

April 9, 2020

Dear Western District Conference Churches:

Western District Conference Israel-Palestine Task Force, in partnership with Mennonite Palestine Israel Network (MennoPIN), entreats you to pray for and share resources with people deeply in need in Gaza. For several months, the task force, along with MennoPIN, has been encouraging WDC congregations to get to know people in Gaza through the Gaza Twinning initiative. Through the initiative, willing Mennonite Church USA congregations share their desire to be paired with religious, medical, youth, or other groups in Gaza. They then share contact information and use social media to get to know each other.



One WDC congregation, Manhattan Mennonite Church, Manhattan, KS, has been in a twinning relationship for several months. Since December 2019 they have enjoyed 10 bi-weekly Zoom meetings with the Youth Vision Society (YVS) and have learned a great deal about each other. The WDC Task Force on Israel Palestine recognizes the COVID-19 pandemic threatens people in WDC and many people around the world. Even so, the urgency of the humanitarian suffering and potential threat of COVID-19 to the people of Gaza calls to our hearts to request your assistance.

To date the Gaza Ministry of Health in Gaza has documented 13 Coronavirus-infections causing the quarantine of 1000 people. The Gaza Strip is a densely populated region, with more than two million people. Suffering from a 13-year air, land, and sea blockade and three devastating wars, Gaza faces economic collapse. The poor earn their living on a daily basis and yet need to stay home because of the pandemic.

Israel-Palestine Task Force requests your help to share funds with YVS specifically for their Hand-to-Hand project. Hand-to-Hand plans to distribute as soon as possible:

- 300 food baskets vulnerable families. A \$75 gift will feed a family for 2 weeks.
- 300 hygiene kits with cleaning supplies to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Donations to the Youth Vision Society (YVS) can be made on-line through the Middle Eastern Children's Alliance (MECA) at <https://secure.everyaction.com/JkiApGXBskq8WNeolrDQ7w2>



Because of the ongoing relationship between YVS and one of our WDC congregations, the task force is confident that any gifts shared will get to Gazans most in need. MECA is a tested, secure donation site.

The spread of the Coronavirus can help us discover how much we are united with our neighbors around the globe in spite of our differences. Living from hand-to-mouth, the poor become especially vulnerable during this pandemic and the stay at home quarantine has created a dire situation. Providing a two-week supply of food and hygiene supplies will sustain the lives of Gaza's children and their families.

If you have questions, please contact the task force at 785-539-5352 or atchison@ksu.edu.

Sincerely,

Bob Atchison

Chair, WDC Israel-Palestine Task Force

