

PIN Bulletin For Local Organizers

Volume 26, August 2021

Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?



EPF PIN Reflects on the United Church of Christ's

Declaration for a Just Peace Between Palestine and Israel



**What can EPF PIN learn
from UCC PIN
about naming the reality 'on
the ground'
in Israel-Palestine:**

"the sin of apartheid"

The August edition of the United Church of Christ [UCC] PIN's E-News celebrates the 83% affirmative vote at the UCC General Synod, cast on July 18th, for the resolution, *Declaration for a Just Peace Between Palestine and Israel*. The resolution was immediately newsworthy because it used the 'A' word, *apartheid*, to characterize the policies of Israel toward the Palestinian people. Interested readers have had the opportunity to study the UCC *Declaration* and think about its possible import for our EPF PIN resolution process leading up to The Episcopal Church's [TEC] 80th General Convention in Baltimore next July. UCC PIN's E-news reflects on several important factors that grounded the success of the *Declaration*, factors that are worth consideration by EPF PIN activists.

First, the successful UCC vote was a culmination of years of advocacy for Palestinian human rights, expressed in [resolutions](#) passed by the UCC General Synod. The recent vote in Synod had a solid foundation. EPF PIN can point to 40 years of strong [TEC resolutions](#) pertaining to Palestine and Israel, including six that became church policy in 2018: Safeguarding the Rights of Palestinian Children, Pursuing Justice in Gaza, The Status of Jerusalem, Supporting Aid to Palestinian Refugees, Negotiating the Palestine Israel Conflict, Adopting a Global Human Rights Screen for TEC Investments.

It was that solid foundation that allowed UCC PIN advocates and allies to push back against attempts by the review committee to remove the word 'apartheid' from the proposed resolution. *"It is our Palestinian partners—out of their own lived experience of dispossession and apartheid—who called upon us to name what they have already experienced, and continue to experience each day. Call this what it is, they cried. Join the consensus around international law. Call it apartheid."* Delegates voted to restore the word 'apartheid.' The wisdom for EPF PIN is clear: listen to the voices of Palestinian partners; call it what it is, 'apartheid.'

Another word that the review committee attempted to delete is 'sin' ... the sin of apartheid. Advocates for the resolution pushed back with their belief that grounding the *Declaration* in theological terms is essential. *"The systemic oppression and denial of human and civil rights for Palestinians caused by the policies of the state of Israel violate the vision of just relationships set forth by the ancient prophets and the gospels. They can rightly be described as a sin against God and God's children."* Delegates overwhelmingly voted to restore the word 'sin.' UCC PIN's option for strong theological grounding resonates with EPF PIN's reliance on our Baptismal Covenant in the struggle to protect the dignity of every human being, as we strive for justice and peace among all people.

Another keen insight from UCC PIN is that strong, honest words like 'sin' and 'apartheid' will provoke strong feedback, both critical and supportive. The UCC E-news links to two commendations, among others, from EPF PIN activists: [here](#) & [here](#). As Steve France's article in *Mondoweiss* states, when a mainline church labels Israel an apartheid state, more churches are sure to follow. The critical [pushback](#) from the American Jewish Committee takes its place in that developing context.

What can we learn, then, as EPF PIN, from the experience of UCC PIN and the vote in General Synod? First, EPF PIN and the TEC General Convention 2022 are 'next at bat.' Our denomination takes its stand on 40 years of strong resolutions on behalf of Palestinian human rights. PIN activists in a number of dioceses are working on resolutions on a variety of themes, including that of apartheid, to be voted on at diocesan conventions this fall; successful resolutions will go forward to General Convention. EPF PIN will also submit resolutions for action in 2022.

Here's the advice of our UCC PIN sisters and brothers: listen to our

Palestinian partners, say the words, name it: the reality 'on the ground' in Palestine is the sin of apartheid. Ground your resolutions in the Gospel Truth. Expect pushback but rely on the arc of the moral universe that bends towards justice. Stand firm with your PIN partners in the denominations. Pray for a just peace and for the liberation of all the peoples of Palestine-Israel into the fullness of redeemed life together in a truly Holy Land.



The
Episcopal Church
gathered in
Convention



To EPF and EPF PIN
Activists in the Wider
Baltimore Area:

SAVE THE DATE!

Waking Up the Church for Justice and Peace

Saturday, April 30th, 2022

2:00-5:00 pm Eastern

**The Historic St. James Episcopal
Church**

**1020 West Lafayette Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21217**

Join old and new friends from the Episcopal Dioceses of

Maryland, Easton and Washington for an afternoon of inspiring worship, music, food and fellowship at Historic St. James Episcopal Church in Baltimore. The gathering is hosted by the Episcopal Peace Fellowship, EPF Palestine Israel Network and the St. James congregation. The bishops of the three dioceses, General Convention deputies, members of EPF and local parishes are invited to come together to plot how we will "Wake up the Church" for peace with justice in 2022. This is an opportunity to get to know one another, build alliances and share our plans for a holy and action-packed General Convention. SAVE THE DATE and stand by for more details as the time draws nearer.



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