



Prayer Request for Peace and Life on the Korean Peninsula

2025 Ecumenical Letter from the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea #1

From: The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK)

To: Ecumenical Partner Churches and Institutions

Date: Friday, January 10, 2025

Shalom!

Beloved brothers and sisters of the global ecumenical community!

May the Lord's love and peace always be with you.

We welcome the new year of 2025 with gratitude and hope. The reality is not always easy, but we trust in God's providence and guidance in all circumstances.

At the 109th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) held on September 24, 2024, Rev. PARK Sang Kyu of the Gwangju Seonggwang Church was elected as the Moderator, and Rev. LEE Hunsam of the Gyeonggi Presbytery was elected as the General Secretary. With the light of hope, the PROK is dedicated to mission work under the theme of the 109th General Assembly, "O, Church! Renew Life and Sing the Song of Peace!"



Moderator
Rev. PARK Sang Kyu



General Secretary
Rev. Hunsam LEE

Taking this opportunity of leadership transition, we wish to inform the global ecumenical community about the current situation in Korea and the Korean Peninsula and request united prayers. We ask the global ecumenical community to continue praying for peace on the Korean Peninsula, just as you have done thus far, and for efforts to overcome the current emergency and division. The PROK has engaged in missionary solidarity with the global church and brother churches since its inception. Going forward, we will continue to interact with the global ecumenical community in Christ and devote ourselves to the work for the Kingdom of God.

The Position and Prayer Request of the PROK General Assembly Regarding Martial Law and the Impeachment Situation.

The Republic of Korea takes pride not only in its economic development but also in various brands such as K-culture, alongside the advancement of democracy. However, on December 3, 2024, President Yoon Suk-yeol declared martial law, mobilizing tanks and the military, and ordered the arrest of members of the National Assembly, plunging the entire nation into anxiety and chaos. This was a coup d'état aimed at the people and their representatives in the National Assembly.

Thanks to the resistance of mature citizens and conscientious members of the National Assembly, martial law was soon lifted, but its aftermath continues. In response, the PROK General Assembly held an emergency meeting at dawn on December 4, 2024, declaring the President's martial law as illegal and unconstitutional, and discussed measures to stabilize the Republic of Korea. Churches nationwide held 'Special Worship for the Nation and People' and 'Emergency Prayer Meetings' to seek God's will and urged the National Assembly to impeach the President.

Alongside some religious groups and millions of citizens, the PROK has taken to the streets, calling for impeachment and arrest, striving to protect democracy. Despite the urgent situation, opposition lawmakers, reflecting our prayers and the people's aspirations, passed the impeachment resolution, and we now await the final decision of the Constitutional Court. However, the forces of Yoon Suk-yeol, who incited an insurrection under the guise of governance, and some fascist elements continue to deny the judgments of the National Assembly and the judiciary, exacerbating the confusion.



Investigations so far have revealed the organized and violent illegal activities of the military generals who followed Yoon Suk-yeol's orders. The President, who directed these actions, refuses to acknowledge his unconstitutional and violent acts, instead offering sophistry as governance techniques. Some individuals with weak democratic consciousness and a narrow worldview still support Yoon Suk-yeol. Unfortunately, many Christians with fundamentalist worldviews are among them, leading to the stigma that Christianity in Korean society is the staunchest supporter of dictatorial forces.

Nevertheless, our people are overcoming this crisis wisely and peacefully. Waving 'cheering sticks' of peace in front of tanks, helicopters, and armed soldiers, and shouting for fairness and common sense despite the snow and rain. The PROK will also join in unity to protect democracy, life, and peace. We continue to trust in the God of justice and life, as we have always done. We ask for your continued prayers so that Korean society can restore democracy, and the Korean church can fully fulfill its role as the central body of the Kingdom of God movement.

Story of the "Reconciliation and Peace Church and Peace & Prayer Request for Peace and Unification of the Korean Peninsula.

The Republic of Korea still bears the scars of division, grappling with conflict and danger. Division is the root of national tragedy and an essential task for our nation in pursuit of peace and unification. Establishing democracy by overcoming dictatorship and violence, achieving a self-reliant nation free from foreign intervention, and realizing reconciliation and unification between the North and South are all significant responsibilities as matters of faith. The PROK has strived in various ways to fulfill these responsibilities. To effectively undertake the peace movement, the PROK General Assembly decided six years ago to establish a church symbolizing reconciliation and peace, "Reconciliation and Peace Church". On June 6, 2024, we held a groundbreaking ceremony for the Church of Reconciliation and Peace near the DMZ (89-2 Wolhari, Cheorwon-eup, Cheorwon-gun, Gangwon Special Self-Governing Province). The construction is progressing with the goal of completion before June 2025, and we intend to invite members of the global church to join in worship and prayers for peace at the dedication service in June.

The "Reconciliation and Peace Church" signifies the PROK's commitment to becoming a church of peace and represents a faith-driven determination to address the issue of national division as a missionary task. This church will be a sanctuary for national reconciliation and peace, a center for peace formation and education, a place for realizing peace in border areas, and a venue for North-South exchange and cooperation. It will transcend the PROK to become a church of the whole nation, a church of life.

The global ecumenical community has generously supported and prayed in solidarity during crises on the Korean Peninsula. We express our deep gratitude for this and request your continued prayers and interest for peace and life on the Korean Peninsula. We hope that peace on the Korean Peninsula can contribute to peace in Northeast Asia and the world. The PROK greets 2025 with new hope and will walk together with the global ecumenical community on the path to achieving God's kingdom of peace and life.

Thank you.

10 January 2025

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA
General Secretary Rev. Hunsam LEE