**Reflection for Monday,**

**October 16, 2023**

Yesterday’s Sunday service was a wonderful celebration of life in community as we learned what our sister church, The Good Table, is doing in El Sobrante. I found it inspiring and heartening to think in new ways about what a church can do and be. And, wow! The offering we took for the Good Table raised $861 dollars! You are a generous people. Thank you so much for supporting not only O.C.C., but ministries throughout our region.

Our very successful and colorful electric vehicle show (Thank you, Nancy Thursby) was another delightful element of the day. And I am glad to report that our fundraising to build a house for Common Hope, has already reached its goal, and all surplus donations (which are most welcome) will go toward the costs of surgery for a young Guatemalan girl who needs surgery to repair her cleft palate. O.C.C. has had a long history of collaboration with Common Hope, and ***we hope you will join us after the service next Sunday as Roger Samuelsen leads us in a discussion of Common Hope’s work, whether building houses or supporting the education of young students.***

I believe many of us in the congregation have been carrying burdens of grief and concern over the terrorist attacks last week in Israel and the Israeli retribution toward Palestine in which many innocent civilians are without food, water, fuel, or electricity and face a ground invasion. We know that all people are beloved by God and we sorrow for the violence, loss of life, and seemingly intractable violence.

If you would like to have a lens to help you see through the fog of misinformation and learn about practical action you can take, please join us next Friday for a special lunchtime visit from Luciano Kovacs who works with the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. Kovacs was very recently in Bethlehem and works as the Presbyterian Church USA Middle East and Europe Area Coordinator. Please see the information below to learn more, and consider joining us.

In faith,

Elizabeth

**Special Friday Event**

**October 20**

**12:00-1:30**

In the church fellowship hall

**The Crisis in Israel and Palestine**

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| Recently returning from Bethlehem where he attended the Dar al-Alima University conference on **L**and, People, Culture, **Luciano Kovacs** will reflect on 1. What local partners on the West Bank are reporting on the current crisis in Israel/Gaza,
2. Their analysis of the current conflict,
3. US complicity, particularly with role of Christian Zionism
4. How we can show our support

BioLuciano Kovacs co-facilitates the Militarism Working Group and Christian Zionism Working Group as the Presbyterian Church USA Middle East and Europe Area Coordinator. He has been on the boards of global ecumenical and interfaith anti-Empire networks such as Peace for Life.  He manages relationships with partners of the PCUSA throughout the Middle East (Palestine and Israel, Syria and Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, and the Gulf), Eastern Europe (Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Moldova and Georgia), Central Europe (Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland) and Southern Europe (Greece, Portugal, Spain, and Italy). He’s also an author and been an actor in New York.  |

Join us by Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87170535293?pwd=MFVYUmdnVFpuUFNJTFBpcDNUc2ZqZz09>