



ELCA E-ADVOCACY NETWORK  
MIDDLE EAST/ INTERNATIONAL  
**ACTION ALERT**

## Middle East Network Newsletter

---

February 25, 2009

### In this issue:

- Action Alert: Thank congress members for visiting Gaza, West Bank, and Israel
- Thank you for supporting holy land peace!
- NILI letter to House members urges support for Mitchell mission
- Two new ELCA ecumenical accompaniers now serving in the Holy Land
- New Peace Not Walls resources available
- New post-cards illustrated with maps of the region
- New website for resources related to the January 2009 Bishops Academy Holy Land trip Economic measures and the settlements

---

**Action Alert:** Over the President's Day break several Members of Congress visited the Middle East, including Senator John Kerry (D-MA) and Representatives Brian Baird (D-WA) and Keith Ellison (D-MN) all of whom visited Gaza and were the first US officials to do so in three years. These leaders also visited the Israeli town of Sderot, the site of repeated rocket attacks launched from Gaza.

Representatives Baird and Ellison also toured the Lutheran World Federation's Augusta Victoria Hospital on the Mount of Olives as did Rep. Rush Holt (D-NJ) in a separate visit.

It is crucial that these members of Congress know that voters appreciate their efforts to learn first-hand from Palestinians and Israelis about the current situation. To read more about their trips, including a statement by Reps. Baird and Ellison, and to send a note of thanks, click here: [www.cmep.org](http://www.cmep.org).

---

### Thank you for supporting holy land peace!

The Christian Call for Holy Land peace, an ecumenical letter to President Obama, signed by 41 national church leaders including our own presiding bishop, The Rev. Mark S. Hanson, was delivered to the Obama Administration on February 11 with the signatures of over 17,000 American Christians from all fifty states! Thank you to all who joined the call by signing the letter.

The letter urged President Obama "to make achievement of Israeli-Palestinian peace an immediate priority." Encouraging signs from the new administration include President Obama's phone calls on his first day in office with Palestinian President Abbas, Egyptian President Mubarak, Israeli Prime Minister Olmert, and Jordan's King Abdullah. The appointment of a special envoy for Middle East peace – Senator George Mitchell – and his immediate trip to the region are also welcome evidence of early engagement.



**Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

ELCA, 8765 W Higgins Rd, Chicago, IL 60631 •  
[www.elca.org/peacenotwalls](http://www.elca.org/peacenotwalls) • [peacenotwallsinfo@elca.org](mailto:peacenotwallsinfo@elca.org)



# Middle East Network Newsletter

---

The continued advocacy of American Christians is vitally important in supporting sustained US diplomatic engagement to resolve the Israeli/Palestinian impasse with a just peace. If you received this newsletter as a forward, and are not already a part of the ELCA's Middle East Network, you are invited to join at [www.elca.org/peacenotwalls](http://www.elca.org/peacenotwalls) to receive updates and calls to action.

---

## **NILI letter to House members urges support for Mitchell mission**

As a follow-up to last month's letter to President Obama, the National Interreligious Leadership Initiative (NILI), of which Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson is a member, sent a letter to all House members backing H. Res. 130 which expresses support for the appointment of former Senator Mitchell as special envoy for Middle East peace.

---

## **Two new ELCA ecumenical companions now serving in the Holy Land**

Pat Ochodnicky and Scott Thams, both members of the ELCA's Southeast Michigan Synod are now serving in Yanoun and Jerusalem respectively. Their blogs and those of past EAs are linked at <http://www.elca.org/Our-Faith-In-Action/Justice/Peace-Not-Walls/What-We-Do/Accompaniment.aspx>.

Donate to the scholarship fund enabling ELCA members to serve as companions by writing a check made out to "Evangelical Lutheran Church in America" with "EAPPI Level II" on the memo line. Send with donor's name and address to ELCA Global Mission Support, Attn: Twila Schock, 8765 W. Higgins Rd, Chicago, IL 60631. To give via credit card or direct bank transfer, please call (773) 380-2700 with your credit card information ready, and specify your gift for "Global Mission Level II – EAPPI."

---

## **New Peace Not Walls resources available now**

Lenten devotions and other resources [<http://www.elca.org/Our-Faith-In-Action/Justice/Peace-Not-Walls/Resources/Worship.aspx>]

New videos on [PNW website](#):

- "[It's PalesTIME](#)" presents a sober assessment of the degree to which Holy Land travelers omit Bethlehem from their itineraries or visit the city only briefly. As a result, these visitors often miss the valuable experiences of holy sites and Palestinian hospitality and culture. In addition, Palestinians are denied their fair share of the tourism dollars flowing into Israel each year.
  
- In "[Wailing Walls](#)" ELCA videographer Brett Nelson shares this 3-minute reflection on the walls of Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

New post-cards illustrated with maps of the region are available free of charge at <http://www.elca.org/Our-Faith-In-Action/Justice/Peace-Not-Walls/Resources/Handouts.aspx>.

---



**Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

ELCA, 8765 W Higgins Rd, Chicago, IL 60631 •  
[www.elca.org/peacenotwalls](http://www.elca.org/peacenotwalls) • [peacenotwallsinfo@elca.org](mailto:peacenotwallsinfo@elca.org)



# Middle East Network Newsletter

---

One side features four maps showing loss of Palestinian land from 1946 to 2009; the other shows the fragmentation of the West Bank, a quotation from Former Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs Shlomo Ben-Ami, and web addresses for Peace Not Walls, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, and the Lutheran World Federation – Jerusalem.

---

## **New website for resources related to the January 2009 Bishops Academy Holy Land trip [[www.elca.org/ecumenical/bishopsacademy09](http://www.elca.org/ecumenical/bishopsacademy09)]**

Find Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson's letter to ecumenical and interreligious national leaders, the ELCA and ELCIC report to rostered leaders, and links to numerous resources in these four areas of interest: Awareness, Accompaniment, Advocacy, and Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relationships.

---

## **Economic measures and the settlements**

Over the last few months several corporations and investing bodies have made changes with regard to their presence in the Israeli settlements in the West Bank. In some cases no explanation was made and this has left various groups to offer a variety of interpretations about the reasoning behind these moves. Some interpret the changes as resulting from decisions to leave certain settlements in the West Bank while others say the moves are a result of pure business motives. Some of the recent stories are listed here:

The Church of England withdrew investments from Caterpillar, important since Caterpillar tractors are known for use in home demolitions.

<http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/node/8595>.

Veolia loses a contract in Stockholm.

<http://www.diakonia.se/sa/node.asp?node=2807>.

Veolia is building a tramway connecting Israeli West Jerusalem with settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Unilever sells a stake of a factory located in a West Bank settlement

<http://www.business-humanrights.org/Links/Repository/963533>

Visit the web address below to tell your friends about this.

 **Tell-a-friend!**

If you received this message from a friend, you can [sign up for Evangelical Lutheran Church in America e-Advocacy Network](#).

This message was sent to [laura.ley@elca.org](mailto:laura.ley@elca.org). Visit your [subscription management page](#) to modify your email communication preferences or update your personal profile. To stop receiving Middle East news and action alerts, click to [unsubscribe](#). To stop ALL email from Evangelical Lutheran Church in America e-Advocacy Network, click to [remove](#) yourself from our lists (or reply via email with "remove or unsubscribe" in the subject line).

---

[Read the Middle East Networking newsletter archives.](#)



**Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

ELCA, 8765 W Higgins Rd, Chicago, IL 60631 •  
[www.elca.org/peacenotwalls](http://www.elca.org/peacenotwalls) • [peacenotwallsinfo@elca.org](mailto:peacenotwallsinfo@elca.org)

