



**WORKING TOGETHER:**  
Justice Can Prevail. Peace Is  
Possible.

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Washington, D.C. - April 25, 2025**

**Media Contact:**

[media@cmep.org](mailto:media@cmep.org)

925-766-9050

**Churches for Middle East Peace Elevates the Statement of The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

Washington, D.C. – April 25, 2025, Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) emphasizes the recent statement from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, which affirms their deep commitment to solidarity with Christian partners in the Holy Land. During this historic Holy Week delegation, Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon, Executive Director of CMEP, was honored to meet with Bishop Dr. Sani-Ibrahim Azar of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL). Their time together included meaningful dialogue about the ongoing witness of the Christian church in the region and how our respective ministries might deepen partnership in our shared mission to embody the love of Christ and pursue a just and lasting peace for all people in the Holy Land.

In a powerful act of solidarity, Dr. Cannon also joined the ELCA and Canadian Lutheran delegation in the Palm Sunday procession through the streets of Jerusalem. As the faithful retraced Christ's path in the Old City, their presence was a visible reminder of the global church's commitment to justice, reconciliation, and accompaniment in the face of ongoing occupation and violence. CMEP is recommitted to this holy work—lifting up the voices of local Christian leaders, advocating for human rights, and working alongside

international partners to end the conflict and bring about a future rooted in dignity, equity, and peace.

ELCA's Statement can be read in full [HERE](#) or below.

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“The Lutheran Church in the Holy Land is small, but does such incredible work! We are grateful for our partnerships and joint efforts with local churches and the incredible women who work and lead alongside us in And Still We Rise (ASWR). Executive Director met in Jerusalem during Holy Week with Pastor Ashraf Tanous - the newly appointed pastor of Christmas Lutheran Bethlehem Church and Presiding Bishop Azar to talk about ways we might continue to partner to help spread the love of Christ and seek peace.”

## **ELCA North America- Holy Land Solidarity Visit Statement**

April 16, 2025

*“The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting, ‘Hosanna!’” (John 12:12-13a).*

Over the past week we have engaged in a solidarity visit with the people and ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), concluding with Palm Sunday celebrations. We have experienced the strength of the Lutheran Christian community, which serves the people through worship, diakonia, education, health care, environmental stewardship and gender justice.

At the same time, we have experienced how the church’s witness in this place, continuous since the time of Christ, is under existential threat. Though many of us have visited before, we have never seen the Holy Land at such a critical point. For Palestinians, movement is restricted, violence is increasing and hope is dimmed. Many feel they have no choice but to leave their land. The last standing hospital in Gaza, which has a partnership with the Lutheran World Federation’s Augusta Victoria Hospital, was bombed by Israeli forces on the morning of Palm Sunday. We wonder if we can still shout, “Hosanna!”

This solidarity visit has been a reminder to the people of the ELCJHL that they are not alone. It has also been a reminder to the people of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada that our presence and accompaniment with the Palestinian Lutheran people is a vital expression of our shared faith and commitment to justice and peace. Together, we invite you to come and see – to witness the vibrant life and faithful witness of the ELCJHL, and sumud (steadfastness) of the Palestinian Lutheran people. We know that travel is not possible for everyone, but we affirm that showing up, in whatever form it takes, matters deeply. For, as long as the ELCJHL is here, we are all here.

We call upon the people of our three churches to remain steadfast in our solidarity, witness and advocacy for justice – for the sake of our life together and in support of the indigenous Christian presence in the Holy Land. By doing so, we greet the One whose arrival in Jerusalem continues to unite us in our “Hosannas.”

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*Formed in 1984, Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) is a coalition of more than 30 national church communions and organizations, including Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, and Evangelical traditions that works to encourage US policies that actively promote a comprehensive resolution to conflicts in the Middle East with a focus on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. CMEP works 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.*

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Recent CMEP Statements and Press Releases:

**[Apr 24, 2025 CMEP calls for preservation of the Armenian Christian Community While Commemorating the 110th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide](#)**

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) calls for the preservation of the Armenian Christian community in Jerusalem, Nagorno/Karabakh, and around the world, as today marks 110 years since the beginning of the Armenian Genocide, during which 1.5 million

Armenians were systematically killed by the Ottoman Empire. In addition, leaders of the Turkish Empire killed Greek, Assyrian, and other Christian minorities living under the Ottoman Empire during the early 20th century. On this solemn anniversary, CMEP joins the global Armenian community and Christians worldwide in remembrance and mourning. We honor the victims and their enduring legacy, remembering not only the lives lost but also the resilience of survivors and their descendants. More than a century later, the Armenian people are still awaiting full acknowledgment and accountability from the perpetrators of this crime against humanity.

### **[Apr 23, 2025 Churches for Middle East Peace \(CMEP\) Mourns the Passing of His Holiness Pope Francis](#)**

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) joins millions of people around the world in mourning the passing of His Holiness Pope Francis. We grieve the profound loss of a stalwart leader of the Christian faith—one whose moral clarity, deep compassion, and unrelenting pursuit of justice marked a generation.

### **[Apr 23, 2025 CMEP joins International Aid Agencies in Issuing Alarming Report on Humanitarian Access in Gaza and the West Bank](#)**

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP), alongside dozens of international aid and development agencies, released its latest Humanitarian Access Snapshot, covering the period from January 19 to April 15, 2025. The report offers a sobering update on the continued restrictions on humanitarian assistance in Gaza and the West Bank amidst ongoing conflict and military operations.

See all of our **[public statements](#)** and **[press releases](#)**.

## Contact Us

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### Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP)

110 Maryland Ave NE, Suite 505  
Washington, District of Columbia 20002  
(202) 543-1222 [info@cmep.org](mailto:info@cmep.org)

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