

CHURCHES FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE

PROGRAM YEAR
SEPT 1, 2022 - AUG 31, 2023

ANNUAL REPORT

EDUCATE | ELEVATE | ADVOCATE





A WORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This Annual Report is a look back at the 2022-2023 program year that ended on August 31, 2023, just a few weeks before October 7, 2023. This is the work that CMEP has been doing for four decades and will continue to do as we address root causes of injustice and the rights of all people to live in freedom and security.

As of this report, the current and unprecedented bombing on Gaza civilians, the captivity of hostages, and the humanitarian disaster in the Gaza Strip is a reality that consumes our days. We remain busy at work calling for comprehensive ceasefire, praying, and supporting our friends and contacts in the Holy Land as they continue their important work.

We are grateful for those who join us in this work for peace.

REV. DR. MAE ELISE CANNON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Read the [Stand in the G.A.P. Report](#) to learn more about the efforts of Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) since October 7, 2023.

While we continue to cry out for a ceasefire and pursue peace we want to say thank you for the support and increased engagement from so many.



A FEW CMEP STAFF & VOLUNTEERS EXHIBITING AT A 2022 CONFERENCE

THIS PAST PROGRAM YEAR SAW WORK & ADVOCACY FROM:

24 STAFF, INTERNS, FELLOWS, & VOLUNTEERS

(REPRESENTING APPROXIMATELY 7-8 "FULL TIME EQUIVALENT" POSITIONS ON STAFF.)

20 REGIONAL COORDINATORS

15 LEADERSHIP COUNCIL MEMBERS

31 BOARD MEMBER COMMUNIONS & ORGANIZATIONS

32 CHURCH PARTNERS

& OVER 56,000 CONSTITUENTS



REGIONAL EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

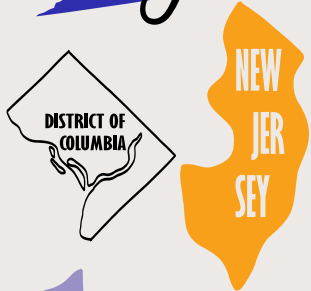
texas

On February 16th and 17th, 2023 CMEP hosted events in Houston, TX and Dallas, TX with Palestinian Christian leaders Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb, Rev. Dr. Munther Isaac, and Rev. Dr. Jack Sara. About 30 people attended the event on the 16th, which was hosted by Fuller Theological Seminary-Houston and explored how Palestinian Christian theology engages with biblical notions of the land and its inhabitants. 35 people attended the event on the 17th which was an interfaith luncheon co-hosted by Faith Commons, a Dallas-based interfaith non-profit. CMEP's new Middle East Fellow Lauren Draper represented CMEP at both of these events and made strategic connections with faith leaders in the Houston and Dallas areas who are interested in engaging with CMEP.



pennsylvania

CMEP Outreach Manager Jennifer Maidrand and Palestinian human rights activist Jonathan Kuttub spoke at a church service of Circle of Hope Church in Philadelphia on Sunday June 25th. Jennifer and Jonathan shared their own stories of engagement with Israel/Palestine and facilitated a conversation about the current realities in Israel/Palestine, Christian Zionism, and the role of American church in peacebuilding in the region.



Throughout the program year,
CMEP was honored
to host regional events in

6 states

29 WEBINARS

CMEP Webinars, Mini-Courses, and Prayer Events offers ways for people to engage from wherever they are. Our constituents are not located in one geographical area and we are grateful for the ways they remain connected to being educated on the issues. There were over 1,400 registrants for these webinars.

During the 2022-2023 Program Year we covered many topics from mid-term elections to what it looks like to be faithful under oppression. We partnered with numerous individuals and organizations.

Meet: Stand with Iraqi Christians

The Rev. Canon
Faiz Basheer
Jerjes, MBE



May 10, 2023

Facilitated by
Rev. Dr. Mae Elise
Cannon



A conversation about contemporary challenges for Christians in Iraq and their ministries in response to ISIS's 2014 invasion and destruction

and
Sinan Hanna
Karakash



Fast and Pray: Settler violence and settlement expansion

Wednesday, August 2, 2023

12:30 PM EDT - 1:00 PM EDT. Via Zoom.

Join us for our third monthly prayer session. We invite you to join us and our special guest, Adam Manasra, for a 30-minute prayer session to lift up the challenges faced by Palestinians as they continue to struggle against settler violence and settlement expansion.

Register



Adam Manasra is 25 years old and serves as the coordinator of the Narjis Community Development Project in the Palestinian village of Wadi Foquin. He is liaison to the U.S. based group Friends of Wadi Foquin. For the last 3 years, he has led the Narjis Youth Group in the village. Adam is a structural engineer and received his B.A. degree from Palestine Polytechnic University in Hebron.

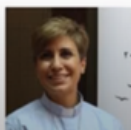
Webinar Series: Conversations with Middle East Christians

August 14

Learn about the work Christians are doing to address various issues in these countries, and how Christians outside of these countries may still have a role to play.



Rev. Colin
Chapman



Rev. Dr.
Rima Nasrallah



Dr. Martin
Accad



cmepp.org/events



92+ MEETINGS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Throughout the program year CMEP staff met with church leaders, local communities and individuals, government workers, journalists, non-profit organizations, and others in our effort to elevate the work and voices of those who live and work for peace in the Middle East.

THOSE MEETINGS INCLUDED:

5

meetings with
Heads of Churches

19

visits to
local communities

such as Masafer Yatta, Tent of Nations, Abboud, Wadi Foquin

41

conversations with local
non-profits and
organizations

of note

CMEP's Executive Director met with His Beatitude Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa in Jerusalem on March 13, 2023. The meeting focused on the suffering of people both in Israel because of the destruction of Israeli "democratic principles" and the devastating effects on Palestinians in Jerusalem and the West Bank. The meeting was very constructive and we explored possibilities of how we might work together in the future and what strategies of engaging the Heads of Churches of Jerusalem might be the most constructive.



Church of St. John the Baptist in Ein Karem



Hebron



Anglican Church in Nablus



Masafer Yatta



CMEP's Executive Director Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon facilitated a strategic planning meeting with the And Still We Rise (ASWR) Leadership in Beit Jala at Talitha Kumi on March 11, 2023. The meeting was facilitated by several Palestinian members of the leadership team including: Shireen Hilal Awad (Bethlehem Bible College), Eilda Zaghmout (Beit Ashams), Nisreen Mansour (Bethlehem University) as well as Maria Wålsten (ACT Church Alliance, Sweden). Rania Murra (Arab Educational Institute) and Amira Hilal (Friends of Bethlehem's Children) are also a part of the Leadership Team.

We determined the goal of our women's program - And Still We Rise (ASWR) is to empower Middle Eastern women to be change makers in church and society in collective efforts toward peace.



New to CMEP's Staff: Tamar Haddad, CMEP's And Still We Rise Coordinator

ASWR Summit

**And Still We Rise 2024
Elevating Women Leaders
Promoting Peace
in the Middle East**

**Jericho, Palestine
November 15-17, 2024**

Join us!
cmepp.org/werise2024



Ecumenical Advisory Group (EAG)

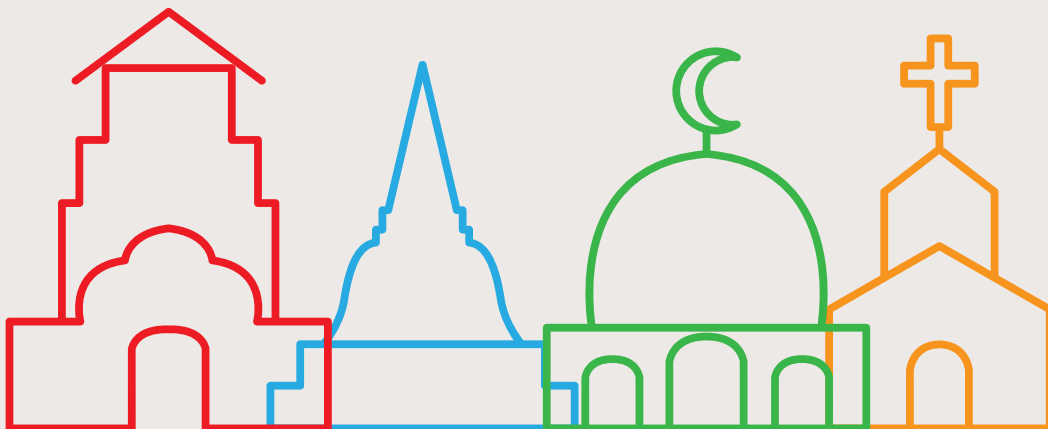
CMEP convenes a coalition of various global Christian NGO and international church workers in the Holy Land to collaborate and offer encouragement in the work for peace and justice. The EAG consists of representatives of our member communions living in Israel and Palestine.

Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon before an EAG Meeting
at Notre Dame of Jerusalem

Religious Freedom/Human Rights Report

CMEP takes seriously the stewardship responsibility of submitting reports for both International Religious Freedom and Human Rights to the US Government on Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories.

The final report featured every topic CMEP submitted to Office of Palestinian Affairs (OPA).



TRAVEL TO THE HOLY LAND

CMEP facilitated two trips to the Holy Land as post-2020 travel picked back up. 31 different people were able to meet with peacemakers and experience the Holy Land.

Additionally, 11 other groups met with CMEP staff during their travels to the Holy Land and Egypt and learned how to connect their tour to ongoing work for peace.



"As someone from a non-Christian background, it was really meaningful to me to learn about Christ by actually going where he lived and moved around - and then to see how that history shaped the people and the lands. I felt very privileged to have this be my first in depth look at His story."

- a CMEP Trip Participant

CMEP Staff Manager of Middle East Partnerships and Middle East Fellow meet with a group traveling in the Holy Land.

JOIN US
cmep.org/travel

Working Together: Justice can prevail. Peace is possible.

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Trips to the Middle East



Interested in Pilgrimage and Advocacy-Oriented Travel?

Plan Your Next Trip with CMEP

[Get in Touch](#)



Churches For Middle East Peace's

2023 Advocacy Summit

Seeking Comprehensive Peace: Advocating for Human Rights in Israel and Palestine | DC | April 20-21, 2023

"The CMEP Advocacy Conference was really great. The Palestinian faith leaders were so compelling and I was beyond touched with their personal stories and speaking their truth, especially sharing the reality of the Palestinian crisis and US foreign policy. The advocacy training was a tremendous help to all of us"

-Mike A., Delaware

We hosted our first in-person Advocacy Summit since 2019. Supporters from 23 states and the District of Columbia gathered to hear from Palestinian and U.S. leaders on the current situation in Israel/Palestine and how they could raise their voices on Capitol Hill in the service of peace and justice for all in Israel/Palestine. Keynote speakers included Revs. Dr. Jack Sara, Mitri Raheb, and Munther Isaac. On April 21, participants had the chance to meet with their Congressional offices to push for continued U.S. support for UNRWA.

CMEP Outreach Manager Jennifer Maidrand had the opportunity to present the James Maxstadt Volunteer Award to Ohio Regional Coordinator, Skip Cornett, at his home. Skip was surprised and honored by the award and visit. He was a CMEP volunteer for over 15 years, during which he has organized regional speaking events with Ambassador Warren Clark and other important leaders, engaged in congressional advocacy, and spearheaded the creation of CMEP t-shirts and bumper stickers.

Skip passed away in 2023. CMEP is honored by his work and legacy.



Advocacy Summit 2023



Action Alerts

5,600

messages to
congress & white house

COSPONSOR HR 3103:

THE PALESTINIAN CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ACT
ASKED CONGRESSIONAL OFFICES TO SIGN A LETTER TO
BIDEN OPPOSING ANEXATION

COSPONSOR THE YEMEN WAR POWERS RESOLUTION

**COSPONSOR THE JUSTICE
FOR SHIREEN ACT**

We sent a total of **seven** action alerts to Congress
and the Administration



UNRWA Funding

CMEP advocated for release of \$75,000,000 to UNRWA for food assistance in the West Bank and Gaza placed under hold by two members of Congress.

CMEP joined civil society groups in advocating both with the members of Congress to release the hold and to the Biden Administration to honor its commitment to provide the assistance.

In September 2023, the Biden Administration announced its intention to provide the \$75,000,000 in funding.



52 Connections (7 new this year)

Elevating our connections in the Middle East and the United States is central to our advocacy efforts. These organizations are some of Churches for Middle East Peace's (CMEP) connections that work in the United States and the Middle East.

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cmep.org/connections

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) is grateful for our coalition relationships. However, these logos and relationships do not indicate agreement on all policy positions.

Connections Highlight



Tent of Nations

CMEP has been a long time partner and friend to the Nassar Family and Tent of Nations. Our work with Tent of Nations falls under our advocacy priorities of human rights and during the 2022-23 Program Year, CMEP partnered with the Tent of Nations to support their court case related to their land ownership and occupancy – including meeting with the Office of Palestinian Affairs (OPA), visiting the farm often (including with tour groups), and praying with and for the Nassar Family.

pictured: a CMEP travel group visits Tent of Nations in Spring 2023

Fast and Pray for The Middle East: On Friday, May 12th, 2023 over 70 people joined together with CMEP and Daoud Nassar to pray together for 30 minutes over the May 15th court hearing regarding the farm's reregistration.

These monthly prayer sessions continued with other Middle East Connections as we gathered with CMEP constituents to pray for a comprehensive, just, and peaceful resolution to the conflict.



TENT OF NATIONS
People Building Bridges



Daoud Nassar from the Tent of Nations shared the latest on his efforts to save his land from confiscation by the Israeli government at the April 2023 Advocacy Summit. The next day, participants had the chance to meet with their Congressional offices to advocate on behalf of Daoud Nassar's struggle to maintain his land.

TWENTY-ONE PUBLIC STATEMENTS & PRESS RELEASES



REPEATED CALLS FOR AN END TO VIOLENCE

The vast majority of CMEP's public statements in 2022-2023 Program Year were a call for an end to violence, including military raids and settler attacks. From September to August we noted the continued and escalating violence in the region.



SHIREEN ABU AKLEH

We continued to call for the justice for Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh who was shot and killed while reporting on the Israeli military's invasion of a refugee camp in Jenin in the occupied West Bank.



BROADER MIDDLE EAST

We called for sanctions to be lifted so that relief may go to Syria and Türkiye after a devastating earthquake. CMEP monitored the ongoing conflict on the Armenian border and the violence centering around the region of Nagorno-Karabakh and asked the UN Security Council to re-open the Lachin Corridor for Humanitarian Aid.



Each month CMEP sends an update to our connections in the Middle East and our mailing list grew this program year from 343 to 523 connections. We are honored to be able to be in contact with so many people who are daily living the work for justice and peace.

This newsletter not only allows us to be in touch with the needs and realities on the ground, but also to communicate about all the incredible work that CMEP is doing in the Middle East and in the US.

Communications

We saw CMEP mentioned 49 times in the media from outlets such as Salt Lake Tribune, National Catholic Reporter, Sojourners, Middle East Eye, The Christian Citizen, Baptist News Global, Mondoweiss, Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, Independent Catholic News, & Others. See all the places CMEP shows up in news at cmep.org/press/news



SOCIAL MEDIA

Our social media engagement continues to grow and helps us connect people to our mission

EDUCATE
ELEVATE
ADVOCATE

We know from social media that people see CMEP as a source of news (they re-share our bulletin articles and public statements) and as a place to learn from peacemakers in the Middle East (social media about our webinars leads to event attendance.)

REACH



5482 | 1% increase



187 | 3% increase



887 | 5% increase

International Human Rights Day



**"How Strong is the
Biblical Basis for
Christian Zionism?"**

Part 1

June 21

2:30-3:45 ET

Colin Chapman
Rev. Dr. Mae Cannon

Zoom link provided upon registration



**CHURCHES FOR
MIDDLE EAST PEACE**

Bulletin

Webinar Series: Conversations with Middle East Christians



Rev. Colin
Chapman



Mondays:

July 17, 24 & August 7, 14

Rev. Colin Chapman will speak with Christian leaders from Iraq, Lebanon, Israel/Palestine, and Egypt, discussing the intersection between political context and personal faith. Learn about the work Christians are doing to address various issues present in these countries, and how Christians outside of these countries may still have a role to play.

cmep.org/events



- 3 CMEP member communions were represented in our Prayers 4 Peace (P4P) Blog:
 - The Episcopal Church (Reverend William B. Lane, 6 Sep 2023)
 - Alliance of Baptists (4 Jan 2023), (Allison Tanner, 19 Jan 2022)
 - Community of Christ (Andrew Bolton & Steve Kellogg, 2 Nov 2022)



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Video Updates

Watch our monthly updates about what is happening in the Middle East. Follow us on social media to receive these videos when they are released.



June 2023:



Our Middle East Fellow, Lauren Draper, discusses the continued pursuit of justice for the Palestinian-American journalist, Shireen Abu Akleh, killed in the West Bank by the IDF one year ago.

April 2023:



On April 8th, CMEP released the following video regarding the violent escalations which occurred during the month of Pesach, Ramadan, and Easter:



Then, on April 13th, CMEP released a further update regarding the escalations:

March 2023:

VIDEO

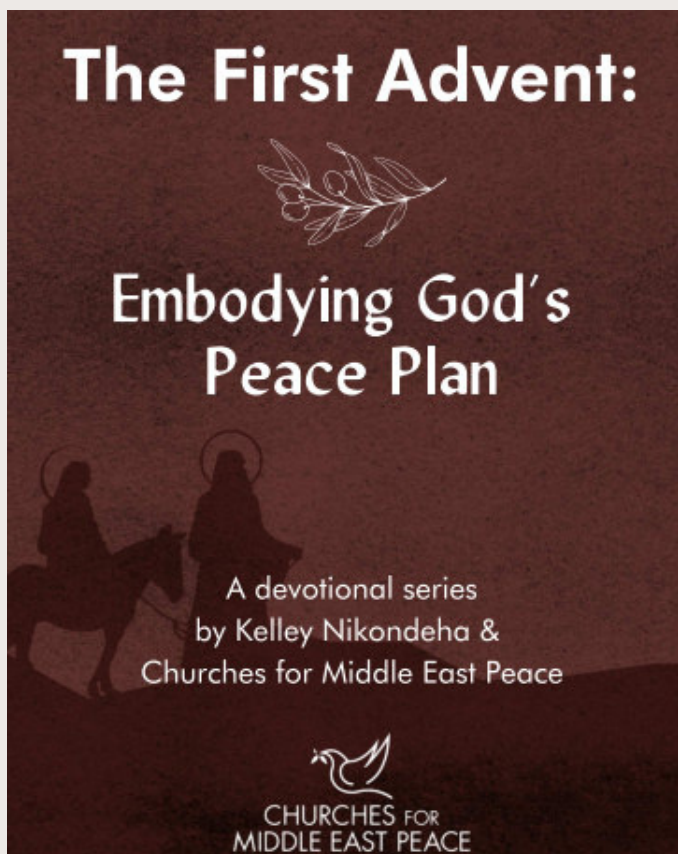
CMEP.org now has a dedicated page for video updates.

Starting February 2023, our Middle East team worked to create more video content to update on pressing events in the Middle East, including two April updates about the escalating violence regarding Al Aqsa Mosque compound during Ramadan.

As of October 2024, these updates are now daily.

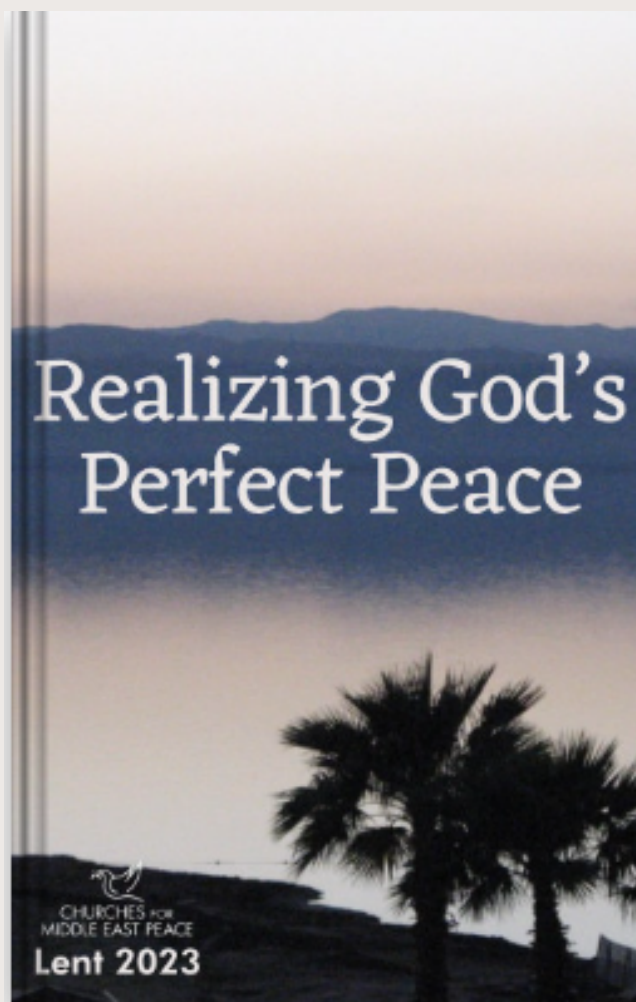


Seasonal Prayer Guides for Advent & Lent



CMEP is pleased to have partnered with author Kelley Nikondeha to create a devotional series entitled "The First Advent: Embodying God's Peace Plan" that is available for purchase for you or your church group. This devotional book contains devotionals for each Sunday of Advent, including Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, as well as Alternative Advent Practices written by members of CMEP's staff.

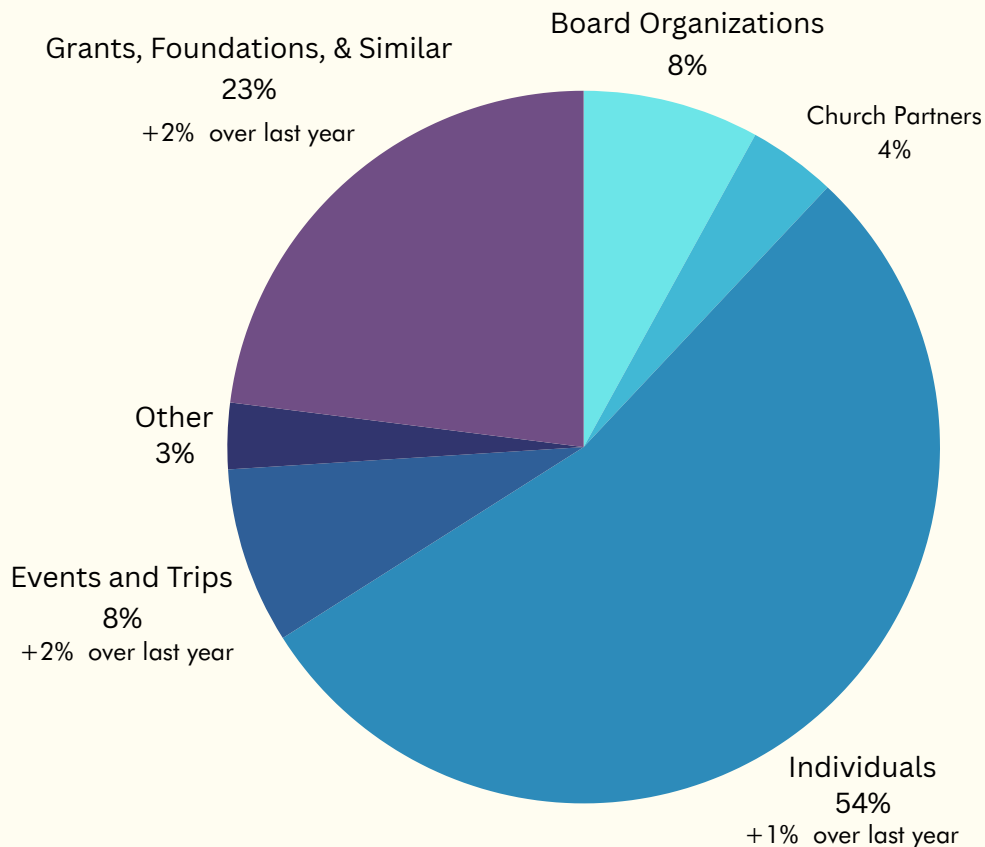
We produced Lenten devotional series entitled "Realizing God's Perfect Peace" which is available for purchase for you or your church group. This devotional book contains spiritual practices and reflections written by our staff for Ash Wednesday, each Sunday of Lent, and each day of Holy Week. Over 100 people utilized our first ever Lent Booklet.



*purchase these and other CMEP books at
<https://bit.ly/CMEPbooklets>*

THE FINANCIAL REPORT

INCOME SOURCES DURING THE 2023 FISCAL YEAR



GRANTS RECEIVED

- \$5,000 for the And Still We Rise Program.
- \$5,000 for creating a podcast focused on equipping young leaders.
- \$72,650 for education to promote peace and justice in the Middle East

You've most likely heard us say this before. We believe that by working together: Justice can prevail. Peace is possible. CMEP is grateful for every penny and every prayer given toward our mission. Thank you for your part in seeking justice and peace.

SUPPORT THE WORK OF CMEP.
Make a donation at cmep.org/donate

Board Highlights



The Northern Province
Moravian Church in America

We were delighted to celebrate the Summer 2023 unanimous passage of the 'Expanding and Developing the Moravian Church, Northern Province's Relationship with Churches for Middle East Peace report which was led by CMEP board Member Sue Koenig. We are so grateful for the support of our board members and their organizations.



CMEP Senior Director of Advocacy and Government Relations, Kyle Cristofalo, and CMEP Board Member, Nikki Toyama-Szeto, Executive Director of Christians for Social Action, attend the inaugural event for the redevelopment of Jesus' Baptismal site in Jordan. In December 2022, the Jordanian government, supported by King Abdullah, launched a program aimed at expanding the area around Jesus' Baptismal site to create space for additional pilgrims to visit and connect spiritually with fellow Christians.

CMEP'S BOARD MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES

as of March 2024

- 1. Alliance of Baptists: Katherine Metres Akbar**
- 2. American Baptist Churches, USA: Rev. William T. Young, IV**
- 3. American Friends Service Committee: Jennifer Bing**
- 4. Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of North America: Fr. Thomas Zain**
- 5. Armenian Orthodox Church: Archbishop Vicken Aykazian**
- 6. Catholic Relief Services, observer**
- 7. Christian Church (Disciples of Christ): Peter Makari**
- 8. Christians for Social Action: Nikki Toyama-Szeto**
- 9. Christian Reformed Church: David Zigterman**
- 10. Church of the Brethren: Rev. Nate Hosler, Ph.D.**
- 11. Church World Service: George Devendorf**
- 12. Community of Christ: Steve Kellogg**
- 13. The Episcopal Church: Paul Feheley**
- 14. Evangelical Covenant Church: Erikka Hedberg**
- 15. Evangelicals 4 Justice: Dr. Andrea Smith**
- 16. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: Dennis Frado**
- 17. Franciscan Friars (OFM): Russ Testa**
- 18. Friends Committee on National Legislation: Hassan El-Tayyab**
- 19. Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America**
- 20. Lott Carey Foreign Missionary Society: Rev. Emmett Dunn**
- 21. Maryknoll Office for Global Concern: Susan Gunn**
- 22. Moravian Church in America: Sue Koenig**
- 23. National Council of Churches: Tony Kireopoulos**
- 24. Presbyterian Church, USA: Catherine Gordon**
- 25. Reformed Church in America: Laura Osborne**
- 26. Unitarian Universalist Association**
- 27. United Church of Christ: Peter Makari**
- 28. United Methodist Church, General Board of Church & Society: Colleen Moore**
- 29. United Methodist Church, General Board of Global Ministries: David Wildman**
- 30. United Methodist Church, United Methodist Women**
- 31. U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, observer**

NEW TO CMEP'S BOARD SINCE SEPTEMBER 2023:

- 32. New Board Organization: Progressive National Baptist Convention, Rev. Tyrone Pitts**
- 33. New Board Organization: Mennonite Central Committee USA, Zachary Murray**

Our work since October 7, 2023

Read the [Stand in the G.A.P. Report](#) to learn more about the efforts of Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) since October 7, 2023.





Working Together: Justice can prevail. Peace is possible.

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