



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

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Washington, D.C. - July 14, 2026**

#### **Churches for Middle East Peace Welcomes The Rev. Dr. Stephen Murray as Chief Development Officer**

July 14, 2026, Washington D.C.- Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) is pleased to announce that The Rev. Dr. Stephen Murray has joined the organization as its new Chief Development Officer.

Rev. Dr. Murray brings decades of leadership in philanthropy, theological education, ministry, and ecumenical engagement. He joins CMEP from Georgetown University, where he served as Senior Director of Development for Family Philanthropy and taught in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies. Throughout his career, he has held leadership positions at institutions including Ecumenical Theological Seminary, the Congregational Library and Archives, Barrytown College, Harvard University, and Yale University, while also serving congregations across several Christian traditions.

"We are delighted to welcome Rev. Dr. Murray to the CMEP team," said Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon, Executive Director of Churches for Middle East Peace. "His extensive experience in development, theological leadership, and ecumenical ministry will strengthen our ability to build meaningful partnerships and expand support for CMEP's mission of pursuing peace, justice, and equality in the Middle East."

Rev. Dr. Murray earned degrees from Bucknell University, Endicott College, Yale University Divinity School, and Union Theological Seminary. A respected theologian and author of five books, he has been recognized nationally for his leadership in ecumenical and interfaith engagement, including being named one of the Center for American Progress's "16 Faith Leaders to Watch."

"I am honored to join Churches for Middle East Peace," said Dr. Murray. "CMEP's commitment to advocating for peace, justice, and human dignity is both inspiring and urgently needed. I look forward to working with our supporters and partners to strengthen this important ministry."

As Chief Development Officer, Dr. Murray will lead CMEP's fundraising and philanthropic engagement, working closely with donors, churches, foundations, and partners to advance the organization's mission.

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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:

**Jul 7, 2026: [Religious Leader Overcomes Personal Setbacks to Complete IRONMAN Competitions in Support of Peace in the Middle East](#)**

After over a year of determination, setbacks, and perseverance, Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon's journey to complete a full IRONMAN has become a powerful testament to the hope that peace is possible. Inspired by CMEP's mission and fueled by a commitment to justice in the Middle East, Rev. Dr. Mae has continued training despite significant health challenges that forced her to postpone her original goal. As she prepares to compete in the Ohio Half IRONMAN in July 2026 and the full IRONMAN Maryland in September 2026, every mile she completes raises awareness and support for CMEP's work to advocate, educate, and elevate voices for peace. Join Mae on the final stretch of this remarkable journey and help turn perseverance into lasting change.

**Jun 18, 2026: [CMEP Welcomes U.S.-Iran Memorandum of Understanding and Calls for Comprehensive Regional Peace](#)**

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) welcomes the recently announced Memorandum of Understanding between the United States and Iran as a possible first step toward a broader and more durable peace in the Middle East. For far too long, the peoples of the region have borne the devastating consequences of war, military escalation, displacement, and political instability. This agreement must mark the beginning of a comprehensive diplomatic process that will halt violence across the region and create the conditions necessary for a just and lasting peace.

**Jun 15, 2026: [Churches for Middle East Peace Elevates the Statement of the Lutheran Church and Expresses Concern Over the Arrest of Four Palestinian University Students](#)**

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) joins Bishop Dr. Imad Haddad and The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) in expressing deep concern over the arbitrary arrest of four Palestinian female university students in the occupied West Bank, including Joulan Abu Awwad, Sama Safi, Laila Khalil, and ELCJHL youth Natalie Abu Diya.

**June 5, 2026: CMEP is deeply alarmed by the recent arrest and detention of four Palestinian university students by Israeli forces in the occupied West Bank**

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) is deeply alarmed by the recent arrest and detention of four Palestinian university students by Israeli forces in the occupied West Bank, including Birzeit University student Natalie Abu Diya, a Palestinian Christian and member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Reformation in Beit Jala.

**April 27, 2026: Joint Freedom Day Statement Calls for Global Solidarity, Truth-Telling, Unity, and Justice Across Continents**

On Freedom Day in South Africa, commemorating the end of apartheid and the birth of a democratic nation, a coalition of Christian leaders and institutions issued a joint statement linking the legacy of South Africa's liberation struggle to urgent global calls for justice Palestine and Israel. The statement was released by the Reformed Church in America (RCA), Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) and the South African Council of Churches (SACC), together with our ecumenical partners, the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) and the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC).

## Contact Us

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