

**16th - 22<sup>nd</sup> September** Stories to share, absorb, pray

This year the theme for the [World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel](#) is taken from the bible verse in the gospel of Matthew (25:40) "Whatever you did...you did for me." The World Council of Churches (WCC) have chosen a specific sub-theme for each day to focus on which covers an overview of the current realities, key data and/or individual testimonies, a Bible reference and prayer.

To supplement these resources PIEN have compiled stories from people in Gaza, Israel, the West Bank and Australia for you to **read, watch, share** and **pray** over, each day. Alternatively, a couple of the stories could be shared during your church service on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> September, along with elements developed in the [WCC resources](#).



## **16<sup>th</sup> September – Ahmed's story** (a Palestinian father in Gaza)

In the early days of this current war Ahmed wrote these small reflections which have been shared with us. As far as we know Ahmed is still alive. [Read](#) these powerful, moving words from a father, a son, a human being, who is trapped in a literal hell hole.

## **17<sup>th</sup> September – Sahar's story** (escape from Gaza)

Sahar's story is told by Mercy Aiken, who many of you know of through PIEN's Speaker Tour in April. From Australia Mercy went to Cairo where she met Sahar and heard her incredible story. PIEN already had contact with Sahar through a committee member and had sold her embroidered bags. [Read](#) her story of escape.

## **18<sup>th</sup> September – Leela's story** (a Palestinian Australian Christian)

Leela Boutagy first told her family's story at a public event in the Blue Mountains a few months ago as part of 'Voices for Palestine'. Leela's family's history, like most Palestinians, carries the memories and scars of a life forcibly taken away, yet the yearning and hope to return to their homeland has never left. [Read](#) her story.

## **19<sup>th</sup> September – Rabbi Hanan's story** (abundant peace)

Rabbi Hanan Schlesinger, who belongs to the organisation [Roots](#), tells how an encounter with Palestinians changed his life and worldview forever, learning to humanize those he previously saw as enemies. [Watch](#) this insightful, touching personal testimony of transformation.

## **20<sup>th</sup> September – Claire's story** (witnessing life in Palestine)

Claire has recently returned from spending a couple of months visiting the West Bank. Whilst over there she wrote these snippets to family and friends of what she was seeing, hearing and witnessing. Join Claire in her journey – [read](#).

## **21<sup>st</sup> September – Yonatan's story** (the son of Vivian Silver)

Yonatan Zeigen addressed the [19<sup>th</sup> Annual Joint Memorial Ceremony](#) on May 12, 2024, reflecting on the life and tragic death of his mother Vivian Silver, the well-known and respected Israeli peace activist. Vivian was killed by Hamas on 7<sup>th</sup> Oct. [Watch](#) Yonatan tell of his personal grief and pledge to continue his mother's work.

## **22<sup>nd</sup> September – Lulu's story** (bring my daughter home)

Lulu Aranki-Nasir in this personal plea recalls the harrowing night Israeli soldiers came into their house and took their daughter Layan away. Layan is still being held in "administrative detention" without any charges. Layan, a Christian, is reported to be providing "positive energy to all the prisoners". [Read](#) her mother's words.