

UUs of Mt Airy/Justice Council Unitarian Universalists for Justice in the Middle East

UUs of Mt Airy/Justice Council UJME Chapter Report, Sept-Oct 2025

By Craig Stevens, Chapter and Philly Metro UJME Network Convener plus chapter liaison to the national UJME Chapters network and its Legislative Working group.

1) Marking the occasion of the Unitarian Universalist tradition of holding its Water Ceremony, the chapter sponsored the 2nd annual Empty Cups for Gaza, a national UJME initiative to give expression to our grief at the State of Israel's denial of the very source of life for the people of Gaza – fresh, potable water over the past two years and extending back to Israel's siege of Gaza beginning in 2011.

- Approximately twenty people marked this ritual.



2) on Oct 4th, we co-sponsored USG's UJME chapter's showing of the No Other Land, the academy award winning film portraying the resilience and struggle of the people the West Bank village of Masafer Yatta in resisting constant attacks by Israeli settlers and Israeli government demolition of their homes, schools, water supplies, olive trees and crops.

3) the chapter is planning a community forum on Sat Nov 22nd in the Sanctuary from 2-3:30 titled: PALESTINE: HOW DID THIS HAPPEN? A PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ON Zionism, Colonialism and the History of Israel, presented by Fran Gilmore, Jewish Voice for Peace-Philly. (See newsletter flyer for image explaining title).

4) The chapter promoted involvement of the congregation and members of USG and 1st Unitarian Church in public advocacy for our Congressional representatives to stop arming Israel and bring about a lasting ceasefire in Gaza and provision of all needed emergency humanitarian aid and to raise these concerns in the massive No Kings rallies.

Following from this, our chapter was invited to join the Philly Alliance for Peace and Justice for All Palestinians to participate in a planning group made up of members of the to engage the leadership of Indivisible Philly, the lead organizers of the local No Kings rallies, to include a Palestinian-American as a speaker at the Oct 18th No Kings rally which Indivisible's board opposed due to wanting to restrict their actions to domestic issues.

In addition, our chapter and, prospectively the Philly Metro UJME network, has also been invited to join the Philly Alliance and have two representatives attend their meetings, due to UUs involvement in area organizing and advocacy around Palestinian self-determination and justice issues.