



GRACE NOTES

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH, 46 WOODLAND STREET, HARTFORD, CT 06105 860-527-7792

NOVEMBER 2023

COMPASSION AMONG AND FOR ALL OF US

It is remarkable that so many of our fellow believers from all places and faiths are coming together to address the dangers and the realities of a fractured and troubled world. Many faith groups are pulling together, seeking ways to be a positive force in their communities and more broadly by showing how we can indeed live together with love and mutual support. If there is a time for such a shift, this is it. We must discover and stoke the compassion that we all bring to the suffering all around us. As we come together, we may learn from each other and work through differences, new ideas and methods. In this way we offer what our faiths all call for. Love, healing, and compassion.

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Sadly, this is not universally true. All people of faith do not operate this way. Certain groups are so enamored with their own beliefs, power, and influence, that they seek to embellish their brand only and always, their way. They believe themselves to be the “right” people and the others are to find “the” way to their truth and forget the others. In fact, they will do almost anything to disturb what God is doing in places apart from them, even though what is being done is good, and to be heralded, not diminished.

As we reflected on Reformation Sunday a few days ago, we prayed that all of us that believe in God and trust the compassion and mercy that is freely given, that we might find ways to establish different relationships with those who would exploit their power and miss what we are all called to do. The Reformation led many reformers, including Martin Luther, to question some of the actions and inactions of the church, not to destroy the church, but to make it better. Today, too, is a time for reformation, a time to let go of our differences and embrace our universal compassion for those suffering, those afraid, those who have no capacity to deal with the horrors all around us. These people come from all over the world, bringing with them an almost infinite number of beliefs and needs. They are SUFFERING and that's the point.

Henri Nouwen's words in “yellow” call us to have compassion and asks us to “go where it hurts.” If we were to do that, our focus would be as Jesus' focus was: “To enter into places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion, and anguish.” May we grasp his words, along with the example of Pope Francis and his efforts to lead not merely his flock, but the world to come to grasp the needs of those suffering, to seek peace, to come together to end war and to find a way to live together. This medium has often quoted the Pope, and other leaders throughout the world who call us to a place of compassion, not one where we are right and they are wrong, but rather a place where we all can come together to find what is right, and to learn from and come to love each other. Judgement was never a task of the church or any of us. We Christians leave judgement to our loving, merciful, and triune God.

Compassion asks us to go where it hurts,
To enter into places of pain, to share in
Brokenness, fear, confusion, and anguish.

Compassion challenges us to cry out
With those in misery, to mourn
With those who are lonely,
To weep with those in tears.

Compassion requires us to be weak,
Vulnerable with the vulnerable, and
Powerless with the powerless.

Compassion means full immersion
In the condition of being human.

Henri Nouwen

*From The Compassionate Cities Mission Statement
Louisville, Kentucky LouisvilleKy.gov*

*Printed letterpress with hand set type
A Revolutionary Press
New Haven, Vermont*

In our evolutionary reconstruction of Grace over the course of many years, we created the position of Ministry Coordinator. Sister Emmanuella Hart has taken that position and has become a gift to Grace and to the people we seek to serve. Her life and vows have led her to a life of service to others. With her love, energy, and focus, we have taken on an expansion of our work with those suffering, focusing on the people who are hungry, homeless, frightened, alone, suffering, afraid, tortured and in deep need. Our relationship with Wheeler Clinic has grown exponentially, and our efforts to be there for those in need have been enhanced. We dream and pray for the ways that we may do more, just as our church has been one of immigrants and refugees, we seek to reach out to those who are dealing with the difficulties of different languages, different cultures, and a country that is racked with differences and fighting for its very existence.

God does some of God's best work

In the spaces and places between our plans.



Courtesy of Kirk Byron Jones

We believe that God is guiding us and so many others to serve with compassion and love. Help us to do this with people of all faiths without competition, without animosity, and with love. Surely we can do more when we pull together. History tells us that pulling apart leads to something less than our faith conceptualizes and means. May we truly find the way to that place, before it is too late.

PASTOR'S MESSAGE – EMBRACING CHANGE AND LOSS

Over the past month many changes have taken place at Grace. These include the renovation of the Fireplace Room by cleaning, sanitizing, and a huge amount of effort, much of which was provided by our dear Simon Dogara, a man who came to this country on a mission to seek to find support and help for a mission he has established to bring Muslims and Christians together in a very troubled part of the world, Nigeria.

You will find information about his project in this issue, and those who can, please provide him with some help. He has been a Godsend to us. We have two other “interns” from the Hartford International University for Religion and Peace assigned to our church. Amar is from Lebanon and Phillipe is from Cameroon. They have helped us while learning about what we are trying to do to help our communities. They have done work on Friday Gatherings and have helped us find homes for refrigerators no longer needed.

We give thanks for the volunteer work done by Ismael and Nilda that enabled people to receive refrigerators, help in accessing food, and by acquiring medical equipment needed by a woman who could not walk without it. This couple has devoted their lives to the work of their church, not Grace, and Nilda's husband helps when there is a need at Grace. Nilda, as most of you know, provides administrative leadership, **plus**, to Grace. Her energy has no bounds.

Back to the changes... thanks to a gift from a dear friend and supporter of our ministry, we were able to have the kitchen and Fireplace Room sanitized, and we acquired two very large, commercial-grade pieces of equipment replacing the six refrigerators and freezers that were in disrepair or meant for home use, not for our purposes. His contribution enabled the sanitizing, the new equipment, and other steps we have taken to improve our church facilities, inside and out. More to come!

The leader of the Center for Leadership and Justice and Executive Director of GHIAA, Corey Mackey, has suffered a brain tumor, and has survived brain surgery. All of us engaged in GHIAA are praying for her recovery. She has been a force in the success of GHIAA in addressing serious problems in our Greater Hartford communities. Please keep her in your prayers.

We have also suffered the loss of many members of families associated with Grace and members who have encountered sickness and/or death. Gladys Jackson's dear husband Billie, died in his sleep weeks ago. Gladys has cared for him since a stroke made him a paraplegic. His life as a veteran and a fireman was lived in service and his suffering and hers would last 18 years. We will be celebrating his life on November 21st. Emma Coleman-Carr has faced several family members passing away after much suffering and old age. She and Rodney have traveled to pay their respects and comfort all those who remain.

Just recently, a Matriarch of our church, Edith Mamet, died in her sleep. A celebration of her life will take place at Grace on November 4th at 11:00 am, with Guenther, and many family members, including at least one from Germany.

O Lord, support us all the day long of this troubled life, until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes and the busy world is hushed, the fevered life is over, and our work is done. Then, in your mercy, grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?"—Psalm 22:1

Dear church,

As Lutherans, we are accustomed to holding tension between two truths. Thus the ELCA denounces the egregious acts of Hamas, acts that have led to unspeakable loss of life and hope. At the same time the ELCA denounces the indiscriminate retaliation of Israel against the Palestinian people, both Christian and Muslim.

For the past week we have borne witness to the horrors of the escalating crisis between Israel and Hamas. We also watch a growing humanitarian crisis in Gaza as Israel blocks food, water, fuel and medical supplies and as airstrikes continue to cause unbearable civilian casualties ahead of a just-announced ground assault. We see Israelis and families around the world in the agonizing wait for word about the fate of loved ones killed or taken hostage by Hamas. We are in anguish, grieving and praying for all people who are living in trauma, fear and uncertainty.

Among us are Palestinian Lutherans who are fearful for their families, their communities and their homeland. In our communities we have Jewish and Muslim neighbors, who are also facing the horrors of this crisis and its impact on their loved ones.

It is difficult to find words that suffice in the complexity of this moment, and in the web of relationships that bind us together, as church, with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and our interreligious partners. Yet God has called us to be a people who stand with others amid suffering.

We must also call a thing a thing. The power exerted against all Palestinian people — through the occupation, the expansion of settlements and the escalating violence — must be called out as a root cause of what we are witnessing. We are committed to our long-standing accompaniment of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land.

The God who liberates us calls us to be a liberating witness. May it be so.

In Christ,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in
America



Things you can do:

- Find updated resources and statements from the ELCA - <https://elca.org/Israel-Hamas%20War>
- Join our partner Churches for Middle East Peace for prayer every Wednesday from 12:30 to 1 p.m. Eastern time. Register here -<https://cmep.org/event/pray-for-peace-2/>
- Call your lawmakers today through the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121 and urge them to take action to deescalate the conflict and uphold unrestricted humanitarian aid to Gaza. Find your member of Congress at [govtrak](https://govtrak.org).
- Support Lutheran Disaster Response

You may notice that we sometimes publicize statements and other information from organizations of which we are members. We will never share information that did not go through our internal vetting process, so you should feel free to share such information on behalf of your church.

HEBREW COLLEGE - A MESSAGE TO OUR COMMUNITY

by Rabbi Sharon Cohen Anisfeld - Oct 16, 2023

Like so many of you, I spent much of last week searching for language to describe and respond to the new reality in which we find ourselves. As Israeli novelist David Grossman wrote last Thursday in the *Financial Times*, “I look at people’s faces and see shock. Numbness. Our hearts are weighed down by constant burden. Over and over again we say to each other: it’s a nightmare. A nightmare beyond comparison. No words to describe it. No words to contain it.”



For me personally, some important language came unexpectedly while I was sitting in shul this past Shabbat morning. Our teacher R. Allan Lehmann was serving as gabbai at our minyan, and as he offered a mi she’berach for each person who had been called up for an aliyah la’torah, he concluded with the words, “b’toch she’ar avelei ameinu” — “among all the mourners of our people.” It was an exquisitely simple and profound gesture of pastoral care. I hadn’t understood until that moment how deeply I needed to be named as a mourner, among all the mourners of our people. I wept with recognition and relief.

Many of you have been reaching out, wondering what to think, what to say, what to do.

Let’s not let the worst days in the last 50 years of Jewish history fragment us.

Sadly, we know we are only at the beginning of a very long, difficult, and uncertain road. A road that will make new demands of all of us as Jewish leaders. Heartbreakingly, it is also a road riddled with the risk of communal rupture and fragmentation — at a time when we so desperately long to come together, to hold one another and to be held, in our shared grief, fear, and love.

I have no road map for this moment, and I am wary of anyone who says they do. But I want to share some thoughts on what I believe this terribly dark hour for our people asks of us.

1. **Allow yourself to be at a loss for words.** The speechlessness that we feel in the face of what we have witnessed is a sign of humanity and of humility. Honor it, protect it, do not rush past it.
2. **Listen to the moral voice within you that knows there is no context, no intellectual contortion that can possibly justify Hamas’ acts of horror. These are acts that deserve nothing but our unequivocal condemnation.** I have asked myself, again and again and again over the course of the last week, why this seems so hard for some good people to do (I’m not even talking about the shocking celebration of these acts in some quarters). There are many answers to this question, some more sinister than others. I recommend that you listen to the very powerful sermons given on this topic this past Shabbat by Rabbi Sharon Brous (**We’ve Lost So Much. Let’s Not Lose Our Damn Minds** – Rabbi Sharon Brous | Bereishit 5784 / 10.15.2023 – YouTube) and Rabbi Angela Warnick Buchdahl (**Israel At War: In the Beginning There Was The Word** | Rabbi Angela Buchdahl – YouTube). To everything Sharon and Angela so eloquently express, I would only add – I suspect that, for some, blaming the actions of Hamas on Israeli occupation is a way of trying to hold onto a world that makes sense, a world in which all hate flows from hurt, a world in which we can somehow keep horror at bay. I understand this impulse, but I believe its impact is insidious — blaming victims of unbearable cruelty for their own suffering, for

the sake of preserving our own ideological and moral comfort and convenience.

3. **Let yourself be uncertain about what Israel should do next in this impossibly painful and frightening moment.** We are already being bombarded with requests to sign petitions, make statements, and participate in protests. Many of us understandably feel a growing sense of urgency as conditions worsen in Gaza and we fear an even more severe humanitarian crisis. I trust that every member of this community longs desperately to do what is possible to prevent further suffering and death of innocent civilians, both Palestinian and Israeli. I hear the same longing from my Israeli friends and family as well. Let us be very, very humble as we share ideas about how best to do so. Beware of facile answers.

4. **Do not equate concern for Palestinian suffering and the loss of innocent Palestinian lives with betrayal of the Jewish people.** Let us not allow the inhumanity of Hamas to strip us of our basic humanity. Here I share the powerful words of my colleague, Rabbi Shawn Ruby, an Orthodox rabbi who lives in Zichron Yaakov. We've been friends and part of the Bronfman Youth Fellowship community together for the last 30 years. Last Monday he wrote these words to the Bronfman list serve (shared here with his permission):

- I live in Israel. I have a child in the IDF. I am attending the funeral tomorrow morning of a young man whom I have known since he was a child who was killed on the first day of fighting. I am in unbearable pain.
- That said, I have no problem with people raising concern, mourning, sadness, or horror about the loss of life in Gaza alongside with that on our side. The human tragedy there is overwhelming. Recognizing that does not diminish from the Jewish/Israeli tragedy.

For all of us reacting one way or the other to each other, let's take a breath, and exercise some compassion and forgiveness for those of us who are reacting to a horrifying situation by being more unwilling to hear the other side than usual. Let's not let the worst days in the last 50 years of Jewish history fragment us.

Let's not let the worst days in the last 50 years of Jewish history fragment us.

Every day, I hear stories from friends and students and alumni in Israel about the ordinary and extraordinary ways in which people are caring for each other — through daily acts of kindness, concrete expressions of hesed. I am inspired and in awe.

Those of us living on this side of the ocean are not living through what they are living through there, but we are feeling our own grief, fear, loneliness, and pain. Let us learn from their example. As my friend and colleague, Rabbi Mishael Zion, wrote to his community in Jerusalem last week: "Seek to be in the company of others who can support you and share their warmth with you. In addition, seek to give and act in support of others . . . allow yourself to experience every emotion that arises, but try not to dwell on it too much. Instead, focus on actions and activities that are aimed at doing good and are spiritually uplifting."



Sending compassion and strength to everyone on this list, and special *hizuk* to those of you living in Israel. Thank you for staying in touch as you are able. Our love and prayers are constantly with you.
Rak besorot tovot.

*Rabbi Sharon Cohen Anisfeld is president of **Hebrew College** in Newton, MA. She writes and teaches widely, weaving together Torah, rabbinic commentary, and contemporary poetry and literature in her wise and compassionate approach to the complexities of the human experience and the search for healing and hope in a beautiful but fractured world.*

STATEMENT ON THE ESCALATING HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN GAZA

New England Synod
Monday Medley
October 16, 2023



PATRIARCHS AND HEADS OF THE CHURCHES IN JERUSALEM

STATEMENT ON THE ESCALATING HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN GAZA
Jerusalem, October 13, 2023

"God created mankind in his own image" (Gen 1,27)

Today, an emergency committee of the Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem met for prayer and consultation over the grave humanitarian crisis that has befallen all of us.

Our beloved Holy Land has changed dramatically over the past week. We are witnessing a new cycle of violence with an unjustifiable attack against all civilians. Tensions continue to rise and more innocent and vulnerable people are paying the ultimate price as the dramatic level of death and destruction in Gaza clearly show.

The order to evacuate the north of Gaza and to ask 1.1 million people—including all the members of our Christian communities there—to relocate to the south within 24 hours will only deepen an already disastrous humanitarian catastrophe. Gaza's entire population is being deprived of electricity, water, fuel supplies, food, and medicine. According to UN sources, 423,000 people have already been displaced because of the destruction of their homes. Many civilians in Gaza have said to us that there are no realistic ways in which they can evacuate to safety in any direction.

We call upon the State of Israel, with the support of the International Community, to allow humanitarian supplies to enter Gaza so that the thousands of innocent civilians may receive medical treatment and basic supplies. Moreover, we call upon all parties to de-escalate this war in order to save innocent lives while still serving the cause of justice.

Finally, in support of all those who have suffered in this war and of the families reeling from the violence, we call upon the people of our congregations and all those of goodwill around the world to observe a Day of Prayer and Fasting on Tuesday, October 17th.

There is yet time to stop the hatred.

—The Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem

DEHUMANIZATION THROUGH PROPAGANDA BREEDS HATE CRIMES



October 15, 2023 - **Americans for Justice in Palestine Action (AJP Action) and American Muslims for Palestine (AMP)** condemn the heinous Hate Crime against 6-year-old Palestinian American Wadea Al-Fayoume and his mother from Plainfield, IL. We urge President Joseph Biden to promptly convene a meeting with the family of Wadea Al-Fayoume to condemn anti-Palestinian bigotry unreservedly, and to call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza.



While President Biden released a statement rejecting Islamophobia and condemning the murder of the young boy, he must take accountability for amplifying deadly, one-sided propaganda and walk back his prior statements regarding the situation in Gaza. Uplifting Israeli propaganda and standing idle as Israel commits war crimes against Palestinians will only further enable anti-Palestinian hate crimes within the U.S.

The mother, Hannan Shahin, and her son, Wadea Al-Fayoume, lived on the ground floor of a house for two years with no previous notable issues or incidents with the landlord, reported as 71-year-old Joseph M. Czuba. It was determined that Wadea and his mother were “targeted by the suspect due to them being Muslim.” According to written text messages sent by the mother to the boy's father while in the hospital, the landlord tried to choke the mother and subsequently attacked her with a knife, yelling, “You Muslims must die!” When she ran to the bathroom to call 911, she found her son stabbed 26 times and ultimately succumbing to his wounds.

The crime committed against the Al-Fayoume family in Plainfield, Illinois, serves as an acute illustration of escalating Islamophobia and anti-Palestinian racism. These destructive sentiments have been exacerbated by remarks emanating from many politicians, including President Biden, concerning the volatile situation in Gaza. Mainstream media propagated flat-out lies, and Israeli officials framed the Palestinians in Gaza as “human animals,” thereby contributing to the otherization and dehumanization of Palestinians. Such propaganda fueled Islamophobic and anti-Palestinian bigotry in the United States, creating the atmosphere that led to this Hate Crime. This heinous act is not an isolated incident; rather, it represents a grim consequence of propaganda, animus, and prejudice permeating our society.

The gravity of public discourse cannot be overstated. Remarks by public figures, whether factual or misleading, play a pivotal role in shaping societal norms that either advance harmony or instigate discord. The outcome of such rhetoric is manifest: a young life has been tragically truncated, a family irrevocably shattered, and a community left grieving for hundreds of dead children in Gaza and now at home.

In light of the preceding, we issue an urgent plea to President Biden to:

- Arrange an immediate and personal meeting with the aggrieved family to extend emotional and moral support during this devastating period.
- Publicly and categorically denounce anti-Palestinian racism, propaganda, and dehumanizing language.
- Direct law enforcement agencies to enhance protective measures for Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim-American communities, including safeguarding educational institutions and places of worship.
- Exercise his diplomatic leverage to demand an immediate ceasefire in Gaza.

DEHUMANIZATION THROUGH PROPAGANDA BREEDS HATE CRIMES

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We call on the U.S. media to be responsible in its coverage, acknowledge Palestinian suffering, and stop inciting violence and hatred against the Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim communities.

We assert that the actions mentioned above represent a minimal commitment toward honoring the memory of young Wadea and mitigating the likelihood of future tragedies and Hate Crimes. Addressing the root causes, rather than mere symptoms, of this burgeoning tide of hatred is paramount.

The voice and actions of President Biden are indispensable at this critical moment.

The AMP and AJP Action teams offer our utmost and heartfelt condolences to the Al-Fayoume family.

Signed,

American Muslims for Palestine (AMP)

Americans for Justice in Palestine Action (AJP Action)

GAZA, COLONIAL VIOLENCE, AND THE PURSUIT OF A JUST PEACE



The fighting in Gaza that has shocked the world requires a clear and principled response. For FOSNA, as an organization that promotes the message of Palestinian Liberation Theology and the Christian perspective on which it is based, a number of statements need to be made:

The first thing we have to say, which is intrinsic to our theology, is that violence and war are never the answer. We need to realize, Palestinians and Israelis alike, that any solution must be based on justice and not the destruction of the other party. At the very least, there must exist a clear distinction between civilian and military targets, between fighters and noncombatants. This is a rule that applies to each side; whatever the justifications, those who choose war and violence in the pursuit of their goals must use every possible means to avoid killing noncombatants or targeting civilian infrastructure. I fear we will see thousands of civilian casualties in the coming few days, primarily among Palestinians who have no access to bomb shelters and no organized state structures to defend them. We are distressed that instead of calling for a quick end to the fighting, many are praising it while doubling down on their ability to inflict maximum damage upon their enemies.

Second, this war reveals the veracity of the message we have long been communicating: today's violence was the inevitable outcome of Israel's persistent and systematic violation of the rights of Palestinians. In the case of Gaza, two thirds of whose population are refugees from the 1948 Nakba and who have been suffering an inhumane siege since 2007, today's outbreak is the most foreseeable outcome. Despite what pundits might think or how things might appear on the surface, an unjust status quo cannot go on forever. The biblical prophets, and all who would stand in the prophetic tradition, consistently proclaim a discordant message over and against the destructive powers that be and their ideological enablers. It is a message that God is sovereign and oppression cannot and will not prevail. The world usually measures things in terms of immediately observable surface elements, tending to be impressed by the power, wealth, and influence of those in command. It takes a prophet to see beyond that and to warn of uncomfortable truths that can be ignored by the powerful. This continues to be the role of those who believe in justice for the Palestinians. Despite the tremendous power imbalance, Palestinian rights need to be addressed and must

be taken into account. The Abrahamic Accords, for instance, are arrangements based on shallow interests that deliberately failed to take Palestinians into account, precisely because they lack the political clout. The events in Gaza today show that such failure to take their interests into account will inevitably explode and force itself upon reality.

Finally, the current round of fighting must lead all parties to think in new terms and not be lulled again into doubling down on policies that have failed time and again.

Palestinians and Israelis must seek ways to live together in peace and harmony. This requires that the demands of justice be met. This is not a conflict that can be resolved through the violent overpowering of one's enemies. For this reason, it is essential that Hamas is no longer excluded from the conversation. They must be brought into a fruitful process leading towards peace with justice. For many years, Israel and its supporters thought they could neutralize, pacify, or ignore Gaza and the Palestinians there. Israel thought it could fragment the Palestinians and isolate both Gaza and Hamas. It is now abundantly clear that cannot be done.

As the fighting continues and the number of victims on both sides increase, we must raise our voice and call for peace: a just peace based on equality, human rights, and dignity, and not on supremacy and colonial domination.

JEWISH VOICE FOR PEACE CALLS ON ALL PEOPLE OF CONSCIENCE TO STOP IMMINENT GENOCIDE

THE WIRE

The Israeli government has declared a genocidal war on the people of Gaza. As an organization that works for a future where Palestinians and Israelis and all people live in equality and freedom, **we call on all people of conscience to stop imminent genocide of Palestinians.**



Jewish Voice for Peace mourns deeply for the over 1,200 Israelis killed, the families destroyed, including many of our own, and fears for the lives of Israelis taken hostage. Many are still counting the dead, looking for missing loved ones, devastated by the losses.

We wholeheartedly agree with [leading Palestinian rights groups](#): the massacres committed by

Hamas against Israeli civilians are horrific war crimes. There is no justification in international law for the indiscriminate killing of civilians or the holding of civilian hostages.

And now, horrifyingly, the Israeli and American governments are weaponizing these deaths to fuel a genocidal war against Palestinians in Gaza, pledging to “open the gates of hell.” This war is a continuation of the Nakba, when in 1948, tens of thousands of

JVP CALLS ON ALL PEOPLE OF CONSCIENCE TO STOP IMMINENT GENOCIDE

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Palestinians fleeing violence sought refuge in Gaza. [It's a continuation of 75 years of Israeli occupation and apartheid.](#)

Already this week, over 1,000 Palestinians in Gaza have been killed. The Israeli government has wrought complete and total devastation on Palestinians across Gaza, attacking hospitals, schools, mosques, marketplaces, and apartment buildings.

As we write, the Israeli government has shut off all electricity to Gaza. Hospitals cannot save lives, the internet will collapse, people will have no phones to communicate with the outside world, and drinking water for two million people will run out. Gaza will be plunged into darkness as Israel turns its neighborhoods to rubble. Still worse, Israel has openly stated an intention to commit mass atrocities and even genocide, with Prime Minister Netanyahu saying [the Israeli response will "reverberate for generations."](#)

And right now, the U.S. government is enabling the Israeli government's atrocities, sending weapons, moving U.S. warships into proximity and sending U.S.-made munitions, and pledging blanket support and international cover for any actions taken by the Israeli government. Furthermore, the U.S. government officials are spreading racist, hateful, and incendiary rhetoric that will fuel mass atrocities and genocide.

The loss of Israeli lives is being used by our government to justify the rush to genocide, to provide moral cover for the immoral push for more weapons and more death. Palestinians are being dehumanized by our own government, by the media, by far too many U.S. Jewish institutions. [Defense Minister Yoav Gallant](#) said that Israel is "fighting human animals" and should "act accordingly," As Jews, we know what happens when people are called animals.

We can and we must stop this. Never again means never again — for anyone.

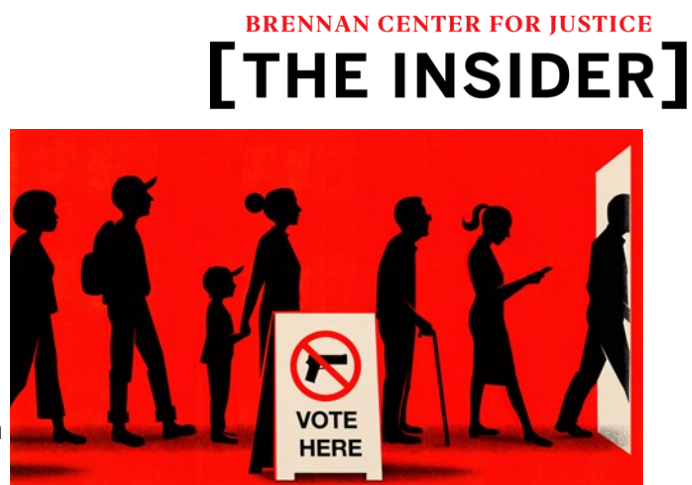
We call on all people of conscience to stop the imminent genocide of Palestinians. We demand our government work towards de-escalation, that it immediately stop sending weapons to the Israeli military. A future of peace and safety for all, grounded in justice, freedom and equality for all, is still the only option.

Tell Congress: Don't fuel this devastating violence.

We cannot stand by while our politicians fuel genocide in Gaza.

GUNS AND VOTING

Even when the Supreme Court expanded gun rights last year, it noted that banning guns at polling places remains constitutional. Yet only 12 states and the District of Columbia prohibit both open and concealed carry of firearms at the polls. A new report from the Brennan Center and Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence finds serious gaps in legal protections for voters and election workers against gun violence. It includes recommendations that are especially urgent in light of increasing political extremism. To ensure that elections remain peaceful, states



must ban guns at places where votes are cast and counted and enact stronger anti-intimidation laws.

Members of Congress recently reintroduced the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, which would restore the Voting Rights Act to full strength. The Supreme Court has severely weakened the landmark 1965 civil rights law, opening the door to dozens of state laws making it harder to vote, particularly for people of color. The bill would modernize and repair the Voting Rights Act so it can once again provide full protection for American citizens at the ballot box.

WHO IS INSURING U.S. COAL?



Many insurance companies claim to understand this and have created their own policies to restrict the coverage they can provide to coal mines.

But we know corporations love to talk a big game and then not follow through when it comes to climate commitments.

So I, along with other researchers at Public Citizen and Insure Our Future, analyzed records from the top 25 U.S. coal mines to see if insurance companies are *really* living up to their promises.

Here's what we found:

In 2022, **AIG, Liberty Mutual, Lloyd's of London, Swiss Re, and Zurich** covered at least 41% of U.S. coal production, with AIG alone insuring at least 28%.

AIG published a policy last year to restrict its coal coverage, but is still renewing coal contracts.

AIG's promise on coal is either toothless or being ignored.

Liberty Mutual and Swiss Re appear to be violating their own coal policies by providing insurance for companies that make the majority of their money from coal.

Lloyd's of London contradicts its own net-zero emissions pledge by not actually restricting coal insurance offered by members of its marketplace.

Zurich's coal policy contains a major loophole that allows it to insure thermal coal mines.

While climate-related disasters devastate communities, AIG and others break their promises and continue to prop up the industries driving the crisis!

We can't let these companies off the hook: AIG, Liberty Mutual, Lloyd's of London, Swiss Re, and Zurich must be held accountable to the climate commitments they've made.

Kerrina (*she/they*)

Public Citizen

P.S. Want to read our full report? Take a look <https://default.salsalabs.org/T7931fbb3-b784-4d65-8113-939a5cf9a677/09cfaa40-a17c-4751-80b3-603ee36378ed>



MUNATARE EMPOWERMENT CENTER



by Dugara Simon Danbaba

Dogara Simon Danbaba has a Vision

to start a nonprofit organization that is centered on building relationships between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria by providing some form of employment for young people in our community.

My name is Dogara Simon Danbaba, and I came to the United States last fall from Nigeria to pursue my graduate studies in International Peacebuilding at Hartford International University for Religion and Peace formally known as (Hartford Seminary). During my time here in Hartford, I have been mentored by wonderful individuals such as Pastor Rick Kremer, James Carter, Courtney Bourns, Steve Havira, and Rich Carman. Their guidance and support have played a pivotal role in my personal and professional growth.



The reason I am writing to you today is to share the exciting news about a nonprofit organization that we have established, thanks to the support and guidance of the aforementioned mentors.

These great individuals along with a number of other local stakeholders have helped develop my vision into a social enterprise called Munatare Empowerment Center. Munatare means "we are together," my passion is to have this center empower the youth of Northern Nigeria to help create resilience against joining terrorism and violent extremism in society. The mission and vision are laid out on the website; (munatare.org).

While we have made significant progress in laying the foundation for this organization, we now require financial resources to turn our vision into a reality. This is where we kindly seek your support. Your contribution would enable us to raise \$75,000 to start this enterprise. Two-thirds of the funds will go towards the actual purchase of motorbikes and motorized tricycles and the remaining third will be set aside for start-up costs. We want to invite you to invest in a youth in Nigeria. If you would consider donating \$1,000 you would be providing one youth the opportunity to lease, and ultimately own a motorbike. A \$3,000 donation will provide a youth with the opportunity to purchase a tricycle.

I would be honored to discuss our organization further and explore potential ways in which you can contribute to our cause. I am more than willing to provide additional information, answer any questions you may have, or arrange a meeting to discuss this opportunity in greater detail.

Your involvement would be a significant step toward empowering the youth of Northern Nigeria and making a lasting impact on their lives. Your generosity and support will be deeply appreciated and never forgotten.

Thank you for considering our request. We are excited about the positive change we can create together. Please feel free to contact me at dogarasimondanbaba@gmail.com or by phone at 8607965632 to discuss this further.

Once again, thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dogara Simon Danbaba

**Executive Director of
Munatare Empowerment Center**



Social Enterprise Concept

Multi-Faith, Social Enterprise, Non-Profit Entity.

Initial focus:

Lease to own program for moto-bikes and tricycles to the youth of Northern Nigeria. Financing provided across religious lines.

- Borrowers sponsored/supported by their own church and Mosques.
- Bikes and tricycles will be paid back over 1 year through weekly payments
- Single lease will ultimately support multiple leases due to payback.
- Church/Mosque will receive fee for lease program

Net Proceeds will support growth and overhead.

Encourages responsibility/savings skills for youth.

Empowering one youth is equivalent to disarming 10-20 young persons over time.

Without Opportunity

The youth will have no path and will end up with terrorist groups.



In 2021, Jared Kushner's investment firm, Affinity Partners, quickly amassed a staggering \$2 billion investment from a Saudi fund overseen by the crown prince of Saudi Arabia himself. This came just 6 months after Kushner ended his White House role as Trump's foreign policy adviser.

Remember, this is the same person Mohammed bin Salman boasted about having "in his pocket." This is the same person who played a massive role in sealing a \$110 billion arms deal with Saudi Arabia in 2017.

Given Kushner's significant involvement in shaping the Trump administration's foreign policy strategies, especially those concerning Saudi Arabia, this rapid financial windfall raises several alarming questions. Was there a "quid pro quo" arrangement? Did Kushner's decisions in office benefit him financially down the line?

A subpoena into Kushner's Saudi-backed investment firm can help unearth potential conflicts of interest that could have dire ramifications, and Congressman Jamie Raskin's recent letter brings these to the forefront.

In the letter, Raskin meticulously details the timeline of investments into Kushner's firm, emphasizing the potential for "quid pro quo" scenarios based on Kushner's former role in the White House and his engagement with U.S. foreign policy regarding Saudi Arabia. **This letter is not just an account but a call to action, pressing for a rigorous bipartisan investigation.**

[Help preserve the integrity of U.S. foreign policy. Become a grassroots co-signer of Congressman Jamie Raskin's letter today and demand Congress launch a robust investigation into Jared Kushner's dealings with Saudi Arabia now.](#)

We all know who MbS is. He is a brutal dictator with a long track record of human rights violations. This week actually marked the five year anniversary of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi's brutal murder by Saudi agents acting on MbS's order. That's the person Jared Kushner got \$2 BILLION from.

This isn't just a quest for truth; it's a stand for the very principles upon which democracy is built. The magnitude of these transactions and their potential implications cannot be understated.

But House Republicans, under House Oversight Committee Chair James Comer, flatly denied Rep. Jamie Raskin's request for a bipartisan inquiry into Kushner's dealings. That's why we need to raise our voices now!

[Add your name to this petition and join us as we champion the cause of transparency, ethics, and integrity. Demand that Congress launch a thorough investigation into Jared Kushner's dealings with Saudi Arabia.](#)

Thank you for working for peace,
Stephen, Faith, Shahed and the Win Without War team

P.S. Here's the [link](https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/sites/democrats.oversight.house.gov/files/2023-08-31.JBR%20to%20Comer%20re%20Kushner%20Subpoena.pdf) to read Rep. Raskin's letter.
<https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/sites/democrats.oversight.house.gov/files/2023-08-31.JBR%20to%20Comer%20re%20Kushner%20Subpoena.pdf>

SOLIDARITY WITH ARMENIANS

by Jonathan Kuttab



Nagorno-Karabakh (known to Armenians as Artsakh) is a disputed region in the South Caucasus, inhabited until recent days primarily by ethnic Christian Armenians. The whole area lies within the territory of Azerbaijan, but its inhabitants are all Armenian who wish to be either an independent state or annexed to Armenia. With the collapse of the USSR and withdrawal of the Soviet empire from the Transcaucasus in the final years of the last century, a simmering dispute emerged between the Armenians and the Azerbaijanis as to who would exercise control of this

enclave. Wars and frequent border clashes over the area have been fought between Armenia and Azerbaijan, but last week, in a swift and bloody move, Azerbaijani forces – who incidentally get 70% of their weapons from Israel as well as Turkey – overran the region. Most of its indigenous Armenian population (of approximately 100,000) had to flee the enclave in sheer terror for their future.

We watched with horror as the entire Armenian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh/Artsakh was overrun by Azerbaijani forces and as the population was forced to flee *en masse* in a very clear case of ethnic cleansing. The population was understandably fearful of a repeat of the massacres from the Armenian Genocide during the First World War. Armenians have been surviving for years with the constant fear that they would see a repeat of these crimes. These fears have been prompted by periodic attacks and intermittent sieges of the enclave by Azerbaijan forces, who have not hid their hostility or desire to take over the whole region. A nine-month blockade of the Lachin corridor, the only route connecting Armenia to the enclave, was undertaken by Azerbaijani forces. Russian forces, who provided some measure of protection for the Armenians and oversaw this corridor between Armenia and the enclave, have been thinned out by the ongoing war in the Ukraine. Apparently, that war also provided enough of a distraction for the world community, as Azerbaijani forces swooped in and overran the entire area.

As a Palestinian Christian, the images of long columns of helpless civilians fleeing their homes reminds me of the 1948 Nakba and the horror of those chased from their homes to become refugees, perhaps never to be allowed to return. Ethnic Cleansing, which is clearly illegal under international law, seems to still occur even in the twenty-first century, as the international community stands by watching helplessly. In particular, the United States, which hypocritically proclaims the need for a “rules-based” international system while actively orchestrating military assistance to the Ukrainians and organizing sanctions against Russia, has had little or nothing to say about this travesty except for a few tepid words by Secretary of State Anthony Blinken. Palestinians do not only oppose such ethnic cleansing on the basis of principled solidarity and support for international law, but we do so also as a result of our shared experience. Many of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide, from the period of 1915-1923, found refuge in Palestine. They were housed in the Armenian Convent and other properties in the Old City of Jerusalem and were gradually absorbed into the life of the Palestinian Christian and Muslim communities there. Unlike the Jewish refugees who came to Palestine fleeing persecution in Europe and ultimately the horrors of the Holocaust, the Armenians never wished to conquer the land in which they sought refuge nor displace the native inhabitants, as did the Zionists, but they became truly integrated as an integral element of the Palestinian community. I grew

up with many such Armenians in Jerusalem, seeing them as Palestinian as anyone else but with their own distinct Palestine-friendly culture, language, and history as well. The famous blue and white “Palestinian Pottery” sold to many tourists actually originated in Western Armenia, and now it has become fully part of Palestinian culture. Armenians found a niche in some industries like photography and goldsmithing, and their Arabic accent was very distinctive, but they have always been seen as fully Palestinian and joined in Palestinian life and politics as part of the rich tapestry of multi-ethnic, multi-cultural Palestine. One of them, Dr. Hassasian, even became the Palestinian Ambassador to England.

They, like other Palestinians across the whole swath of Occupied Palestine, are also currently taking the brunt of extremist Jews, who are regularly spitting on and harassing them, and who are trying to take over much of their property in the Old City as part of their efforts to Judaize the city. Literally, one has only to walk across the Armenian Quarter in the Old City of Jerusalem to feel the harassment and hostility of Israeli settlers and Orthodox Jews, as they walk through these pathways on the way to the Jewish Quarter or the Western Wall. Spitting, scuffles, swearing, and shouting insults are commonplace, but they hardly lead to any action or follow-up by the Israeli police.

While attempts are underway to marginalize and erase the Armenian-Palestinian presence in Jerusalem, their sisters and brothers in Nagorno-Karabakh are being violently overrun and ethnically cleansed yet again from their historic lands. We stand in solidarity with our Armenian siblings in their tragic hour of need, and we stand firmly in favor of international law and norms in a world free of prejudice, racism, and ethnic violence.



THURSDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2023

"As with every authentic encounter with Christ, this experience of faith summoned her to mission. St. Therese could define her mission in these words: "I shall desire in heaven the same thing as I do now on earth: to love Jesus and to make him loved"."

Pope Francis

FAR-RIGHT CATHOLIC NETWORK EWTN IS TRYING TO INCITE FEAR AND SPREAD LIES ABOUT POPE FRANCIS'S SYNOD. TELL THE CEO: STOP YOUR JOURNALISTIC MALPRACTICE



**FAITHFUL
AMERICA**

Love thy neighbor.
No exceptions.

The Catholic synod has begun. **This could be Pope Francis's defining legacy:** A robust, diverse, global discussion about the future of the church where it's not just cardinals and bishops who talk, listen, and vote but women and laypeople too.

Yet despite the global enthusiasm, **EWTN -- the Fox News of religious broadcasting -- is waging a dangerous campaign to undermine Pope Francis and the inclusive synod.**

While these meetings are a return to a tradition from the earliest centuries of Christianity, infamous anti-Francis EWTN personalities like Fr. Gerald Murray and author Robert Royal are calling the process a "hostile takeover" of the Catholic Church, "the synod on homosexuality," and a "moment of crisis" for Christianity.

Fact-based religion journalists are appalled. **"It's a real misinformation, bordering on disinformation, campaign,"** Fordham's David Gibson told the National Catholic Reporter. We know why the Catholic far-right spreads this misinformation: to divide Catholics and derail Pope Francis's efforts to build a more inclusive, loving, and pastoral church. We won't stand for it. Together, let's show EWTN that a nationwide movement of Catholics and ecumenical friends embrace truth and inclusion -- and that we reject the anti-Francis misinformation campaign.

[Tell EWTN: Cover Pope Francis with truth and facts. Stop spreading lies about his synod.](#)

Pope Francis has expressed openness to discussing blessing same-sex couples and even ordaining women as deacons -- inclusive, loving changes that would be welcomed by many American Catholics.

So EWTN's coverage isn't just inciting fear and division -- it's also making it harder to get the synod off the ground and move forward with critical conversations about the future of the church.

EWTN's anchors are as guilty of undermining Pope Francis as its pundits. They have encouraged synod members to violate the Pope's request for confidentiality until the synod concludes. Host Raymond Arroyo even echoed one far-right German cardinal's inflammatory rhetoric, telling viewers, "This is a hostile takeover of the Catholic Church" Read that again. A hostile takeover of the Church by... the pope.

Tony Spence, the former editor-in-chief of Catholic News Service, called the misinformation "really destructive," "a serious mistrust of the Holy spirit," and a **"tragedy of irresponsible journalism," with EWTN as "the big culprit."**

As fellow Catholics and grassroots Christians, we have the power to support Pope Francis, spread the truth, and show that despite its well-funded global reach, EWTN speaks for only a small minority of far-right Catholics. Together, let's speak out now and **ensure that Pope Francis's efforts to listen to the whole church have a strong chance at success.**

[Tell EWTN's Chairman and CEO: Stop spreading anti-Francis disinformation about the synod.](#)

FAR-RIGHT CATHOLIC NETWORK EWTN IS TRYING TO INCITE FEAR AND SPREAD LIES ABOUT POPE FRANCIS'S SYNOD. TELL THE CEO: STOP YOUR JOURNALISTIC MALPRACTICE

(continued from page 19)

Thank you for everything you do to love your neighbor and stop misinformation from right-wing media.

In peace,

- Rev. Nathan (he/him), Karli (she/her), and the Faithful America team

"God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." - John 4:23-24

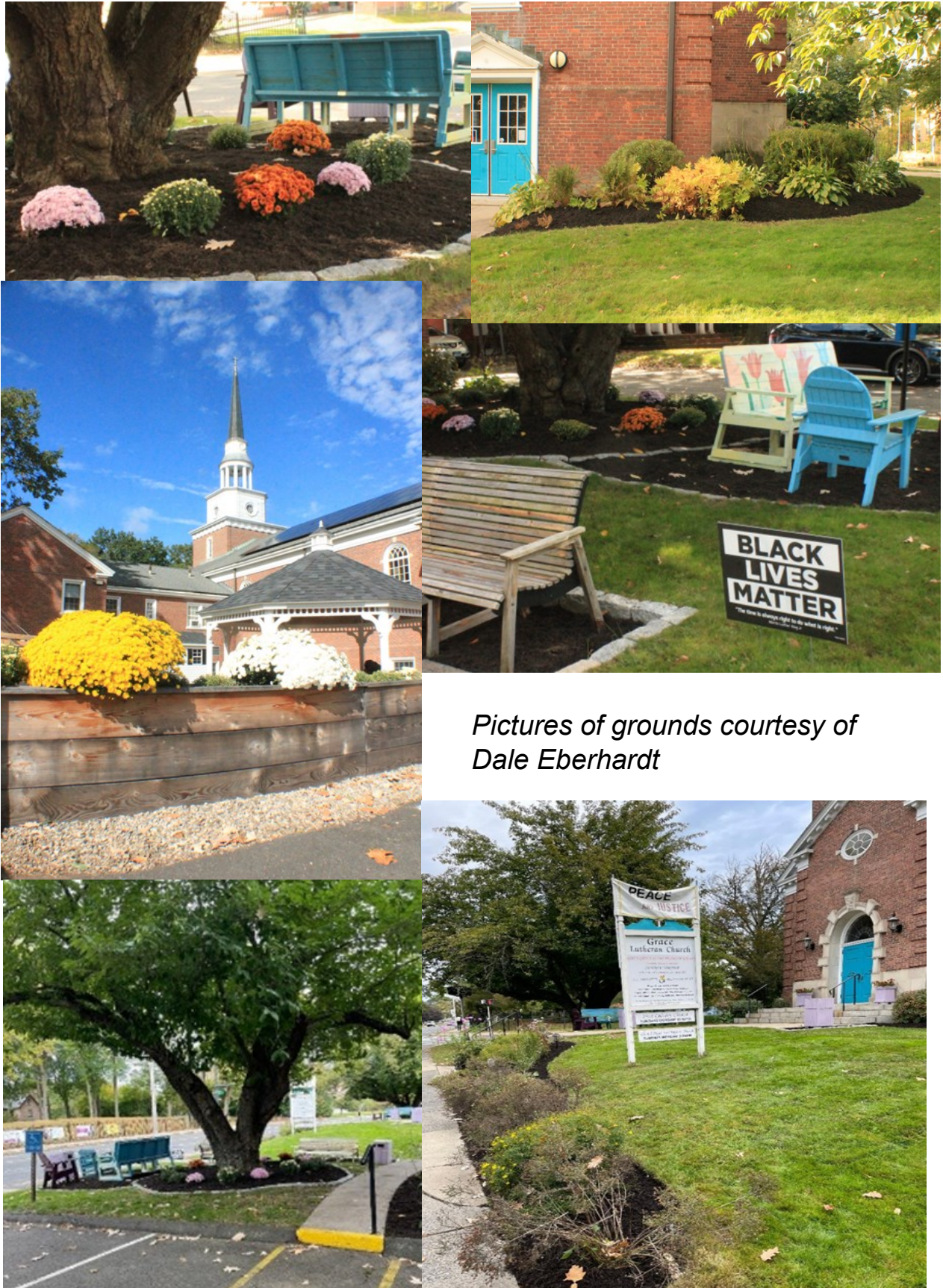
PASTOR RICK CELEBRATES HIS ORDINATION 15 YEARS AGO



*Happy Anniversary,
Pastor Rick!*




FALL 2023 AT GRACE



*Pictures of grounds courtesy of
Dale Eberhardt*

SOLAR PANEL REPORT—September 2023



 **Produced**
2.0 MWh


17% lower*
1 Sep :114.9 kWh

Maximum production day

 **Consumed**
1.5 MWh

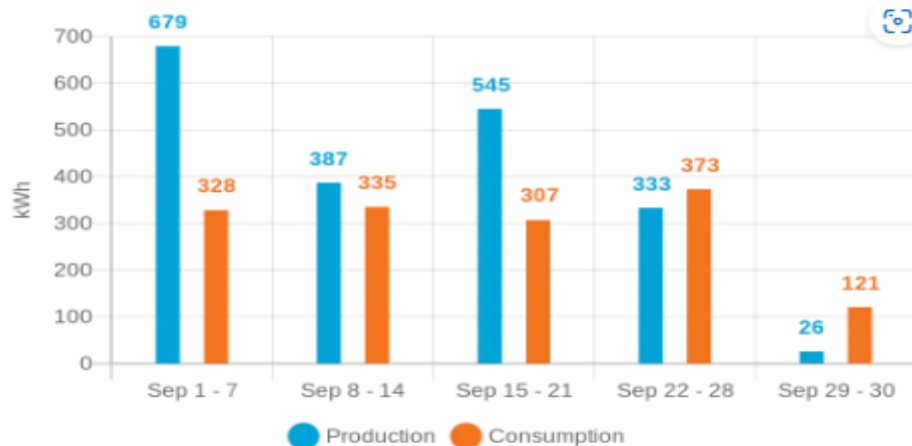
7% lower*
8 Sep :91.8 kWh


Maximum consumption day

 **Grid energy**

738.3 kWh
Imported

1.2 MWh
Exported



 **CO2 reduction**
1.43 ton

Offset equivalent to 24
Trees

 **Grid
Dependence**
50%

For this month, 50% of your
energy consumption is supplied
by the utility grid.

**Get grid
independence
with Enphase**

[Add Storage](#)

**Year-to-date
production**
19 MWh

* As compared to last month's records

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NOVEMBER 2023 BIRTHDAYS!

Happy Birthday November!

Allen Redding	11/03
Wendella Colbert	11/10
Jayden McAdams	11/11
Michael Gagnon	11/17
Dominick Mathura	11/20
Natalie Dugan	11/20
Hazel Abrom	11/22
Barbara Ruhe	11/25
David Eberly	11/26
Felicite Yigle-Kaljob	11/28



May you all be blessed as you celebrate your special days!

Did we miss your birthday or anniversary? Contact the office at 860-527-7792 or email office.gracelutheranhartford@gmail.com to update our records.

IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

NOVEMBER 7TH—VOTE!

NOVEMBER 12TH—A Congregational meeting will be held on **Sunday, November 12th immediately following the service**. A revised congregational constitution will be considered.

DECEMBER 3rd - GHIAA Core Group meeting at Urbans - 2 to 4 p.m.

Grace Lutheran Church – Readers for November 2023

Note: If you are unable to read on your assigned Sunday, please switch with someone else.

Date	Reading #	Reading	Reader	Notes
11/5	1	Revelation 7: 9-17	Dale Eberhardt	
	2	1 John 3: 1-3	Judy Butterworth-Kremer	
	Psalm	Psalm 34: 1-10	Alternating Pastor/Congregation	
11/12	1	Amos 5: 18-24	Mark or Cindy Jones	
	2	1 Thessalonians 4:13-18	Mark or Cindy Jones	
	Psalm	Psalm 70	Unison	
11/19	1	Zephaniah 1: 7, 12-18	Quincy Coleman	
	2	1 Thessalonians 5: 1-11	Kasumi Campbell	
	Psalm	Psalm 90: 1-12	Alternating Men then Women	
11/26	1	Ezekiel 34: 11-16	Lou Oliver	
	2	Ephesians 1:15-23	Dorothea Glatte	
	Psalm	Psalm 95: 1-7a	Rodney Carr	



Grace Lutheran Church
46 Woodland Street
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Our Staff and Council Leadership

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rickkremer@aol.com

Emmanuella Hart— Ministry Coordinator

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Nilda Bolorin, Parish Administrator

office.gracelutheranhartford@gmail.com

Dorothea Glatte, Lay Minister

Lloyd Smith, Lay Minister

Betsy DeRoma, President

Lou Oliver, Vice President

Dale Eberhardt, Treasurer

Judy Butterworth-Kremer, Secretary

Janice Potter, Financial Assistant

Dale Eberhardt, Organist

Emma Coleman-Carr, Altar Guild

www.graceistheplace.org

