



SCNCCUCC-PSWRDOC Global Ministries Team

The Southern California/Nevada UCC and Southwest Regional DOC Global Ministries Team meets quarterly to discuss global ministry and needs and ways to involve churches and church members. Over the past year, we have invited guest speakers to our meetings hosted on Zoom. We have heard from Jawad Musleh, a Palestinian travel agent, who has helped us to organize previous mission trips. Jawad's perspective, as an average citizen in the West Bank, has been greatly appreciated during this very turbulent year in Israel/Palestine. We had begun to plan a trip to both Israel and Palestine which was interrupted by the Covid pandemic, then took up the plans once again, prior to the attack by Hamas in southern Israel and the ensuing invasion into Gaza by Israel. We hope to make this trip at some point, continuing to provide our support and witness to religious organizations seeking peace and justice for both Israelis and Palestinians. At least one of our team's members, Nancy Fowler, will be going to a Women's Empowerment Summit in Jericho in November where she will present about her grief work and the practice of compassion.

Whether or not we send a group to Israel this year, we are actively pursuing ways for pastors and church members to learn more about ongoing events in the region and ways that we can respond. Letters from clergy are being suggested and an event for members is in early planning stages.

During the year, we invited Peter Markari, lead for Israel/Palestine ministries from the national Global Ministries setting, to speak with us about events in Israel and Palestine. We hope to have him speak with us again on June 4th, 2024 to be informed about activities at the national level. He has taken over lead authority in more global regions now and we invite interested members to join in on our Zoom meeting.

The previous lead for Latin America and Caribbean ministries, Angel Luis Rivera-Agosto was another of our invited speakers. For many years we have organized annual trips to Central America or the Caribbean and to Tijuana, Mexico. These trips were put on hold during the Covid pandemic and in the meantime, various events and leadership changes have made it challenging to reconnect to some

of our previous partners. We continue to seek reconnections or new partnerships to keep this ministry of witness and support going. Guatemala is being considered, as well as locations in Tijuana, for a future mission trip for all who are able to journey with us.

One of our members, Paul Turner, is a previous missionary who served in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. His wife, Carine, grew up there. They continue to have close ties and remain aware of issues with conflict, economic needs, health needs, and the subjugation of minority tribes. We are seeking to lend support to a previous mission co-worker whose ministry continues, though his funding has ended.

Our team is small, but passionate about engaging in regions where suffering, injustice, and neglect is ongoing, trying to learn and discern how we may do our part as followers of Jesus to be partners for compassionate and effective peace and justice in the world.

Leaders and members participating with our team come from the following churches:

Claremont UCC
Irvine UCC
First Congregational Church Long Beach (UCC)
Montebello Plymouth Congregational Church (UCC)
Community Church of Poway (UCC)
Tehachapi Community Church (UCC)
Church of the Foothills, UCC/DOC
First Christian Church Fullerton (DOC)
Vista La Mesa Christian Church (DOC)
First Christian Church of Pomona (DOC)
First Congregational Church of Bakersfield (UCC)
Community Church of Atascadero (UCC)