

Palestinian partner to visit Northern California UMC churches this month

Ata Manasra from the Palestinian village of Wadi Foquin in the West Bank will visit the California-Nevada Annual Conference Sept. 10–20 for an educational and fundraising speaking tour. Manasra is the coordinator of the Narjes community development project, a unique Muslim-Christian partnership supported by the UMC General Board of Global Ministries that assists with economic initiatives and other efforts to help make life sustainable while resisting the Israeli military occupation. He will be sharing information about Wadi Foquin and raising funds for current projects.



Wadi Foquin is a microcosm of all the challenges facing Palestinians under the occupation: Its lands are being annexed for construction of illegal settlements; it lies in the path of Israel's separation wall; access to jobs, schools, hospitals, and markets is restricted by Israeli military checkpoints; and residents are subject to random military raids and threatening incursions into the village by armed settlers. Village leaders have chosen to resist nonviolently by remaining in Wadi Foquin and investing in projects that promote hope, pride, and practical life skills for the residents, particularly the young people.

The following speaking engagements are open to the public:

9/11: 7pm, Central UMC Stockton, 3700 Pacific Ave., Stockton (Fireside Room).

Sponsored by Cal-Nev Israel-Palestine Task Force.

9/12: 6:30pm Creekside UMC, 14 Main St., Sutter Creek (social hall)

9/13: 4pm, First UMC of Loomis, 6414 Brace Rd., Loomis

9/14: 12 noon, St. Mark's UMC, 2391 St. Marks Way, Sacramento (bring own lunch)

9/17: 10:30am worship, Lake Merritt UMC, 1330 Lakeshore Ave, Oakland

9/17: 7pm, Lynnewood UMC, 4444 Black Ave., Pleasanton

The tour is sponsored by Friends of Wadi Foquin, a partnership initiated in 2009 by members of the California-Nevada Annual Conference. For more information about the partnership, go to friendsofwadifoquin.com. For speaking tour arrangements, contact FoWF co-chair Rev. Michael Yoshii at michaelyoshii1@gmail.com.

The United Methodist Church calls for Israel to end the occupation, land confiscations, and the expansion of settlements, which are illegal under international law. At its 2016 General Conference, the church passed a resolution supporting Wadi Foquin specifically, acknowledging the challenges of settlement expansion, calling for accountability from the Israeli government for the destruction of land and life in the village, and asking U.S. officials to intervene.