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Building Solidarity for Palestine

University Church Chicago

5655 South University Avenue, Chicago IL

April 2026

Summary

This document provides links to resources for use at University Church and elsewhere for examination and learning about the situation in Palestine and for consideration of how we can collaborate to build solidarity for Palestine in dark times.

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Part 1 – History and Current Situation in Palestine/Israel

Don Wagner and Linda Kateeb – Speakers and Discussion Leaders

Sermon to the West

Rev. Munther Issac

<https://rebrand.ly/Isaac-Sermon>



Power Point Presentation:

Don Wagner and Linda Kateeb

[*Palestine: Roots, Realities and Path Forward*](#)



Myths and Facts About Israel:



<https://rebrand.ly/isr-myths>

(print as a two-sided trifold)

The Nakba (1948 until now):



<https://rebrand.ly/ongoingnakba>

(print as a two-sided trifold)

Palestine Maps Over Time – <https://rebrand.ly/PalestineMap>



BBC: Israel and the Palestinians

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ckqr71z0jp4o>



Israel's Apartheid Regime in Palestine

- Kairos Palestine: A dossier on Israeli Apartheid: A Pressing Call to Churches Around the World
<https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>
- Amnesty International Report -
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2022/02/israels-system-of-apartheid/>

- Human Rights Watch Report-
<https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>
- Definition of the Crime of Apartheid under International Law -
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crime_of_apartheid

Accelerating Settler Violence in the West Bank in 2026

Amnesty International Report of February 26, 2026

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2026/02/israel-opt-global-impunity-fueling-israels-unlawful-annexation-measures-in-the-west-bank/>

B'Tselem Report of March 9, 2026

https://www.btselem.org/press_releases/20260309_under_cover_of_the_war_settler_militias_increas_lethal_shooting_of_palestinians_as_part_of_wb_ethnic_cleansing



Israel's Genocide in Gaza

- Institute of Middle East Understanding Fact Sheet: Two Years of Israel's Genocide in Gaza <https://imeu.org/resources/resources/fact-sheet-israels-genocide-in-gaza/446>



- UN Human Rights Council September 2025 report on The// Question of Palestine, concluding that Israel's war in Gaza constitutes the crime of Genocide under International Law - <https://www.un.org/en/genocide-prevention/definition>
- American Historical Association – 2025 Resolution on Israel's Scholasticide, in systematically destroying Gaza's Universities <https://www.historians.org/perspectives-article/resolution-for-consideration-at-the-january-2025-business-meeting/>



- International Federation of Journalists October 2025 report on Israel's targeting of Journalists <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/israel-two-years-of-killing-journalists-and-controlling-the-narrative-in-gaza>



It's Our Genocide –

U.S. Military Aid and Arms Transfers to Israel, October 2023 to September 2025 – The Quincy Institute and Brown University
<https://costsofwar.watson.brown.edu/paper/AidToIsrael>



The Genocide Continues Until Now –

Amnesty International Report – November 2025
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/11/israels-genocide-against-palestinians-in-gaza-continues-unabated-despite-ceasefire/>

Al Jazeera Report: February 2026
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CM7qIRbi92U>



Israel's Manipulation of the "Ceasefire Agreement" to Continue the Genocide and to Take Permanent Control of 58 percent of Gaza

FP.com analysis of January 20, 2026: Is Israel Annexing More Than Half of Gaza? <https://foreignpolicy.com/2026/01/20/israel-gaza-yellow-line-netanyahu-palestine-annex/>



Gaza's Yellow Line: Where Genocide is Internationally Acceptable
<https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6931/Gaza%E2%80%99s-Yellow-Line:-Where-genocide-is-internationally-acceptable>



Peter Beinart's October 2025 Interview of Mohamed Shahada

<https://peterbeinart.substack.com/p/muhammad-shehada-on-gazas-unending-c0e>



Forces Underlying U.S. Diplomatic and Military Support of Israel

Christian Zionism – Cornerstone of the Israel Lobby

Fact Sheet: Christian Zionism from the Religious Media Center

<https://religionmediacentre.org.uk/factsheets/factsheet-christian-zionism/>

The Dangerous Exceptionalism of Christian Zionism from Al- Shabaka Policy Network

<https://al-shabaka.org/briefs/the-dangerous-exceptionalism-of-christian-zionism/>

AIPAC and the Politics of Intimidation - increasingly hidden behind shell organizations and organized contributions by individual donors

Financial Power and Foreign Influence: How AIPAC Shapes U.S. Policy Beyond Public Opinion, Bruin Policy Network, December 24, 2025

<https://bruinpoliticalreview.org/articles?post-slug=financial-power-and-foreign-influence-how-aipac-shapes-u-s-policy-beyond-public-opinion>

US elections: How AIPAC shapes American politics, Middle East Monitor, November 4, 2024

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20241104-us-election-how-aipac-shapes-american-politics/>

The Defamation Campaign of the “Anti-Defamation League”

Explainer: The Anti-Defamation League, Institute for Middle East Understanding, February 26, 2025

<https://imeu.org/resources/key-issues/explainer-the-anti-defamation-league/123>



Part 2 – Collaboration in Building Solidarity for Palestine

Elsa Weber, Rachel Payden, John McLees

Working Together

- To support Palestinians and Palestinian Organizations
- To take a stand in calling out Israel’s Apartheid and Ongoing Genocide
- To take action in challenging U.S. Policy and Censorship of Opposing Voices

Individually Choosing Ways to Learn and Share, to Speak Out, to Act and to Contribute

Repentance and Resolve

<https://rebrand.ly/repentance>



Power Point Presentation

<https://rebrand.ly/Apr12Slides>



United Church of Christ – Solidarity for Palestine

2025 Declaration for the End of Genocide –

<https://rebrand.ly/UCCDecla2025>



UCC Movement for Palestinian Solidarity (UCCMPS)

<https://www.uccmps.org/what-we-do>

The Road from Ceasefire to Peace – a Roadmap for United Church of Christ Advocacy and Solidarity from UCCMPS in November 2025: <https://rebrand.ly/RoadToPeace>



Resources for Congregations regarding the crisis in Gaza

<https://www.uccmps.org/crisis-in-gaza>



Signing up to receive UCCMPS E-Newsletters:

<https://www.uccmps.org/contact>

Subscribing without charge to the UCCMPS Substack, to get the Weekly Pause for Palestine, liturgical resources, etc.

<https://uccmps.substack.com/>

Nine-Day UCCMPS trip to Palestine – August 5-14, 2026

For Clergy and Lay Leaders, Indigenous Leaders, Educators, Young Influencers

To foster discernment around resistance and discipleship

To bring U.S. Christians and Palestinian Christians together, around our diverse experiences

To explore strategies building power for solidarity and action

To imagine and implement action upon our return

For more information contact Rev. Linda Noonan at lindanoonan@mac.com

or Rev. Sara Ofner-Seals at smo@plymouthfw.org

Description of the trip and an Invitation with registration information here:



Supporting the Work of Palestinians in Palestine

Palestinian Christians

Sabeel and FOSNA (Friends of Sabeel North America)

<https://www.fosna.org/> – programs and actions

Kairos Center for Religions, Rights, and Social Justice

<https://www.kairospalestine.ps/> – actions and resources

- Kairos Palestine II, issued in November 2025: “[*A Moment of Truth: Faith in a Time of Genocide*](#)” document by Kairos Palestine“



- A congregational Study Guide for Kairos Palestine II
<https://www.kairosresponse.org/kp2guide.html>



- The original Kairos Palestine call in December 2009: “A moment of truth: A word of faith, hope and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering”
<https://www.kairospalestine.ps/index.php/about-kairos/kairos-palestine-document>



Palestine Civil Society

Boycott, Divestiture and Sanctions movement (BDS)

<https://bdsmovement.net/what-bds>

<https://bdsmovement.net/> /

International Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAH)

<https://icahd.org/>

Collaborating with Other Groups in Chicago

Jewish Voice for Peace - <https://www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org/>

Presentation of Charles Delman and Lida Zeitlin-Wu of JVP Chicago:

Learning about Jewish Voice for Peace, its history, its core values and ideology, its strategy and tactics, and its campaigns and initiatives:



Join JVP at <https://www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org/join-us/>

Get updates from JVP Chicago on Instagram at

<https://www.instagram.com/jvpchicago/>

Sign in support of JVP's petition to Drop the ADL From CPS Schools

<https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/drop-the-adl-from-chicago-schools>

Get links here for participating in JVP's other current campaigns:

<https://www.canva.com/design/DAHAakmK4b4/l0dUe5hZXYlfmEacyIJ2hg/edit>

Subscribe to the JVP Wire for information and action items at

https://actionnetwork.org/forms/get-the-wire/?fastActionSessionId=ixLP0_6w10sYg5JEet4E6JAtnUr

JVP Health Advisory Council (health justice in Palestine)– sign up for updates and action items <https://www.jvphealth.org/involved>

Donate to JVP Chicago here:

<https://secure.qgiv.com/for/chapterpodcontributionform/restriction/chicago>

Mennonite Action Chicago

Join its email list to learn of prayer vigils and other events –

<https://mennoniteactionchicago.org/>

American Muslims for Palestine

<https://www.ampalestine.org/organize/chapters/amp-chicago>

Interfaith Action in Chicago:

Chicago Faith Coalition for Middle East Policy

Committee for Just Peace in Palestine Israel - <https://www.cjpip.org/>

Collaborating In Hyde Park:

Church of St. Paul and the Redeemer

<https://www.sprchicago.org/>

University of Chicago Faculty for Justice in Palestine

<https://fjpuhicago.noblogs.org/>

Christian Groups Active Locally and Nationally

United Methodist Kairos Response – <https://www.kairosresponse.org/>

Episcopal Church Palestine Justice Network <https://thepjn.org/>

Presbyterian Church Palestine Justice Network - <https://thepjn.org/>

Opposing Suppression of Advocacy for Palestine

Use of False Claims of Antisemitism to Defame, Expel, Punish, Deport

<https://palestinelegal.org/distorted-definition>



Implementing Project Esther: WhatsProjectEsther.org

Citizens in a Democracy Must Be Allowed to Criticize Israel

<https://zeteo.com/p/democracy-criticize-israel-netanyahu-iran-trump>

Palestine Legal <https://palestinelegal.org/>:

representing those punished for their speech or advocacy:



Ongoing actions in which Chicago groups are collaborating

Films and other Educational Programs

Protests against US support of Israel's attacks on Gaza –

included in the No Kings March on Saturday March 28

Vigils – organized by Mennonites and others

Advocating for an end to State of Illinois investments in Israeli Bonds

<https://illinoisdivest.com/>

<https://fightbacknews.org/articles/protests-at-illinois-treasurer-offices-in-chicago-springfield-over-renewal-of>



Advocating for passage of HB 2723/SB 2462 in the General Assembly
the Illinois Human Rights Advocacy Protection Act (to repeal the anti-BDS Law in Illinois). Learn about the bill at:

<https://www.workingfamilies33.org/il-is-weaponizing-pensions>



Follow Illinois Coalition for Human Rights - <https://www.ilchr.org/> and Mennonite Action for ongoing opportunities to take action.

Lobbying with members of Congress

In favor of bills requiring application of U.S. law to end use of
U.S. weapons to engage in war crimes

In favor of resolution and bills naming Israel's apartheid and geocide

Other Events and Actions

April 11 through April 28, 2026 –

Chicago Palestine Film Festival, at the Gene Siskel Film Center at

164 North State St. – <https://www.palestinefilmfest.com/schedule>

Sunday April 26, 2026 from 1:00 to 4:00 pm –

**showing the film *The Voice of Hind Rajab* and a discussion of
solidarity with Palestine from Chicago, at First Presbyterian Church at
6400 Kimbark in Woodlawn (with lunch)**

RSVP [here](#) or at tinyurl.com/VoiceofHR to attend the event

**Ongoing program of films on Palestine – at the Uprising Theater and
Café at 3805 N. Milwaukee – <https://uprisingtheaterchicago.com>**

Every Friday at 11:00. Weekly AFSC Action Hours online:

Register here: <https://afsc.org/actionhour>

Taking Action at University Church

- Declaring University Church to be an Apartheid Free Community:

- highlighting our opposition to Israel's apartheid regime and to US support of Israeli ethnic cleansing, apartheid and genocide in Palestine,
- agreeing to refrain from providing any support to Israel's regime of oppression
- encouraging other communities to join in opposing Israel's apartheid

Joining a national campaign being led by American Friends Service Committee (the AFSC)

Inspired by Palestinian civil society

Encouraged by the UCC Mobilization for Palestinian Solidarity

Would imply ongoing discernment by University Church on how the congregation should manifest its identity as an Apartheid Free Community

Next steps – study and discernment by the Congregation

The Apartheid Free Community Declaration

<https://afsc.org/apartheid-free-communities>

AFSC explanation of the Apartheid Free Community Declaration

<https://apartheid-free.org/>



Trifold to copy and distribute to introduce people to the idea and importance of becoming an Apartheid Free Community

<https://rebrand.ly/apartheid>



Discussion of what it means to be an Apartheid Free Community
<https://afsc.org/video/what-does-being-apartheid-free-mean>
and a 20 minute Interview with Rev. Munther Isaac on the
importance of churches naming apartheid



Additional Possible Events and Actions by University Church

Study of Kairos Palestine II, A Moment of Truth: Faith in a Time
Genocide with the Congregational Study Guide mentioned above
Films on Palestine

Possible invitation to Jewish Voice for Peace to present its program
about Zionism, Anti-Zionism & Antisemitism at University Church

Things we can do as Individuals

Learning and Sharing – Learn about the ongoing situation in Palestine and sharing that information with others:

Subscribe to reliable sources for learning about the historical
context and developments in the West Bank and Gaza:

Independent news organizations like Zetee – <https://zeteo.com/>

Al Jazeera - <https://www.aljazeera.com/>

Mondoweiss - <https://mondoweiss.net/> - subscribe to their

newsletters at <https://subscribe.mondoweiss.net/newsletters>

If Americans Knew – <https://ifamericansknew.org/> - subscribe to

their reports at https://ifamericansknew.org/about_us/list.html

Electronic Intifada – subscribe at: <https://electronicintifada.net/>

Just Vision – go to <https://justvision.org/> to sign up for updates

The International Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAH) –

<https://icahd.org/>

Discuss what you learn with others.

Contribute to some of those organizations to support their work

Acting – Join actions advocated by other organizations

US Palestinian Community Network – <https://uspcn.org/>

AFSC - <https://afsc.org/programs/us-palestine-activism-program>

US Campaign for Palestinian Rights - <https://uscpr.org/>

Sojourners – <https://sojo.net/>

Christians for a Free Palestine

<https://christiansforafreepalestine.com/>

- Illinois Coalition for Human Rights – <https://www.ilchr.org/>

Pushing Back – Learn how to counter false accusations of antisemitism

Speak out on social media and in other forums against censorship of voices advocating for Palestine or opposing support for Israel

Participate in contacting Universities and other organizations to oppose actions and policies that punish pro-Palestinian speech

Supporting the work of Palestine Legal –

<https://palestinelegal.org/donate>

Following the Work of Other Organizations

Churches for Middle East Peace— <https://cmep.org/>

a multi-denominational group

Adalah Justice Project – <https://www.adalahjusticeproject.org/>

Palestine Institute for Biodiversity (PIBS) and the Palestine

- Museum of Natural History – <https://www.palestinenature.org/>

Indiana Center for Middle East Peace, a small group in

Fort Wayne, Indiana — <https://www.indianacmep.org/>

Contributing—Join others In supporting relief efforts in Palestine by organizations such as:

The Siraj Library Project - <https://www.serajlibraries.org/>

Bright Stars of Bethlehem - <https://www.brightstarsbethlehem.org/>

Heal Palestine - <https://www.healpalestine.org/>

UNRWA - <https://www.unrwausa.org/>

Palestine Children’s Relief Fund – <https://www.pcrf.net/>

(pick an organization to support)

Books on Palestine That Are Worth Reading

Glory to God in the Lowest by Donald E. Wagner

[second edition due out in spring 2026]

The Question of Palestine by Edward Said

The Hundred Years' War on Palestine – a History of Settler

Colonialism and Resistance by Rashid Khalidi

The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine by Elan Pappé

A Palestinian Cry for Reconciliation, by Rev. Naim Ateek

On Anti-Semitism by Jewish Voice for Peace

Fatal Embrace by Mark Braverman

Christ in the Rubble by Muther Isaac

Anxious about Armageddon, by Donald E. Wagner

One Country by Ali Abunimah

Peace Not Apartheid by Jimmy Carter

The Israel Lobby and American Foreign Policy by John