

MISSION MOMENT

Holy Land Advocacy Group

By Rev. Nick Utphall and Deacon Vicki Hanrahan

This past Sunday evening, a group from seven congregations of people who have participated in travels to the Holy Land gathered at Advent in Madison to rekindle their passion and reinvigorate our synod's work with the ELCA Peace Not Walls program of Advocacy, Awareness, and Accompaniment. Congregations that have traveled to the Holy Land and attended this reunion were:

- Advent (Madison)
- St. Stephen's (Monona)
- Our Savior's (Sun Prairie)
- St. John's (Evansville)
- Trinity (Madison)
- Grace (Dodgeville)
- Bethel (Madison)

We ate tasty food (including hummus, falafel, olives, and Arabic coffee) while seeing photos from a recent trip to refresh our memories.

We also heard updates on the Lutheran World Federation-run Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem from Dan Rift, Director for ELCA World Hunger and Disaster Appeal, and on Lutheran schools around Bethlehem from a 2018-2019 ELCA Young Adult in Global Mission (YAGM) Calla Gilson.



Calla shared, "God is doing incredible things through the Global Mission ministries of the church! Young Adults in Global Mission is a leadership development program where young adults aged 21-29 serve a year in solidarity with ELCA companions in 10 different countries." Calla has visited with the synod staff and with congregations in our synod over the past six months to talk about her personal experience of a year of service in Jerusalem and the West Bank as a YAGM, and how we can support young adult missionaries. Now in its 20th year, the Young Adults in Global Mission program has inspired 30% of its participants to rostered leadership in our church!

If you'd like to stay in the loop and care about issues in Palestine and Israel, contact Nick Utphall (nick@theMCC.net) or Blake Rohrer (blaker@midvalelutheran.org).