

The California-Nevada Annual Conference Board of Missions created a Task force on Israel and Palestine in February, 2007. Current members are Rev. Jinsik Lee, Tom and Liz Ryder, Rev. Linda Loessberg-Zahl; Margaret Langer, Doug and Kathy Smith, Doug Sibley, Rev. David Leeper Moss, Rev. Michael Yoshii, Rev. Becky Goodwin (Mission Education Chair of our Conference Board of Missions, and Rev. Larry George (Task Force Chairperson).

All of these persons have been (or will be next February) part of our U.M. Board of Global Ministries 2-week delegations in Israel and Palestine, visiting schools, clinics, hospitals, human rights organizations, meeting persons of various perspectives, including United Methodist mission personnel and volunteers. The goals of this task force are:

- Continual updating of information, field reports from mission personnel, which also offer opportunities for sustainable relationships, including partnerships with local churches; and promotion and coordination of visiting Mission Personnel and other speakers and resource persons on Israel/Palestine
- Coordination of future fact-finding and Connectional/Mission Support/UMVIM teams in Palestine and Israel
- Working with GBGM and other annual conferences on information relevant to the 2008 General Conference
- Keep abreast of current issues affecting the lives of those in Israel and Palestine today, particularly through the experience of Christians, most of whom are Palestinians
- Serve the churches and members of our Conference, cooperate with other Conferences and other organizations, for further education and advocacy to inform and influence policies toward justice & peace, and
- to better understand and broaden support for United Methodist missionaries, interns, and programs supported by our denomination and congregations

Our desire is to provide resources for information and dialogue.

Our guideline is the “Circle of Concern and Response” framework created by the Rev. Sandra Olewine, our United Methodist Missions director in Israel and Palestine from 1995-2006:

- (1) Pray--establishing a network of concern for the real people and situations in Israel and Palestine, and the efforts for peace and justice;
- (2) Give—participating in enabling ministries through various forms of giving and connectional support for the Christian communities in the Holy Land;
- (3) Study—deepening our understanding of realities that receive almost no attention in our mainstream media: The illegal Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza with its mounting devastation of the lives of an entire population; the apartheid system in Israel itself which deprives 20% of its population their rights and livelihood; the myths and

distortions which deny the daily efforts for peace and justice by countless Jews, Christians and Muslims in Israel and Palestine;

(4) Engage—initiating dialogue in our communities and interfaith relationships; too often the questions of Israel and Palestine are averted in Christian-Jewish conversations because of fear of its controversy;

(5) Advocate—systematically address our elected officials on critical policy matters, and our media on how stories are told: Whose perspectives dominate? What words are used? What questions aren't raised? Join with the many who refuse to remain silent in the face of injustice.