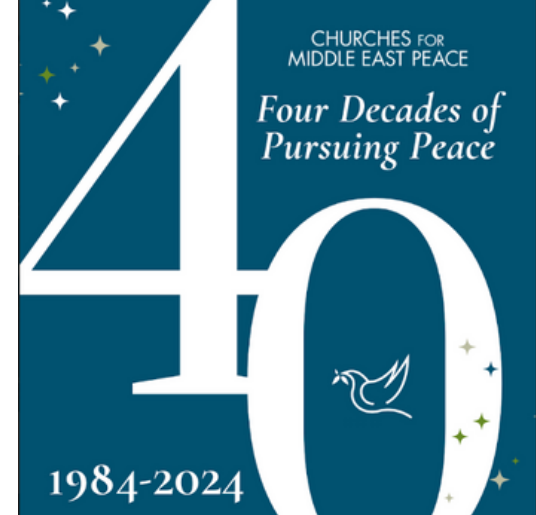


Our 40th year
working,
praying,
educating,
advocating,
& believing:
peace is
possible.
justice will
prevail.

Annual Report | Sept 2023–August 2024
Churches for Middle East Peace



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For 40 years CMEP has been working for peace and justice in the Middle East. Our work has been focused on educating U.S. Christians on the realities in the Middle East, elevating Middle Eastern Peacemakers, and advocating for just U.S. policy. Since October 7th we have leaned in to these callings and have been working non-stop in the fervent hope that there will be a comprehensive bilateral ceasefire, that the captives will be free, that humanitarian needs will be met, and that the root causes we've been focusing on for four decades will finally be addressed in a way that means our work won't be necessary for another 40 years.

This report focuses on our work during the Program Year 2023-2024, which began shortly before the attacks on October 7, 2023.

We invite you to join us in believing that peace is possible and justice will prevail.

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Providing opportunities to learn about the Middle East with a holistic approach to advocating for peace.

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Elevating diverse voices who are advocating for equality, security, & human rights for all people in the Middle East.

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Advocating for just U.S. policies in the Middle East by contacting members of Congress, participating in Government meetings, & attending Advocacy Summits.

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STAND IN THE G.A.P.

GIVE. ACT. PRAY.



Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon
Executive Director






The 2023–2024 Program Year was a time of intense focus on the importance of our work and the critical life-saving task of ending violence. Our priorities this year as we called on everyone to stand in the GAP (Give. Act. Pray.) were:

- Comprehensive Bilateral Ceasefire
- Setting the captives free
- Demilitarization – stopping U.S. arms to Israel
- Humanitarian Aid
- Restoration of UNRWA funding
- Address the root cause of the conflict

I have provided a daily video update on the news from the Middle East, particularly as it relates to Church communities, every single day since October 7, 2023. We have literally not stopped working for peace and justice. We truly believe that peace is possible and justice will prevail. We will not stop working. As we reflect on the work of the past year and the work ahead of us, we are committed to the mission to mobilize US Christians to embrace a holistic perspective and to be advocates of equality, human rights, security, and justice for Israelis, Palestinians, and all people of the Middle East.

As you review our work from this past program year, we invite you to join us in standing in the GAP.

–Mae

GIVE	ACT	PRAY
 Partner With Us	 Weekly Briefings	 Pray With Us Weekly
 Donate Now	 Call Your Congressperson	 Read Prayers4Peace

educate

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Traveling & Educating

We have travelled from coast to coast speaking at churches, universities, and with communities about the importance of peace and justice. Our travel schedule was broken up into two large focuses over the past program year. In addition, we hosted multiple weekly virtual events. You'll see more details about each of these in the following pages.

Fall 2023 Regional Events

Boston | Seattle | Los Angeles | Phoenix | Milwaukee | Chicago | Atlanta
| Grand Rapids | New York City | Boston | Upstate NY | D.C. | Notre Dame

Spring 2024 Pilgrimage to Peace

New York | New Jersey | Illinois | North Carolina

Virtual, Hybrid, & Regional Events

Weekly Prayer Time and News Briefings | Live from Jerusalem services
| Educational Webinars | Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimages

A Time to Pray

At the White House | From Jerusalem | Advent Reflections & Prayer Chains
| Weekly Zoom Gatherings

CMEP WEEKLY EVENTS



Praying for Peace

Wednesdays 12:30 - 1 pm ET

Weekly Briefings

Thursdays 10 - 10:30 pm ET

*I rise before dawn and cry for help;
I have put my hope in your word.*
Psalm 119:147 (NIV)



LIVE FROM JERUSALEM

January 14th, 2024

Ceasefire Prayer Service

Christmas Ceasefire Service

December 11
6:00 PM EST

The New York Ave Presbyterian Church
1313 New York Avenue NW
Washington, D.C.

Christ in the Rubble

A LITURGY OF LAMENT

LIVE FROM BETHLEHEM

INCLUDING A SERMON BY
REV. DR. MUNTHUR ISAAC

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23

6PM IN BETHLEHEM (11AM ET / 8AM PT)

ORGANIZED BY



JULY 24

Prayer for Justice and Peace at Netanyahu Address

Joint Prayer Service

LOCATION:

Friends Committee on National Legislation
245 2nd Street NE
Washington, DC 20002



**HOLY WEEK
WITH GAZA**

EASTER VIGIL

Zoom | Saturday, March 30

9pm East Jerusalem/Palestine 3pm EST



With sermon from
Rev. Munther Isaac

A sampling of our numerous in-person, virtual, and hybrid events. Visit cme.org/events for upcoming opportunities.

Boston, Mass | Oct 2023

CMEP was already scheduled to be in Boston in mid-October 2023 to speak with churches and universities. After the events of October 7th, we were positioned to immediately begin engaging people in our calls for peace and justice.



Faith in Action: Jewish, Christian, & Muslim Solidarity for Just Peace in Times of Conflict

On October 18th, CMEP Executive Director Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon spoke as a panelist at Harvard Religion and Public Life for the event "Faith in Action: Jewish, Christian, & Muslim Solidarity for Just Peace in Times of Conflict" at Harvard Divinity School. The event, which was attended by approximately 50 Harvard students and community members, examined how three scholar-practitioners fuse their religious convictions, academic pursuits, and calls to social justice, peacebuilding and Palestinian liberation. Rev. Dr. Cannon was joined by Dr. Atalia Omer, Professor of Religion, Conflict, and Peace Studies at Notre Dame's Kroc Institute of Peace and Dr. Hussein Rashid, Assistant Dean for Religion and Public Life at Harvard Divinity School. The panel was moderated by Dr. Diane Moore, Direction and Associate Dean for Religion and Public Life at Harvard Divinity School.

October 15, 2023
A Guest Sermon

by Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon
First Church in Cambridge, UCC



On October 18th, CMEP Executive Director Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon performed the morning prayers at Memorial Church in Harvard Yard. The 20-minute daily prayer service is Harvard's longest standing tradition, and garners approximately 40 attendees each morning, including students, faculty, staff, and others in the Harvard community. [Listen here.](#)

Father Drew Christiansen Holy Land Lecture Series

The Father Drew Christiansen Holy Land Lecture Series brings Christian leaders and scholars from the Holy Land to share firsthand updates, insights, theological reflections, and a much needed (and often unheard) perspective on today's Christian situation in the Land of Jesus' birth. Hosted by Churches for Middle East Peace's (CMEP) Catholic Advisory Council (CAC), the lecture series promotes education and advocacy among American Catholics and other Christians about realities in the Holy Land while promoting U.S. policies that contribute toward the need for a just and lasting peace.



His Beatitude Michel Sabbah (r) pictured with Fr. Drew Christiansen (l) and CMEP Catholic Advisory Chair, Sir Jeffery Abood.

Fr. Drew Christiansen S. J. Lecture Series
The Second of two full lectures in honor of the late Fr. Drew Christiansen, S.J.

Dr. Bernard Sabella
Professor Emeritus, Bethlehem University in the Holy Land

Thursday, November 16, 2023
4:30 pm
Eck Visitor Center Auditorium
A light reception will follow

Fr. Drew Christiansen, S.J. Lectures: Israel/Palestine: Recent Developments, Difficulties Ahead // Kroc Institut...

The University of Notre Dame's Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies is one of the world's leading centers for the study of the causes of violent conflict and strategies for sustainable peace.

Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies / Nov 16, 2023

November 2023 brought our second annual Fr. Drew Christiansen Holy Land Lecture, Series.

Rev. Aune Carlson, CMEP's then Director of Operations and Communication, participated on a panel with Dr. Bernard Sabella and Sir Jeff Abood at Notre Dame University. This portion of the series was co-sponsored by the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, the Liu Institute for Asia and Asian Studies, and the Catholic Peacebuilding Network along with Churches for Middle East Peace and the Bethlehem University Foundation.

Nov 13, 2023 - Israel-Palestine: Recent Developments & Difficulties Ahead

Recent Developments & Difficulties Ahead

Featuring **Dr. Bernard Sabella**

Part of Fr. Drew Christiansen S.J. Holy Land National Lecture Series
Hosted by Churches for Middle East Peace

November 13, 2023
University of Scranton

This lecture was hosted by The University of Scranton's Office of Community Relations, Theology and Religious Studies Department, Political Science Department, Ellacuria Initiative and Peace and Justice Studies, together with: Churches for Middle East Peace Catholic Advisory Council.

CHURCHES FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE
THE UNIVERSITY OF SCRANTON
A JESUIT UNIVERSITY

Watch on YouTube

On November 13th, The University of Scranton hosted a program on "Israel-Palestine: Recent Developments & Difficulties Ahead" featuring Dr. Bernard Sabella, a Palestinian Catholic sociologist as part of a national lecture series in memory of the late Fr. Drew Christiansen S.J. who was dedicated to the preservation of the Palestinian Christian community, to interreligious dialogue, and a just and lasting peace in the Holy Land.

Nov 15, 2023 - Israel-Palestine: Recent Developments, Difficulties Ahead - Fr. Drew Lect...

Father Drew Christiansen Holy Land Lecture Series

Israel-Palestine: Recent Developments & Difficulties Ahead

Speakers: November 15

Sponsored by:

Mubeena Barbari
Rev. Elias D. Mallon
Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon

Watch on YouTube

Churches for Middle East Peace
Catholic Advisory Council of CMEP
Bethlehem University Foundation

On Wednesday, November 15 – CMEP's Executive Director hosted a Lecture online. Guests included: Palestinian Christian Nabeela Barbari, formerly of the National Security Staff and Department of Homeland Security and currently the Executive Vice President of OTHSolutions, Incorporated, a consulting firm supporting the national security community at the intersection of strategy, policy, and operations. Father Elias Mallon the Special Assistant to the President of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA). The conversation focused heavily on the current realities now more than a month into Israel's war against Hamas and the effects on Palestinian civilians in Gaza.

CMEP's outreach to college and early career adults | CMEP1835

CMEP's Catholic Advisory Council's breakout session at the Fall 2023 Ignatian Teach-In demonstrated the enthusiasm for engagement among young people. We had over 250 attendees and they had to move us to a bigger room to accommodate the interest, and it still wasn't big enough. The seats and floor were entirely full, and people had to be turned away at the door. The interest and enthusiasm of the young people who came encouraged our work.



On January 11th, 2024, CMEP Head of Advocacy, Kyle Cristofalo, and Programs and Outreach Manager, Destiny Magnett, met with a group of about 12 students from Columbia Theological Seminary at the PCUSA Office of Public Witness in DC. They spoke about CMEP's history and mission & work since October 7th, as well as their respective roles at CMEP and how they came to this work. PCUSA board representative Cathrine Gordon helped to facilitate the conversation and also offered words of wisdom about discernment in justice-centered ministry.

Pray without ceasing

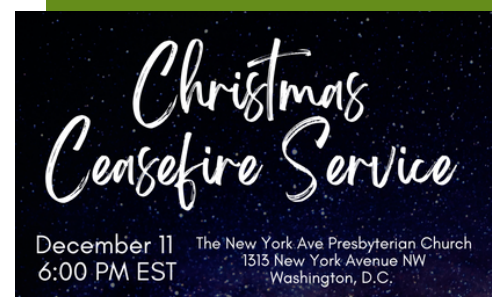
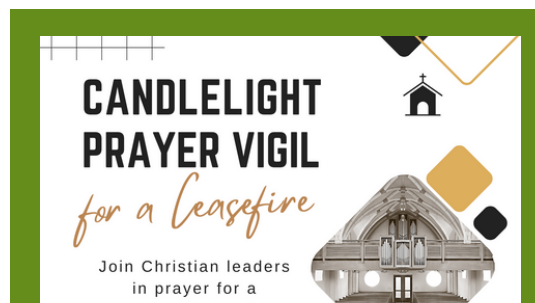


weekly prayer time

545 people registered
for weekly prayer

In addition to vigils, we have hosted an online prayer time every single Wednesday since October 7, 2023.

Our work is rooted in faith and we believe in the power of prayer. From numerous in-person and virtual prayer vigils, Ceasefire Christmas Prayer Chains, and the countless candles lit for the hope of peace, prayer has been a thread that has held us together this past year.

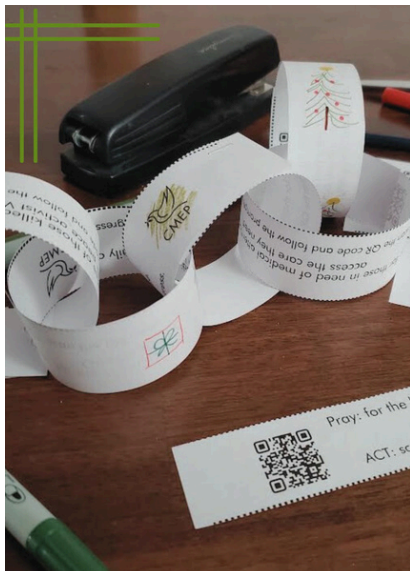


Alongside Red Letter Christians, CMEP helped raise \$100,000 for Bethlehem Bible College via the Advent service "Christ in the Rubble." This service was live-streamed from Bethlehem and featured Rev. Dr. Munther Issac – Palestinian Christian Pastor, theologian, and Dean of Bethlehem Bible College. The now-viral sermon was viewed by over 1 million people and included in coverage by *Time* and *Al Jazeera*.



Advent Ceasefire Chains

daily prayers and calls to congress in pursuit of peace



During Advent we observed the spiritual season of waiting and longing for the coming of the Prince of Peace, join us in our calls to make peace known.

Each day, individuals and churches offered a prayer and a call to Congress for a ceasefire, immediate and adequate humanitarian aid to Gaza, and a holistic response to the long-standing root causes of the conflict in Israel and Palestine.

100 individuals and churches downloaded CMEP's resource packet to create their own chain.

GAZA CEASEFIRE PILGRIMAGES

Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimages in

120+

different US cities.

20+ countries

7 continents



Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimages

Come, **walk with us.**

gazaceasefirepilgrimage.com

#GCCPilgrimages

Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimages



More than \$12,000 raised

for distribution to CMEP's peacebuilding programming in the U.S, Displaced Palestinians, and BBC Shepherd's Society for Gaza

LACKAWANNA COUNTY

Gaza cease-fire walk held in Scranton

More than two dozen people took part in a Gaza ceasefire walk on Sunday, calling for peace for Palestinians and Israelis.



CMEP Director of Operations Rev. Aune Carlson, right, with another member of the Grand Rapids GCP event on March 9, 2024



PILGRIMAGE
TO PEACE

Spring 2024

This year, our presentations gave particular attention to the events that have unfolded in the Holy Land since October 7, 2023. Following October 7th, CMEP has continuously called for a permanent bilateral ceasefire, the allowance of humanitarian aid into Gaza, and for the release of Israeli hostages and Palestinians held without due process. We recognize that current events are rapidly changing, and our speakers were prepared to discuss the most current news and updates from the ground. During our presentations, we discussed the importance of advocating for human rights in Israel and the Palestinian territories. The occupation has impacts on people living on all sides of the conflict including both Israelis and Palestinians. Understanding the geopolitics, social considerations, and other aspects of the conflict demands that we look beyond the headlines into the daily realities of people living on the ground.

We were grateful to speak to 971 people at 24 different events in 4 states over 10 days.



P2P April 2024

#NoWar2024P2P



Highlights: Spring 2024 P2P

Gary United Methodist Church - April 25, 2024



Gary United Methodist Church created space for robust conversation about geopolitics, theological challenges, and why the church has been stubborn in terms of engagement. It was a powerful evening, and the church looks forward to more opportunities to engage. 65 people were in attendance, and we discussed church partnership.

Wheaton Student gathering at Ewert home - April 25, 2024



The Ewert family near Wheaton College has been hosting students since 1978. Every Thursday night 50+ students gather - often to hear speakers, guests, or to pray and be in community together. Pilgrimage to Peace had the opportunity to spend some time with 75+ students where we talked about what students can do to "make for peace" - they were inspiring and hopeful! Students will lead the way.

Home Moravian Church - April 30, 2024



Home Moravian Church hosted P2P for a dinner and conversation with the broader Winston-Salem community. The dinner prior to the event, where Rev. Dr. Cannon, Destiny, and Jonathan shared intimate reflections on peacebuilding included 20 community leaders, including three generations of Moravian representatives to CMEP's board. The main event held in the church sanctuary included 40 community members and local leaders, and was a powerful witness and emotional witness to the Christian call to speak out for peace and against injustice.



North Carolina media coverage

Churches for Middle East Peace Representatives speak in Winston-Salem

Reverend Doctor Mae Elise Cannon, Executive Director for Churches for Middle East Peace, is on a speaking tour and stopped at Home Moravian Church tonight. "Ofte

WXLV / May 1



173 Churches downloaded Solidarity Sunday resources to plan their own event.



CMEP Social Media Manager Fayelle Ewuakye speaks at her church, Kirkwood Presbyterian Church USA in Kennesaw, GA on Solidarity Sunday.

Church Partners

CMEP Staff spoke at

40

churches in person across the U.S. including in Boston, Seattle, Illinois, North Carolina, Michigan, Georgia, New York, and more.

22

introductory meetings with potential church partners.

5

churches have purchased and used our curriculum on Israel/Palestine

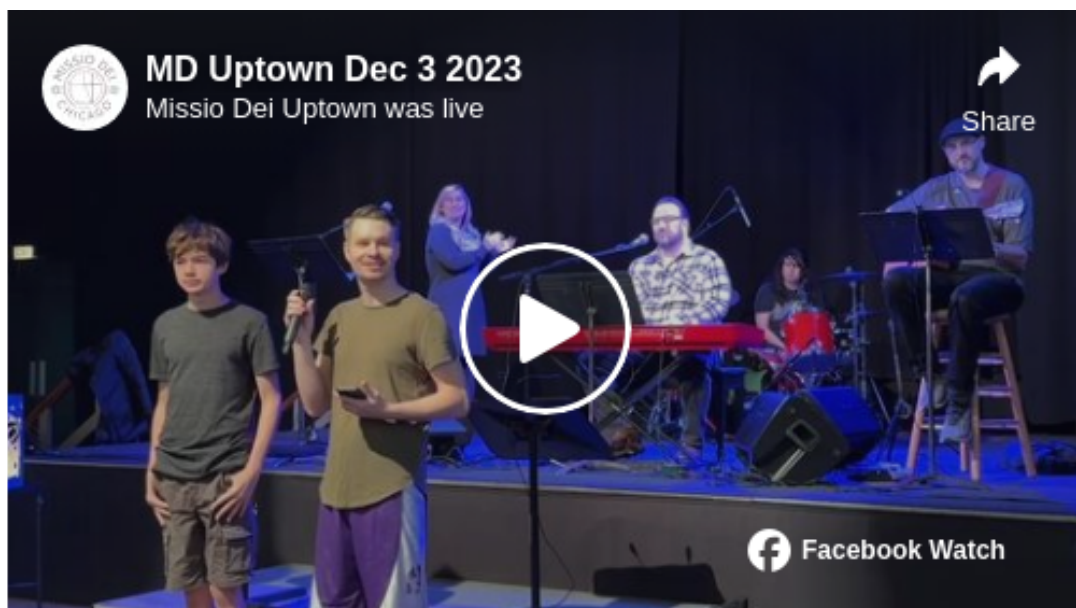
26

churches who made first time donations

church partner testimonial

Westminster Pres,
Wilmington, DE

Many thanks to everyone for their part in the Solidarity Sunday service this past Sunday! It was a wonderful service, bringing prayers and attention to the people of Gaza, the Middle East and the great need for Peace. We are grateful for all who were part of the planning and participation on Sunday Morning and to Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) for their coordination of Solidarity Sunday across the country. Our prayers continue for our brothers and sisters in Gaza, Palestine and the Middle East, for the war and violence to end, aid to reach the starving and injured people and for all to be free.



[recording of CMEP speaking event at a church in Chicago, Dec 2023](#)

elevate

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Executive Leaders Delegation

to Jordan, Israel, occupied Palestinian Territories, and Lebanon | January 2024

25+ high-level meetings during the delegation

5 Meetings with Heads of Churches in Jerusalem or their representatives

Met with staff from the Office of Palestinian affairs as well as staff from the US Embassy in Jerusalem and Jordan.



CMEP Executive Leaders Delegation on the Mount of Olives

6 CMEP Board Church communions and organizations represented by delegates



President of the Palestinian Authority Mahmoud Abbas met with the delegation. He expressed his appreciation for CMEP's work and thanked us profusely, specifically for CMEP and the American Christians who are calling for a ceasefire.



The delegation had the privilege of meeting with Jordanian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman H. Safadi to discuss political options toward a comprehensive ceasefire and negotiated peace agreements that will bring an end to the bombing of Gaza, and end to the occupation, and lasting peace.

[Read the full trip report by clicking here.](#)

The Delegates

Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon

Executive Director, Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP)

H.E Vicki Downey

Lieutenant of Honor of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem

Hassan El-Tayyab

Legislative Director for Middle East Policy, Friends Committee on National Legislation, CMEP board representative

Susan Gunn

Director of Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, CMEP board representative

Bishop Steven Kellogg

CMEP board representative, Community of Christ

Rev. Sue Koenig

CMEP board representative, Moravian Church in America

Bridget Moix

General Secretary, Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL)

Rev. Laura Osborne

CMEP board representative, Reformed Church in America (RCA)

Russell Testa

CMEP board representative, Franciscan Friars, and chair of CMEP Board

Delegation in the News

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) executive leaders traveled to the Middle East in January of 2024 and completed extensive visits with Patriarchs and Heads of Churches, pastors and local Christians, political leaders and heads of state, peace activists and human rights leaders in Israel, the occupied Palestinian territories, Jordan, and Lebanon. CMEP leaders advocated for an end to all violence and called for a comprehensive ceasefire, highlighting the massive number of deaths and demanding an end to the bombing and ground invasion and its effects on civilians in Gaza. CMEP also advocated for the immediate release of all hostages held by Hamas and other militant groups and the release of Palestinian political prisoners.

In addition, CMEP demanded immediate and adequate humanitarian access be granted to Gaza so that basic needs like water, food, electricity, and health care be provided and not utilized as leverage for political aims and as weapons of war.



Views from the Holy Land: Reflections and Call for Action

Monday, October 28, 2024 — Psalm 119:105–112 2 Samuel 19:31–20:26; John 10:22–33

Moravian Church Northern Province / Mar 5

[click to read](#)



[click to read](#)

Churches for Middle East Peace Visits the Holy Land

A delegation of U.S. Catholic and Protestant church representatives traveled to the Holy Land in January and share what they encountered.

[maryknollogc.org / jun 12](#)



In the presence of His Beatitude Patriarch Raphaël Bedros XXI Minassian

A delegation from Churches for Middle East Peace Visits the MECC General Secretariat in Beirut With the Blessing and in the presence of His Beatitude Patriarch Raphaël Bedros XXI Minassian, Catholicos of the...

The Middle East Council of Churches / Jan 25

[click to read](#)



As Gaza Death Toll Mounts, the Peace Lobby Fights for Influence in Washington

By Kate Kelly February 16, 2024

The Friends Committee, a Quaker lobbying group, has been pushing in Washington for a cease-fire, going up against more powerful and better-funded groups backing Israel.

The New York Times

[click to read](#)

Middle East Partners

The 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.



A CMEP delegation was in Jordan, Israel, and the West Bank in May to engage religious actors in peacebuilding. Rev. Dr. Mae spoke at the Christ at the Checkpoint conference at Bethlehem Bible College.

The 2023 International Religious Freedom (IRS) report featured CMEP's voice and data: "CMEP . . . said lack of protections for Christian practice or Christians themselves was forcing the remaining minority to consider fleeing the land."

2023 Report on International Religious Freedom

OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM
WWW.STATE.GOV

U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

West Bank and Gaza

West Bank and Gaza Strip residents are subject to the jurisdiction of separate authorities. Palestinians in the West Bank are subject to Jordanian and British Mandate statutes in effect before 1967, military...

United States Department of State / [click to read](#)



ASWR is a women’s empowerment initiative at CMEP that creates a safe space for Palestinian and international women to build community, invite transformation, and take action.

ASWR events include international webinars and events for local Palestinian women.

November 2, 2023 was the kickoff to And Still We Rise 2024. The webinar Introducing “And Still We Rise” 2024, designed to introduce ASWR, its history, and its mission, featured remarks from CMEP Executive Director, Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon, And Still We Rise Coordinator Tamar Haddad, and ASWR Leadership Team Member, Shireen Awwad Hilal, from Bethlehem Bible College.

On August 26, 2024 CMEP hosted a webinar titled Beyond the Headlines: Voices of Palestinian women in Journalism which featured voices of three courageous Palestinian women journalists: Rula Salameh, Faten Alwan, and Rana Abu Farha. All three offered powerful reflections on the power and importance of journalists working on the ground in Palestine/Israel, especially in the wake of the War on Gaza and violent escalations in the West Bank. The panel was moderated by CMEP’s Tamar Haddad. 17 people attended.

On March 8, 2024, celebrating International Women's Day, ASWR hosted an in-person Gathering titled Palestinian Woman Leaders and the Healing Journey at the Bethlehem Bible Collage. The gathering celebrated Palestinian women's leadership and fostered physical, mental, and spiritual healing in light of recent tragedies in Gaza and the West Bank. The gathering featured psychology expert, Sandreen Hilal.

On May 20, 2024, CMEP’s Executive Director met with the ASWR local Palestinian team and other Palestinian women leaders. The gathering including guided mediation and a devotion. New leadership team members were recruited in this gathering.



ASWR Summit

**And Still We Rise 2024
Elevating Women Leaders
Promoting Peace
in the Middle East
Jericho, Palestine
November 15-17, 2024**

cmepl.org/werise2024

**ASWR includes a group travel
experience to the Holy Land.
If you would like to plan future
travel with CMEP, please visit**

cmepl.org/trips



And Still We Rise (ASWR) 2024 PODCAST

ChurchesforMEP · Podcast
6 episodes Last updated on Apr 4, 2024

▶ Play all

Limited series And Still We Rise 2024 podcast

Elevating Women Leaders Promoting Peace in
the Middle East

Engaging American and Palestinian women from diverse
age groups and backgrounds, with special attention to
current events since October 7th.

12 Female Activists

6 episodes

[Listen on YouTube](#)



52 Connections

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



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.

advocate

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Take Action Now

Sign CMEP's current action alerts and share them with your community to take action in seconds.

Current Action Alerts:

— CALL TO DEMAND A CEASEFIRE

Call your congressional offices and demand a ceasefire. Right now members of Congress need to hear from constituents in support of a ceasefire in Israel/Palestine. As the situation on the ground continues to deteriorate, a ceasefire is desperately needed to ensure there is no further loss of life. Call your members of Congress and let them know you support a ceasefire, the release of civilian hostages, and the immediate and adequate distribution of humanitarian aid in Gaza.

— HRES 786 TO END CURRENT VIOLENCE AND FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Each day without a ceasefire will just bring more suffering, pain, and death to civilians in Israel/Palestine. Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) is deeply saddened by the continued violence, bloodshed, and unfathomable level of grief felt by the many Israelis and Palestinians who have lost friends and loved ones. A protracted Israeli military offensive, including a possible ground invasion, could result in considerably more deaths and a broader regional war. CMEP denounces all forms of violence in this conflict and calls for an immediate ceasefire.

— SUPPORT CEASEFIRE AND DE-ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) laments the ongoing violence in Gaza and Israel, which began on Saturday, October 7th. CMEP condemns all acts of violence against civilians. It is critical that members of Congress hear from their constituents who support a de-escalation of violence and for restraint from all parties. It is incumbent that Congress not support measures that will only intensify the violence.

— HR 3477 THE JUSTICE FOR SHIREEN ACT JULY 2023

While the FBI engages in a criminal investigation, the updated HR 3477 will ensure an important level of transparency for Congress, Shireen Abu Akleh's family, and the American public. It is important that we continue to push for both accountability and transparency as the US investigates this killing. When he was in the region last summer, President Biden called for a "full and transparent accounting" of the death of Shireen Abu Akleh. The Justice for Shireen Act will provide that accounting.

— HR 3103 THE PALESTINIAN CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ACT

With the rise of violence in the West Bank growing by the day under the new Israeli government, it is critical members of Congress join Rep. McCollum and sponsor HR 3103. Congress must ensure U.S. taxpayer dollars are not used to violate Palestinian human rights and further annex Palestinian land in the West Bank. Such actions—which only exacerbate the conflict—should not be funded with assistance from the U.S. government.



Action Alerts

Sign CMEP's current action alerts and share them with your community to take action in seconds.



Churches for Middle East Peace

Nicole Anderson Cobb, then CMEP Illinois Regional Coordinator, took part in February Calls For Ceasefire at Rep. Budzinski's Office in Illinois. We encourage you to raise your voice in whatever way you can to call for a ceasefire NOW.

Palestinian Delegation to DC

In November, CMEP partnered with the Middle East Democracy Center, the Tahrir Institute, and Telos to host Palestinian leaders, Rev. Munther Isaac, Rev. Jack Sara, and Tamar Haddad. While in DC, the delegation had several meetings with Congressional offices, the White House, and State Department to advocate for an immediate and durable ceasefire. In addition, they spoke at a public prayer vigil hosted on Capitol Hill and were interviewed by several media outlets including the BBC and NPR



Rev. Dr. Jack Sara (left), Rev. Dr. Munther Isaac, and Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon at White House on November 28, 2023.

Rev. Dr. Munther Isaac (left), Tamar Haddad (second from right), and Rev. Dr. Jack Sara



40th Anniversary Advocacy Summit



2024 Advocacy Summit Four Decades of Pursuing Peace

**CMEP's 40th Anniversary Dinner
& Advocacy Summit
Washington, D.C.
April 9-11, 2024**

From Tuesday, April 9th-Thursday, April 11th Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) hosted our 40th Anniversary Advocacy Summit: Four Decades of Pursuing Peace. Over the three-day Summit, we reflected on CMEP's witness through the years and reaffirmed our commitment to continuing to educate U.S. Christians on the realities in the Middle East, elevate the voices of local peacemakers, and advocate for a just and lasting end to conflicts in the region.

"My friends in Gaza who lost their homes and found a way to survive without water, food, and medicine teach me resilience and compel me to advocate for their fundamental human rights."



Tamar Haddad

"Our response against injustice, well, we refuse to act violently. We refuse to hate. We are people created in the image of God, not to hate each other."



Daoud Nassar

"Hope is vision in action today. Hope is living the reality and yet investing in a different one."



Dr. Mitri Raheb

"People in the Holy Land feel forsaken, feel abandoned by the church globally. And Jesus stands at odds with that and is saying, 'If everyone abandoned you, I will be with you.'"



Rev. Jack Sara

"We must pressure decision-makers and continue to tell our story, making sure that the world knows what is going on. And we must continue to pray to our Lord to stop the genocide against Gaza."



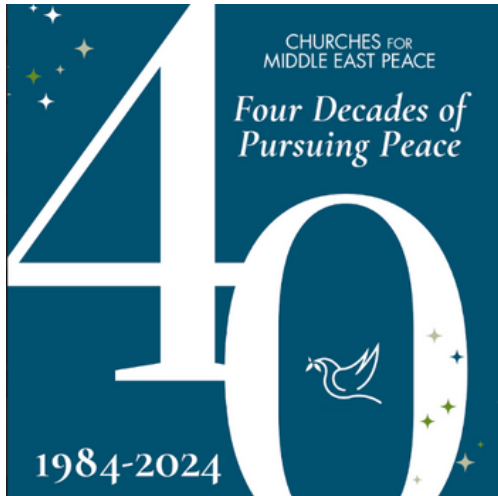
Shireen Awwad Hilal

"Our faith compels us to lift up this moral call for a ceasefire. We invite any who share this conviction to join people of faith around the world who are praying and taking action for peace."



Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon

Anniversary Dinner: April 9



On Tuesday, April 9th, CMEP hosted more than 130 people for a dinner reflecting on four decades of pursuing peace. The event, which was held at the National Union Building in Washington, DC, featured remarks from a number of CMEP's longtime friends and supporters, including Executive Director Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon, former (and first!) Executive Director Corinne Whitlatch, who joined via video, Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb, Rev. Dr. Jack Sara, and Shireen Awwad Hilal. Representatives from CMEP's board—Susan Gunn, Dennis Frado, Joyce Ajlouny, Russ Testa, and Rev. Dr. Tyrone Pitts—reflected on the ways in which they have valued their partnership with CMEP over the years. We were delighted to have a wide array of CMEP supporters and friends, including several regional bishops and executive leaders from CMEP member communions, current and former board representatives, leadership council members, regional coordinators, and local supporters. The dinner set a positive tone for the rest of the three-day Summit.



Left: Dinner attendees listen to a message from CMEP's First Executive Director, Corinne Whitlatch



Right: Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb, Omar Shaban, and Shireen Awwad Hilal speak to those gathered.

Summit Programming: April 10

The Summit's formal programming began Wednesday, April 10th with a day of keynote speakers, panels, and updates from CMEP staff. The program was co-facilitated by Destiny Magnett, CMEP's Programs and Outreach Manager, and Tamar Haddad, CMEP's And Still We Rise Coordinator. On Capitol Hill, 160 participants from across the country gathered to receive updates on CMEP's work, hear from Palestinian Christian leaders and Middle East policy experts, and prepare for advocacy meetings with their Congressional offices. We were honored to have Palestinian Christian leaders with us: Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb (Dar Al Kalima University), Rev. Dr. Jack Sara (Bethlehem Bible College), Shireen Awwad Hilal (Bethlehem Bible College), and Daoud Nassar (Tent of Nations). Through sharing their personal Palestinian experiences, each of the Palestinian speakers inspired the attendees to remain committed to using their voices to advocate for peace and an end to all violence.

Our April 10th programming also included an advocacy panel with Bill Deere (UNRWA), Lara Friedman (FMEP), and Jim Zogby (Arab American Institute), moderated by CMEP Board member David Wildman (The United Methodist Church, General Board of Global Missions). The panelists provided expert analysis on U.S. policy on Israel/Palestine since October 7th and insights on the challenging humanitarian crisis in Gaza. In addition to hearing from some of CMEP's external partners, Executive Director, Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon, and Russ Testa, Chair of the CMEP Board, gave an update on our progress throughout the years with a special focus on achievements post-October 7th. Finally, CMEP board member Hassan El-Tayyeb (Friends Committee on National Legislation) and CMEP's Senior Director of Advocacy and Government Relations, Kyle Cristofalo, led training for attendees on effective advocacy for those meeting with their congressional offices the following day.



Advocacy Day: April 11



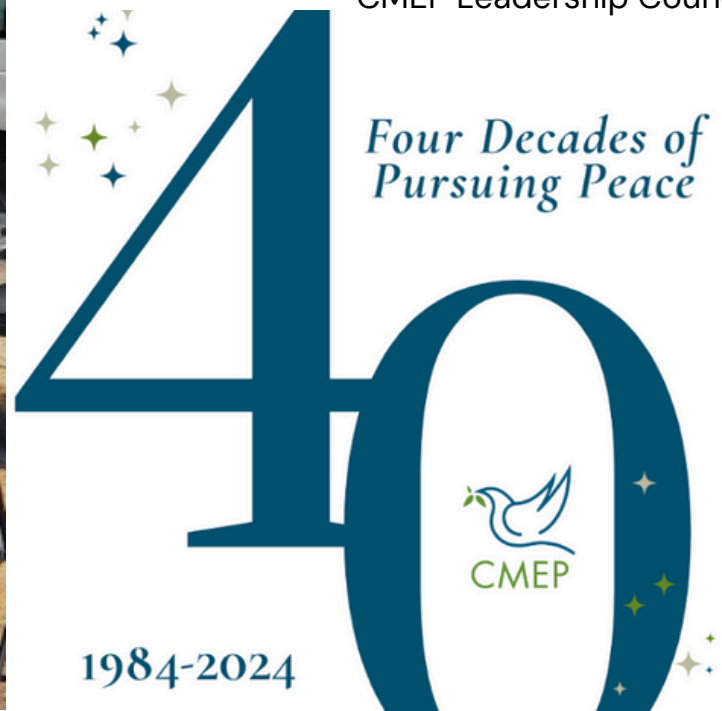
On Thursday, April 11th, attendees met with more than 60 congressional offices across 18 states and the District of Columbia. During the meetings, summit attendees advocated for a bilateral and comprehensive ceasefire, for the release of hostages held in Gaza and Palestinian prisoners held without due process, for adequate and immediate humanitarian assistance, demilitarization, and addressing the core causes of the conflict. Attendees shared personal stories regarding their commitment to pursuing peace as well as anecdotes shared during the prior days of the Summit.

The Summit concluded on April 11th with a public prayer vigil overlooking the Capitol Building in Washington, DC.. The vigil featured remarks from CMEP staff, leadership council members, and Executive Director, Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon. Despite a bit of rain, the vigil was a tremendously meaningful way to conclude a day of more than 60 CMEP meetings on the Hill and centered participants in the ongoing work for peace and justice.



"The experience in DC was powerful on many levels... But what made our presence in DC particularly distinctive was its deep spiritual rootedness – in the prayers that sustained us, the symbols we drew upon, the authority we claimed – especially in a town in which religious proclamations can ring hollow – used to offer veneer to violent, exclusionary, imperial interests."

– Rev. Susie Hayward,
CMEP Leadership Council



communicate

Annual Report | Sept 2023–August 2024
Churches for Middle East Peace



Working Together: Justice can Prevail.
Peace is Possible.

GET INVOLVED

LEARN MORE

website refresh visit cmep.org

LEARN ABOUT

Issues In The Middle East

Learn about some of the issues facing the Middle East—both the background and current realities.

Aid & Assistance: Gaza

The Gaza Strip is one of the most densely populated places on the planet. It is home to more than two million Palestinians living within a stretch of territory 32 miles long by seven miles wide. Since 1967, this territory has been under Israeli military occupation. [Read More](#)

Aid & Assistance: Humanitarian Aid

Broader Middle East: Covid 19 & the Middle East

Broader Middle East: Egypt

Human Rights: Child Detention

Since the West Bank is a part of the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt) and has not been annexed by Israel, all criminal cases there—including those involving juveniles—fall under the jurisdiction of Israeli military law. In principle, military courts comply with the obligations of an occupying power under international law. [Read More](#)

Human Rights: Water Insecurity

Holistic Peace Building: Conflict Overview

Holistic Peace Building: Jerusalem

LEARN MORE

74 Statements & Press Releases

We have repeatedly called for comprehensive bilateral ceasefire and for the release of hostages and prisoners; for demilitarization and stopping arms to Israel; for humanitarian aid and restoration of UNRWA funding, and to address the root causes to prevent even more death and despair in the future. When it's time to speak, CMEP is speaking up to all who will listen. We addressed statements and letters to the the press, to the American Christian Community, to politicians, and to a global community working for justice.

Public Statements & Letters

These Statements & Letters are available for you to share with others.
Please simply link back to this page.

ALLCALLS FOR JUSTICECALLS FOR PEACECHRISTIAN SUSTAINABILITYHUMANITARIAN AIDWRITTEN BY CMEP

ALL2024202320222021202020192018201520142013

JUL 8, 2024

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) Stands with the Diocese of Jerusalem in Expressing Dismay at the Closure of Al Ahli Arab Anglican Hospital in Gaza

The closure of the hospital, the evacuation, and the declaration of the area as a red zone, in addition to the firing upon the ambulance, are all unacceptable violations of humanitarian international law. International law demands that health establishments and units, including hospitals, should not be attacked. In addition, the already vulnerable, the wounded and the sick, and those seeking shelter should not be placed in further harm or jeopardy.

CMEP

APR 17, 2024

International Community Urged to

JUN 21, 2024

CMEP affirms The Episcopal Church statement on Layan Nasir and detained Palestinians.

The Episcopal Church is one of the founding members of CMEP's 30-plus member communions committed to pursuing an end to the Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. As the war on Gaza continues, we must not ignore the ongoing pressures Palestinians continue to face in other parts of the occupied Palestinian territories. CMEP stands with The Episcopal Church in advocating for the release of Layan Nasir, the Palestinian Christian woman who continues to be held unjustly in Israeli prison. We also call for an immediate end to the war on Gaza and for an immediate and sustained ceasefire, full humanitarian access, and the release of all hostages.

CMEP

MAY 28, 2024

Joint Statement: NGOs demand UN Security Council enforce ICJ orders on Israel's actions in Rafah.

The undersigned NGOs urgently call on all permanent and elected members of the UN Security Council to enforce the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) orders regarding Israel's actions in Rafah, Gaza. Immediate action is required to uphold international law and ensure the Government of Israel meets its obligations as mandated by the ICJ.

CMEP

MAR 1, 2024

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) Joins the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem in Condemning Events Yesterday That Caused the Deaths of Civilians in

View all the letters, statements, and press releases at cmep.org/press-news

Page 36

Raising our collective voices as faith leaders

CMEP led the initiative to draft three “global letters” signed by church based leaders around the world and forwarded to their respective government officials.

MAY 2, 2024

Sign-On Letter from U.S. Catholics on Israel-Palestine.

In May 2024, when this letter is being released, we continue to plead for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza and adherence to international law by all parties. 71% of U.S. Catholics support a Gaza ceasefire, echoing the position of Pope Francis, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Society of Jesus, and other U.S. Catholic organizations and leaders. As of this letter's publication, over 34,000 Palestinians in Gaza-- the majority civilians--have been killed by Israel's military assault marked by indiscriminate bombing. We mourn each life lost. Tens of thousands more are severely injured without access to adequate medical care; half of Gazans are facing famine; and most have been displaced from their homes, 70% of which have been destroyed. We are also deeply concerned about the recent spike in attacks and killings of Palestinians in the West Bank by Israeli soldiers and settlers.

CMEP

MAR 26, 2024

In New Letter, 140+ Global Christian Leaders Call for Permanent Gaza Ceasefire, Halt of Arms Sales to Israel.

In a new letter released during Holy Week ahead of Easter, more than 140 Bishops and executive leaders from churches, denominations, and church-based organizations in the US and around the world call for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza, urge the US and other world powers to halt additional arms sales to Israel, and make clear that Israel, the US, and all countries must abide by Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. The letters' signers include a US Catholic Bishop, a Catholic Cardinal, the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the presiding bishop and primate of the Episcopal Church, an Anglican Dean, and many other notable figures from a wide range of churches, including Catholic, Lutheran, Mennonite, Quaker, and Evangelical leaders. CMEP has forwarded this critical letter directly President Biden and his team with this cover letter.

CMEP

JUL 23, 2024

July 2024 Global Bishops and Christian Leaders Letter

Prior to Netanyahu Congressional Speech, 200+ Global Bishops and Christian Leaders Call World Leaders to Institute a Permanent Gaza Ceasefire, Halt of Arms Sales to Israel, and Prevent Broader Regional War

And we signed on to dozens more in partnership with local leaders

CMEP In the News

The support of donors and funders allowed CMEP to amplify our media reach and the message that U.S. Christians demand a comprehensive ceasefire. In 2024, we saw coverage of this message for peace and justice in increasingly larger media platforms. One of our global letters was mentioned on more than 70 NPR stations.

CMEP was mentioned or quoted in, contributed to, or appeared in the below outlets and many more:



Mondoweiss



Save the Children®

The Washington Post



The Harvard Crimson

THE JERUSALEM POST



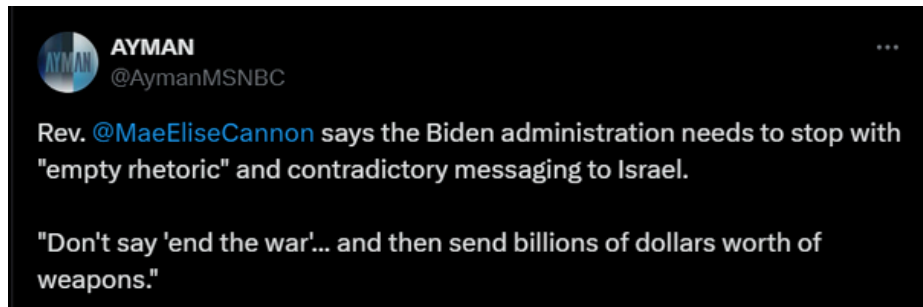
9 Christian Women Shaping the Church in 2024

These are peacemakers, academics, preachers, bakers, community leaders, podcasters, psychologists, and theologians all connected by their Christian faith and vision of a more just world.

Sojourners / Mar 7

519+ MEDIA MENTIONS

Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon was named as one of the women shaping the church by Sojourners Magazine



Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon was a guest on MSNBC in May 2024



The world was paying attention to what U.S. Christians were saying and supporting during the ongoing violence.

'The peace movement has failed': Why this U.S. evangelical wants to stop arming Israel

[Haaretz.com /](https://www.haaretz.com/) [click to read](#)

CMEP spoke up at every chance we got to call for a ceasefire, humanitarian aid, and the importance of addressing the root cause



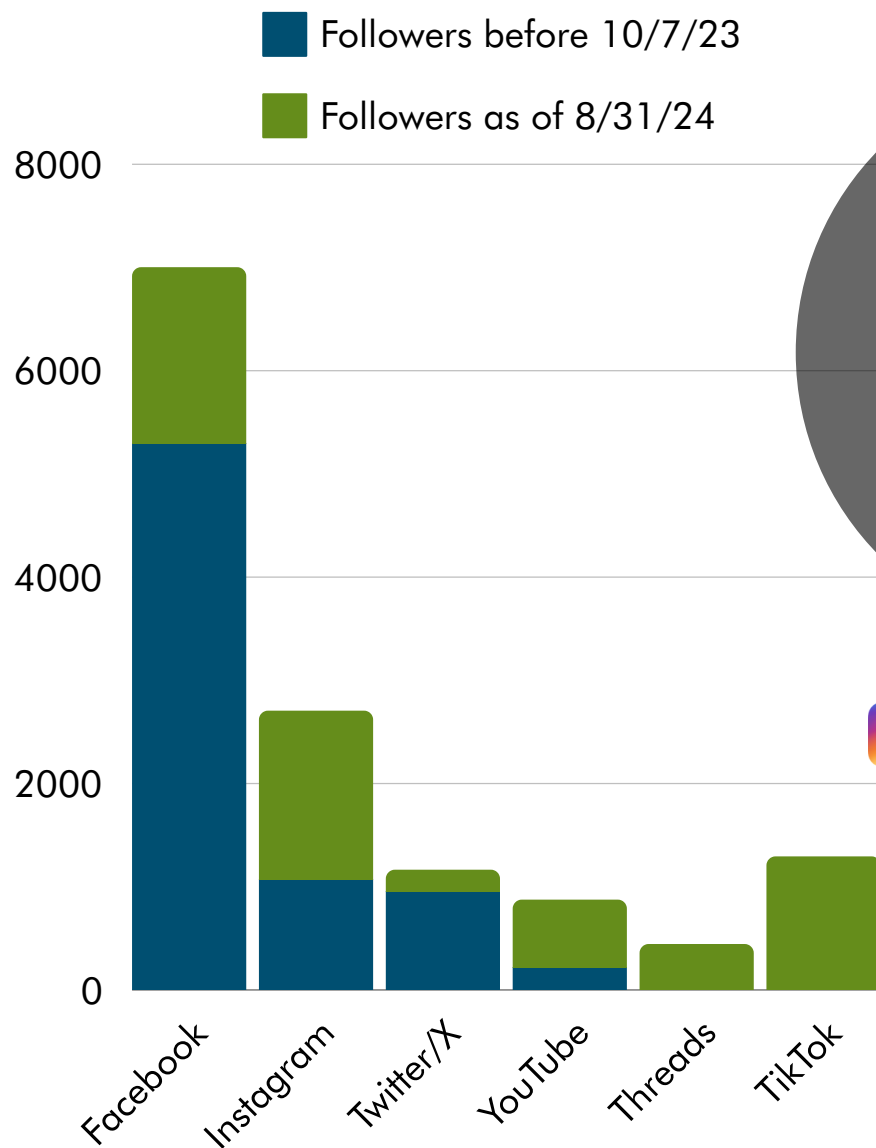
From the sidelines, some Christians in US strive to be peacemakers as Israel-Hamas war continues

While some U.S. Christians strongly support one side or the other, many who feel caught in the middle embrace their faith calling as peacemakers.

[click to read](#)

USA TODAY / Apr 30

Social Media



**Viewers have
watched 5k+
hours of our
videos**

41,410 YouTube views



@churchesforme

9,910

people had a first time
engagement with
CMEP

3,269

minutes of daily updates

981

minutes of
educational webinars

operate

Annual Report | Sept 2023–August 2024
Churches for Middle East Peace



staff | fellows | interns | volunteers

The full CMEP Team is made up of not only highly qualified, passionate, and innovative staff members but also bright Ambassador Warren Clark Fellows, dutiful interns, and volunteers as well as committed board members and an esteemed leadership council of prominent diplomats (retired), politicians, church leaders, academics, and business and media professionals with a particular interest and connection to the Middle East. We are grateful for each individual's experience, wisdom, and work on behalf of CMEP and peace.

We are also grateful for the wisdom and experience of our Leadership Council, chaired by Susan Hayward.

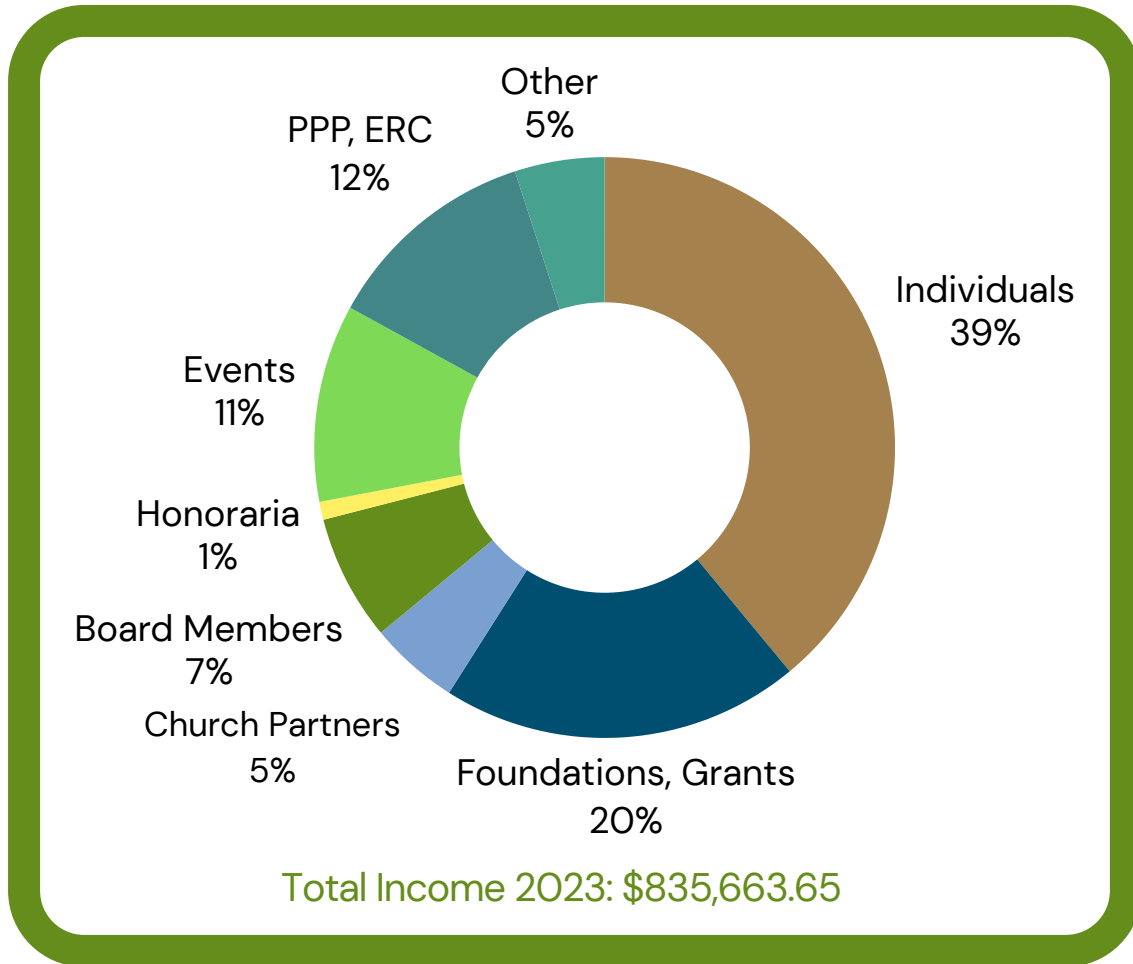
LEADERSHIP COUNCIL



Learn more about all the people who do the work of peace and justice at cmep.org/team

Support Raised

Numbers are based on Fiscal Year 2023



New Donors made up 37% of online donations during the 2023 Fiscal Year.

New Donors are on track to be 40% of our online giving in Fiscal Year 2024.

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. [Donate Here.](#)



Grants Received

During the 23–24 Program Year

\$35k

Anonymous

for the And Still We Rise (ASWR): Middle East Women's Empowerment Project.

\$10k

Bellevue Presbyterian Church (BelPres)

for Global Outreach Ministry Funding FY2024.

\$150k

El Hindi Foundation

for outreach to US Evangelicals.

\$2k

Gemmer Family Foundation

for the And Still We Rise (ASWR): Middle East Women's Empowerment Project.

\$35k

the Hassib Sabbagh Foundation

for general funding to help support our broad work engaging Evangelical leaders in leading their networks and congregations to action on behalf of peace and justice in the Middle East.

\$5k

Luce-AAR (granted to CMEP Staff)

for the And Still We Rise (ASWR): Middle East Women's Empowerment Project.

\$150k

Open Society Foundation

for CMEP to coordinate Christian advocacy to resolve the conflict in Palestine/Israel via rights-centered, long-term solutions.

\$5k

Rock Spring UCC SAM Grants

for general funding to help support our mission for peace in the Middle East.

CMEP'S BOARD MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES

as of August 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, observer
9. Christian Reformed Church
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, Katherine Wilkens
20. Lott Carey Foreign Missionary Society: Rev. Emmett Dunn
21. Maryknoll Office for Global Concern: Susan Gunn
22. Mennonite Central Committee USA, Zachary Murray
23. Moravian Church in America: Sue Koenig
24. National Council of Churches: Tony Kireopoulos
25. Pax Christi USA, Scott Wright
26. Presbyterian Church, USA: Catherine Gordon
27. Progressive National Baptist Convention, Rev. Tyrone Pitts
28. Reformed Church in America: Laura Osborne
29. Unitarian Universalist Association
30. United Church of Christ: Peter Makari
31. United Methodist Church, General Board of Church & Society: Colleen Moore
32. United Methodist Church, General Board of Global Ministries: David Wildman
33. United Methodist Church, United Methodist Women
34. U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, observer
35. H.E. Vicki Downey, independent member

NEW BOARD MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES SINCE SEPTEMBER 2023



PNBC

Progressive National Baptist Convention
Tyrone Pitts (October 2023)



**Mennonite
Central
Committee**

Mennonite Central Committee US
Zachary Murray (January 2024)



Pax Christi USA
Scott Wright (June 2024)



Independent member
Vicki Downey (July 2024)



Working Together: Justice can prevail. Peace is possible.

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