

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UNJPPI-sponsored Workshops in Manitoba and Saskatchewan led by Kathy Bergen and Jan McIntyre

March 18, 2016

During the first two weeks of April, workshops will be held in churches in Manitoba and Saskatchewan to educate and engage congregations on the situation in Palestine and Israel while encouraging actions towards a just peace.

In each place, Kathy Bergen and Jan McIntyre will lead a two-hour workshop sponsored by the United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine and Israel (UNJPPI). They will share information out of their experiences that is not readily available in the mainstream media. The workshops will briefly explain the history of the conflict and explore the role of International Humanitarian Law and UN Resolutions in this conflict. Kathy and Jan will share some personal stories of dedicated Israelis and Palestinians working for a just peace, and discuss some of the barriers that prevent people from speaking out and becoming involved in peacemaking.

The UCC has a long history of supporting Palestinian and Israeli organizations working towards a just peace. The United Church staff has developed educational materials including *Unsettling Goods* and an eleven-part video series *Let's Keep Talking*. In partnership with the World Council of Churches the United Church of Canada has sent almost 30 ecumenical companions to Palestine for 3 month assignments. They witness the effects of the occupation and share stories with the wider church back home.

UNJPPI is a United Church of Canada related network working toward the goal of a just peace in Palestine and Israel by calling for an end to the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands and equal rights for all who live in Palestine/Israel through education and advocacy.

Kathy Bergen is currently the part-time UNJPPI staff person. She has worked on Middle East issues for 33 years, 17 of them in Palestine--first with MCC (Mennonite Central Committee) in Jerusalem, the AFSC (American Friends Service Committee) in Philadelphia, the ICCP (International Coordinating Committee NGOs on the Question of Palestine) in Geneva, and with the Friends Center in Ramallah.

Jan McIntyre is a Manitoba farmer and chairperson of the Prairie Spirit School Division Board of Trustees. She has been sent twice by the United Church of Canada to work with the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI), and currently works with the Hebron International Resources Network, a Hebron based NGO. She has spoken to over 40 groups about her experiences in Israel and Palestine.

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