

Peace with Justice Ministries grant money made two scholarships available for United Methodists from the Great Plains Conference to attend Walking with Palestinian Christians for Holy Justice and Peace Conference in August 2014.

United Methodists from the Great Plains Conference attend Walking with Palestinian Christians for Holy Justice and Peace Conference



Submitted by Andrea Paret, Great Plains Conference peace with justice coordinator.

Nearly 300 participants representing many Annual Conferences came together at Ginghamburg United Methodist Church in Tipp City, Ohio, on Aug. 7 and 8, for the Walking with Palestinian Christians for Holy Justice and Peace Conference organized by the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM).

Thomas Kemper, general secretary of GBGM, welcomed all to the conference by saying the following.

“To this experience of walking with Palestinian Christians for ‘holy’ justice and peace. I emphasize the word HOLY because if we take the New Testament seriously, if we listen to Jesus in the Beatitudes, justice and peace are holy—instruments of God’s grace to be honored and shared. We know from long, painful centuries that conflict and warfare are not holy—in the Middle East or elsewhere. We are on a prayer pilgrimage, a prayerful quest, for peace and justice in an important land with holy roots and holy possibilities ...

“As you might expect, the title and the purpose of our event here these two days has not been clearly understood by everyone. To some it sounds like a rally favoring one side in a protracted political and military conflict—a contest of historical wills. That is far from the case. We are here to join hands with fellow Christians, Palestinians, in considering how our faith commitments can contribute to holy justice and peace for all the people of Palestine and Israel. It would be quite unthinkable for us not to meet with other Christians in this cause. And while our lens here is through that of Palestinian Christians, we remain deeply committed to working with people of all faiths—Christian, Jewish, Muslim—to achieve justice and peace in the Middle East.

"We as Methodists — we as Christians — have not always taken seriously the realities and prospects of the ancient or contemporary Christian communities in the Holy Land. We too-often have looked away as political and social pressures resulting from decades of military occupation have resulted in emigration and exile — self-selected and forced. We raised our voices, and still do so, for the formation and continuation of Israel, but we have been less forceful in noticing and addressing the conditions of Palestinians, including the Christian minorities, in the West Bank, Gaza and Israel..."



Rev. Mike Slaughter of Ginghamburg United Methodist Church speaks at the conference

"This 'walk' at Ginghamburg is a further step in our pilgrimage to contribute to holy justice and peace in this part of the world. Much of the planning for this walk took place at a time when peace talks were active. But then we had terrible violence and death and weeks of warfare in Gaza. And now we hope and pray that the ceasefire will hold and the blockade be lifted. My heart is drawn to the words of Pope Francis: "Brothers and sisters, never war, never war! I am thinking above all of children, who are deprived of the hope of a worthwhile life, of a future." With this escalation of the long conflict we must devote ourselves even more to peace so that we have no more situations of dead and injured children — children, as Pope Francis says, 'Whose toys are things left over from war, children who can't smile anymore.'

"The Kairos Palestine document, which is a gift to us from our Palestinian sisters and brothers ... says and I quote, 'The word of God is a word of love for all His creation. God is not the ally of one against the other, nor the opponent of one in the face of the other. God is the Lord of all and loves all, demanding justice from all and issuing to all of us the same commandments.'

More information about the conference will be shared in the next few weeks.

[Read the whole presentation by Thomas Kemper.](#)

Photo: Andrea Paret, Nancy and Walter Coziahr, Carol Ekdahl-Garwood and the Rev. Gene Watson at the GBGM Conference on Palestine

<http://gp-email.brtapp.com/viewemail/184182#toc26> (08/13/14)

** Other articles about this conference:

8/20/2014 <http://gp-email.brtapp.com/viewemail/186300#toc12>

Invitation to participate in the world Week of Peace for Palestine Israel Sept. 21 – 27, 2014

8/28/2014 <http://gp-email.brtapp.com/viewemail/188054#toc16>

Boycotts, divestment and sanctions

09/17/2014 <http://gp-email.brtapp.com/viewemail/194936#toc19>

Walking with the Palestinian Christians for Holy Justice and Peace conference held last month