background music to accompany the slides or to hold silence when there are no readings or recommended music.
- ✓ If using the tracks off YouTube it is best to cue these up in advance so that you don't get an advert playing in the middle of your vigil.

CONTEXT

The purpose of this resource is to provide churches and groups of Christians with some words to help them to reflect on the events of the last year in the Middle East and to enable these groups to pray into a situation where words can sometimes feel difficult. Embrace the Middle East supports people who are living and working on all sides of this conflict and we approach this from a conviction that all people are made in the image of God. We mourn each life that has been lost or damaged as the result of violence and war.

VIGIL NOTES

Slide 1: Vigil intro

Slide 2: Light the candles

Slide 3: Reading

Slides 4-6: The facilitator can read the points of reflection on the slide, or allow those attending to read for themselves. Give at least one minute of silence to reflect on each of the three groups of people.

Slide 7: Invite people to pray silently or put their prayer in the chat. Play the track through until the end. If the music within the PowerPoint does not work you can find a similar track here Taizé - O Lord, Hear My Prayer (youtube.com)

Slide 8-11: We suggest the facilitator read the prayers on these slides and then allow a minute or two for silent prayer and to reflect on the quotes from Embrace's partners in the region.

Slide 12: Prayer from The Very Reverend Canon Richard Sewell, Dean of Saint George's College Jerusalem. We suggest that you listen to the audio. However, the prayer is transcribed here in case of technical difficulties.

God of peace turn those who follow the ways of war and division towards the ways of justice and reconciliation encourage those who seek to establish a fair and just peace in the Middle East bless their efforts as they work to end conflict lead those who engage in violence to put down their weapons and to live in peace with one another

God of justice bless those who work for peace through justice strengthen their resolve in the face of seemingly endless violence guide the leaders of the peoples of the Middle East to know your will and to support a just peace audio children

God of love lifting up the Holy Land for all humankind breathe love and compassion into our prayers with a desire for nothing other than peace; peace in our hearts peace for all creation and especially peace in the land of the holy one

God of mercy even as we long to understand that which is often beyond our comprehension we lay before you the hearts minds and bodies of all those suffering from conflict in the West Bank; in Gaza; in Israel; and Lebanon from those suffering from the ongoing occupation. Shower upon all the people of this Holy Land the spirit of justice and reconciliation

God of the nations give to all your people the blessings of well-being freedom and harmony and above all things give us faith in you that we may be strengthened to care for all those in need and who suffer in war until the coming of your son our saviour Jesus Christ

Amen

Slide 13: Reading – followed by playing the Taize track linked on the PowerPoint. Direct link is here Be Still - YouTube