

January 17, 2019

Dear Church Members, Friends and Community Partners,

We are writing to share the news that a new group, the Palestine-Israel Justice group, has formed within our Social Justice Ministry Team. The group's primary focus is to provide information to members and friends of the congregation about the ongoing need for justice, equality and dignity for the people in Israel and Palestine.

We realize that many people have strong feelings about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. We understand that for some, even entering into conversation about this growing crisis will feel challenging, while for others, this conversation has been a long time in coming.

We know there are no easy solutions to the conflict and we understand history enough to know that a number of decisions by those in various positions of leadership, including in the government of the United States, played a role in creating the current crisis. This is quite apparent, for example, with the dire human rights situation in Gaza.

Our Unitarian Universalist principles and values call us into this work, starting with awareness and education, and eventually seeking peaceful actions urging positive change. We strongly support the right of both Israelis and Palestinians to live in peace, freedom, security and dignity. We want our country to play a positive peacemaking role and help ensure that human rights abuses cease for the benefit of all living in the region.

We will practice deep listening with one another and with our community and faith partners, with whom we will work to recognize and counter all forms of racism, including anti-Muslim, anti-Arab and anti-Jewish bigotry.

We believe the Palestine-Israel Justice group will further our congregation's justice work within our church and in the larger San Diego region. We acknowledge that we are not alone in this work. We plan to work closely with other Unitarian Universalist social justice organizations, as well as other faith and social justice allies. We look forward to engaging with you on this journey.

In Faith,

Social Justice Executive Team (Rev. Kathleen Owens, Angela Fujii, Isabella Furth, Michanne Hctor-Thompson, Erik Kaestner, Karen Lamphere) and the Co-Leaders of the Palestine-Israel Justice Group (Cathy Pfister, Steve Gelb)