Dear Prayer Partners,

This new year takes its beginning amidst dramatic changes in the world. The most relevant development for Israel is that the US government has officially recognized Jerusalem as the historical capital of the State of Israel. While causing great joy for many in Israel, this declaration also immediately prompted many other nations to voice their public disapproval.

It needs to be emphasized, however, that the status of Jerusalem has long since been decided, albeit not by nations, politicians or international bodies but by Heaven. God declares His own city as “the City of God:”

“Why do the nations rage,
And the people plot a vain thing?
**2**The kings of the earth set themselves,
And the rulers take counsel together,
Against the Lord and against His Anointed, *saying,*
**3**“Let us break Their bonds in pieces
And cast away Their cords from us.”

**4**He who sits in the heavens shall laugh;
The Lord shall hold them in derision.
**5**Then He shall speak to them in His wrath,
And distress them in His deep displeasure:
**6**“Yet I have set My King
On My holy hill of Zion.” (Psalm 2:1–6, NKJV)

God established the city and her King. And His purposes will prosper no matter what the nations attempt to decide.

Yet Jerusalem is a city that can determine whether a nation is blessed or cursed. God warns every nation that tries to lift that burdensome stone: They “will surely hurt themselves” (Zech. 12:1-3, ESV). The declaration of the Trump administration regarding Jerusalem should therefore not relegate us to delighted ease but rather serve as a starting signal. We already see nations competing to lift that burdensome stone further than others. A group of nations, led by Turkey’s President Erdogan, threatens to move their embassies to Jerusalem, in order to recognize the city as the capital of a virtual Palestinian State. The UN Security Council already gathered to condemn the decision of President Trump, stopped only by a firm US veto. We can expect these dynamics to increase even more in the weeks to come.

As you read this, you might consider yourselves lacking earthly power to influence such global matters. Yet the word of God reminds us that we as believers are seated “together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus… ” (Eph. 2:6, NKJV) This is the most powerful place to be in the entire universe.

Moreover, the Word of God gives us great confidence to approach His heavenly throne of grace with supplications and prayers of faith. God promises us that they will have great effect (see James 5:16). Such prayers of faith can subdue kingdoms, obtain promises, stop the mouths of lions, quench the violence of fire, turn to flight the armies of the aliens, and much more (see Heb. 11:33–35).

Let us therefore use these first weeks of the year to proclaim God’s purposes for Jerusalem and to intercede with the judge of the whole world that your nation, where you come from, will stand with God’s purpose in matters concerning His beloved city. Such prayer will not only affect Israel and Jerusalem, but it will affect you own nation and can release His blessing for your country.

Please prayerfully consider to join us in starting the year with a month that is particularly dedicated to prayer. Maybe you even want to fast for a few days or one particular day a week. Here in Jerusalem, every Wednesday in January will be our day of prayer and fasting, as we gather three times during the day to seek God. Please join us as we do so. Please know that with you thousands of believers from over 140 nations will join you as you seek the Lord during this week. If you are a pastor, please consider declaring January a month of special congregational prayer. I know God will answer our prayers, and together we will carry out great exploits.

Here from Jerusalem we will send you weekly prayer updates during the month of January.

Finally, please let us hear from you! Send a short email to prayer@icej.org to let us know you are praying and fasting with us. Tell us your personal prayer needs, and just as importantly, let us know if the Lord answered our prayers!

Many blessings and breakthroughs for 2018

Yours in Christ, from Jerusalem

Jürgen Bühler

**Pray with us according to the following guidelines:**

**1. Pray for Israel**

**A. Government**

* Many diplomatic countermoves and initiatives are being made in response to the US recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital. Pray that Israel’s leaders and allies will be able thwart or defang harmful initiatives against Israel.
* Pray for God’s will concerning the Temple Mount, which continues to be a flashpoint between Jews and Muslims.
* Pray for the swift conclusion and just outcomes of corruption probes, which continue to hamper political processes and undermine the Israeli public’s trust and confidence in their leaders.
* Scriptures to use:

*“We have a strong city; God will appoint salvation for walls and bulwarks.
Open the gates, that the righteous nation which keeps the truth may enter in.” (Isaiah 26:1-2)

“Then I said to the nobles, the rulers, and the rest of the people, “The work is great and extensive, and we are separated far from one another on the wall.**Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us.” (Nehemiah 4:19-20)

“Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.” (John 12:31)*

**B. Society**

* Labor disputes and general strikes in connection with cutbacks at Israel’s flagship pharmaceutical company, Teva, have severely affected the nation. Pray that Israel’s workers, business leaders and politicians will find the right balance between running an efficient economy and providing fair compensation and job security for workers.
* Continue to pray for more rain. Water is necessary for the environment, economy and stable relations with Israel’s neighbors.
* Pray that Israel’s 70th year will be a time of rejoicing and hope for the spiritual future of the nation.
* Scriptures to use:

*“When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.**And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.” (Acts 2:1-2)*

*”When the Lord brought back the captivity of Zion,
We were like those who dream.” (Psalm 126:1)

“And they were afraid, and marveled, saying to one another, “Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!”.” (Luke 8:25)*

**C. Security**

* Pray for the security and comfort of Israel’s border communities. When Hamas and other Islamic factions wish to provoke Israel, they lob mortar shells and launch short-range rockets across the border between Gaza and Israel. Pray that these communities will remain stalwart and not suffer psychological or physical harm.
* Pray for the success of C-Dome, Israel’s sea-based missile defense, which is being deployed to protect the country’s vital gas installations in the Mediterranean Sea.
* Pray for the safety of IDF and Border Police units, and pray that they will maintain purity of arms and use force wisely, even as they are severely provoked by Palestinian protesters.
* Pray that Hezbollah’s lucrative drug-trafficking-for-arms scheme will be severely sanctioned by the international community and that the group and its patron state, Iran, will be publically shamed for these activities.
* Scriptures to use:

*“So Judah said to Simeon his brother, “Come up with me to my allotted territory, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I will likewise go with you to your allotted territory.” (Judges 1:3)*

*“Happy are you, O Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the Lord, The shield of your help and the sword of your majesty! Your enemies shall submit to you, and you shall tread down their high places.”(Deuteronomy 33:29)*

*“For the nation and kingdom which will not serve you shall perish,
And those nations shall be utterly ruined. The glory of Lebanon shall come to you, the cypress, the pine, and the box tree together,
To beautify the place of My sanctuary…”(Isaiah 60:12-13)*

**2. Pray for the Nations**

**A. Middle East**

* Pray that potential Arab allies to Israel, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, will not be under too much pressure from their publics to distance themselves from Israel in the wake of President Trump’s Jerusalem Declaration.
* Pray that the ability of the Islamic State to shape events and influence the minds of Muslims will be permanently stamped out. Pray that Muslims will see the light of Christ.
* Pray that Russia’s involvement in the Middle East will not benefit those states that wish to harm Israel.
* Pray that the political order that surfaces in Syria in the near future will allow the Syrian nation to move forward and not merely entrench the Assad regime further.
* Scriptures to use:

*“Happy is the man who is always reverent, but he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity.” (Proverbs 28:14)*

*“For the wicked boasts of his heart’s desire;
He blesses the greedy and renounces the Lord.
The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God;
God is in none of his thoughts.” (Psalm 10:2-3)*

*”Blessed be the name of God forever and ever,
For wisdom and might are His.**And He changes the times and the seasons;
He removes kings and raises up kings…” (Daniel 2:20-21)*

**3. Pray for the ICEJ**

**A. ICEJ Ministry**

* Pray for the construction plans and finances for the new building at our Haifa Home for Holocaust survivors.
* Pray that the number of people engaging in and supporting the work and ministry of the Christian Embassy will grow in 2018.
* Pray for the success of our strategies under God’s guidance for 2018, globally and in Israel.
* Pray for the protection from the enemy and the health of ICEJ leadership in Jerusalem and worldwide.
* Pray for our AID projects in terms of planning and finances, so that we can bless the largest number of people possible in the most efficient way possible.
* Scriptures to use:

*“Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.” (Matthew 18:14)

“And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, “Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!” So God granted him what he requested.” (1 Chronicles 4:10)

“Then He said to them, “The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.” (Luke 10:2)*