



**WORKING TOGETHER:**  
Justice Can Prevail. Peace Is  
Possible.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) Joins U.S. Christian Faith Leaders to Show Support for Christian Community in Jerusalem After Attack at Church of Gethsemane in East Jerusalem**

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) Executive Director, Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon, joined 28 other Christian faith leaders in a statement in support of the Christian community in the Holy Land. The statement comes after an attack at the Church of Gethsemane in East Jerusalem, on Sunday, March 19th, perpetrated by two Israeli radicals.

In the letter, copied below, the leaders write, **“the International community, including the U.S. government, must do everything in their power to ensure Jerusalem is a city in which freedom of religion and free access to worship for all are strengthened and respected.”**

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March 29, 2023

As church-based leaders in the United States, we stand in solidarity with our siblings in Christ in Israel/Palestine. We condemn the attack at the Church of Gethsemane in East Jerusalem, on Sunday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, which occurred during the service. The

perpetrators, two Israeli radicals, must be held accountable for their actions. It is not insignificant to note the attack came during one of the holiest times for Christians— the season of Lent—when we seek repentance and prepare to celebrate Christ’s resurrection.

We affirm the statement released by the [Greek Orthodox Patriarchate](#) in Jerusalem, which notes, “attacks on Christian holy sites, properties, heritage, and identity constitute a violation of international law, which explicitly calls for the protection of religious sites in Jerusalem and emphasizes the need to respect this basic human right to worship freely.” Jerusalem is a sacred city to Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Over the past few years there has been a steady rise of attacks against Christian clergy, churches, and church-owned properties. The International community, including the U.S. government, must do everything in their power to ensure Jerusalem is a city in which freedom of religion and free access to worship for all are strengthened and respected.

We offer our prayers and support to the members of the Church of Gethsemane, and the entire Christian community in the Holy Land.

Rev. Eddy Alemán

General Secretary

Reformed Church in America

Joyce Ajlouny

General Secretary

American Friends Service Committee

Archbishop Vicken Aykazian

Ecumenical Director and Diocesan Legate

Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern)

Bishop Thomas Bickerton

President of the Council of Bishops

The United Methodist Church

Rev. Marco Cable

President, Division of Overseas Ministries

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Co-Executive

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Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon

Executive Director

Churches for Middle East Peace

Carole Collins

Co-Director

Alliance of Baptists

The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry

Presiding Bishop and Primate

The Episcopal Church

Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer

General Minister and President

United Church of Christ

Reverend Emmett Lafayette Dunn

Executive Secretary/CEO

Lott Carey Foreign Mission Convention

Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton

Presiding Bishop

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

The Very Reverend James Gannon, ofm;

Provincial Minister of the Province of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Susan Gunn

Director

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

Rev. Dr. Zachary King  
General Secretary  
Christian Reformed Church in North America

Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie  
Interim President and General Secretary  
National Council of Churches

The Rev. Dr. Betsy Miller  
President, Provincial Elders' Conference  
Moravian Church Northern Province

Bridget Moix  
General Secretary  
Friends Committee on National Legislation

Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson  
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly  
Presbyterian Church (USA)

Rev. Teresa Hord Owens  
General Minister and President  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Rev. Dr. Neil Routh  
President, Provincial Elders' Conference,  
Moravian Church in America, Southern Province

Richard Santos  
President & CEO  
Church World Service

Dr. Andrea Smith  
Founder and Board Member  
Evangelicals 4 Justice

Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson  
Associate General Minister Wider Church Ministries and Operations

United Church of Christ

Co-Executive

Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ

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President

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Dr. C. Jeff Woods

General Secretary

American Baptist Churches USA

Archpriest Thomas Zain

Vicar-General

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

Rev. Elijah R. Zehyoue

Co-Director

Alliance of Baptists

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*Formed in 1984, Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) is a coalition of more than 30 national organizations, including Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, and Evangelical traditions that works to actively promote a comprehensive resolution to conflicts in the Middle East with a focus on the CMEP works to mobilize US Christians to embrace a holistic perspective and to be advocates security, and justice for Israelis, Palestinians, and all people of the Middle East.*

