

Middle East Network Newsletter

April 21, 2010

Augusta Victoria Hospital gets USAID funds for linear accelerator

A long-awaited second linear accelerator will be installed at the Lutheran World Federation's Augusta Victoria Hospital thanks to funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The machine is an important tool for treatment of cancer patients. [Read more.](#)

Christian leaders send letter to President supporting peace efforts

Heads of Christian denominations, including ELCA presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson, and other Christian leaders sent a [letter to President Obama](#) supporting strong U.S. leadership to achieve Israeli-Palestinian peace. The April 5 letter followed U.S. Vice President Joe Biden's trip to the region during which planned construction for new settlement housing in East Jerusalem was announced by Israel. The leaders wrote, "The expansion of settlements endangers efforts to start the proximity talks that are to be the first step towards direct negotiations on all final status issues that include borders, refugees, security, and a shared Jerusalem."

Lutheran World Federation Executive Committee issues positive response to Middle East Quartet statement

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Executive Committee, meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, welcomed the March 19, 2010 [statement](#) by the Middle East Quartet (United Nations, Russian Federation, United States and European Union) regarding the status of Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations. The March 20, 2010 LWF statement noted the LWF's support for a two-state solution with a shared Jerusalem, saying, "The fulfillment of this vision, as noted by the Quartet in its statement, is in the fundamental interests of both parties..." The LWF statement went on to express support for the Quartet's "clear and forceful language" in denouncing "ongoing settlement activity in East Jerusalem and the West Bank as a principal obstacle to progress towards these objectives." The LWF statement also noted concern about Christian emigration from the region and called for a lifting of the economic blockade of Gaza and "for all parties to refrain from violent or provocative actions." [Click here](#) to view ELCA news report.

Bishop Hanson puts in a good word for Middle East peace at White House breakfast

The Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), was one of around 50 Christian leaders who attended an Easter Prayer breakfast at the White House. Bishop Hanson had an opportunity to share the ELCA's commitment to Middle East Peace with President Obama. As the ELCA news service [reported](#) "Hanson said he spoke briefly to Obama, and told him the ELCA remains committed to peace in the Middle East and encouraged him to continue his efforts. 'I said we stand with him in the commitment to find a lasting, just peace for Israel and Palestine,' he said."

Save the Date: CMEP annual conference, Washington, DC, June 13-15, 2010

Registration is now open for the CMEP annual advocacy conference to be held at the Kellogg Conference Hotel in Washington, DC, June 13-15, 2010 under the banner: Pursuing Peace Together: Working for Reconciliation in the Holy Land. Go to [CMEP Website](#) to register today.

World Council of Churches Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAPPI)

Two ELCA members are currently serving as a supportive presence in the Holy Land: Kimmy Meinecke, pastor from Goldendale, WA, in Bethlehem; and Kathleen Preuss, social worker from Portland, OR, in Jerusalem. Find links to their blogs [here](#) (scroll to bottom of that Web page).

One of them was among those assaulted recently by settler youth. See ["Settlers attack EAs with stones in Jerusalem"](#). Check for updates [here](#).

See the blog report by [Lutheran Kathy Preuss](#).

Find blogs of all U.S. accompaniers [here](#).

EAPPI has now launched a YouTube service with a video on [house demolitions in Jerusalem](#).

See also a brief interview with Palestinian politician Mustafa Barghouti on [Israel's declaration of heritage sites](#).

For much more about the tensions in Sheikh Jarrah, see ["Special Focus: The Planning Crisis in East Jerusalem, April 2009"](#).

And from MIFTAH, the Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy, ["In East Jerusalem, a Defining Battle over Palestinian Ownership in Sheikh Jarrah"](#).

World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel, 29 May - 4 June 2010

ELCA synods, congregations, and institutions are invited to observe the annual [World Council of Churches World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel](#) May 29 to June 4, 2010.

Find the following resources at the World Week for Peace Website:

- liturgical, educational, and advocacy resources to assist in planning for World Week activities, including newly created and updated resources
- the Kairos Palestine Document (issued December 2009) and other church-related and political documents
- the blog, "It's Time to Speak Out," which offers a weekly report from an Ecumenical Accompanier serving in the WCC's EAPPI program
- web-based links to the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum (PIEF) and other advocacy and peace groups
- newly updated ["Jerusalem Prayer"](#) for Sunday, May 30, 2010, just released by the Jerusalem Interchurch Centre. This prayer has been authored by the heads of churches in Jerusalem.

[Click here](#) to see Liturgical Resources for celebrating the World Week for Peace, including a link to "Prayers for Peace in the Middle East" from the Lutheran Church of the Atonement in Illinois.

Also see updated Irish Ecumenical Liturgy ["It's Time for Peace."](#)

Please participate by having special prayers on May 30, planning a prayer vigil service, and/or hosting such educational events as an adult forum series or an intergenerational Israel and Palestine awareness day.

If your synod or congregation plans an educational or worship observance, please send a description to Peace Not Walls at peacenotwallsinfo@elca.org.

Kairos Palestine Updates

A Pastoral letter in response to Kairos Palestine has been sent from the United Church of Christ and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Read the letter [here](#).

A group of Christians in South Africa welcomed the Kairos Palestine document in a message called, "A South African Christian response to the Palestinian Kairos Document: An Easter 2010 message from South Africa to Palestine." The message is also signed by members of the Jewish and Muslim communities. To read the complete message, [click here](#).

Peace Not Walls Website resources

Major issues-related slide show (downloadable) on [home page](#)

[Holy Week in the Holy Land](#)

["Current Analysis and Reports from the Ground"](#)

Many new ecumenical and interreligious peace partners added at [Ecumenical Peace Partners Web page](#) and [Inter-Religious Peace Partners Web page](#).

[Young Adults in Global Mission \(YAGM\) newsletters and blogs](#)

Also, posted at YAGM is the April 2010 newsletter from Greta Steeber, who is serving in Beit Sahour.



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