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## Week 52: Christians in the Holy Land

**WEEK** DEC. 24  
**52** TO  
DEC. 30 **CHRISTIANS IN THE HOLY LAND**



Christians were 80 percent of the population in and around Bethlehem when Israel was founded.

Christians make up just 12 percent of that population today.

The desire to emigrate is much higher among Palestinian Christians than Palestinian Muslims.

Sources: Forward, PCPSR, NBC News

<http://kuminow.com/ChristiansintheHolyLand>

[Next Online Gathering](#)

[This Week's Entry](#)

[You Should Know](#)

[Upcoming Weeks](#)

[You Should Watch or Read](#)

Dear Kumi Now supporter,

Merry Christmas and a happy new year! As we come to the end of 2021, we'd like to remind you that we'll be taking a break from our weekly online gatherings while we regroup to improve Kumi Now. And we'd love your input! If you have ideas, big and small, on how we can improve Kumi Now (the newsletter, the webinars, the website...anything!) please send us an email at [kumi@kuminow.com](mailto:kumi@kuminow.com) or fill out this [feedback form](#).

But, while the online gatherings are temporarily on hold, we will continue to send the weekly newsletter, following the [Kumi Calendar](#). So you'll hear from us again next week. Now on with the newsletter...

On Tuesday, **Nizar Ayoub**, founder of **Al-Marsad**, **Wael Tarabieh**, Syrian artist and activist, and **Karama Abu Saleh**, a lawyer focusing on labor law, spoke about the Syrian Golan and the ongoing occupation. The replay of the session is now available on [YouTube](#) and on our [website](#). The website includes the advocacy instructions and links shared during the gathering.

We would appreciate it if you could share the session with your community or on social media. You could use text such as:

*Often overlooked when discussing Israel's occupation, the Syrians of the Golan have felt the full force of Israeli occupation and exploitation. The Syrian Golan has become a popular site for Israeli tourism, natural resource exploitation, and military bases. This week, Nizar Ayoub, founder of Al-Marsad, the artist Wael Tarabieh, and the lawyer Karama Abu Saleh talk to us about reality in the Syrian Golan. Watch here: <https://youtu.be/WEOFck-oltQ>*



It is Christmas, and the World Council of Churches publishes the [Ecumenical Prayer Cycle](#) for Palestine and Israel this week. Please join us during this holy time of the year in praying for Palestine.

## Next Online Gathering

WEEK  
**52**  
**CHRISTIANS IN THE  
HOLY LAND**



featuring  
Bishop Munib  
Younan  
of ELCJHL

**KUMI  
NOW  
ONLINE**

TUESDAY  
DECEMBER 28  
6PM  
(UTC+2)

### December 28: Week 52 - Christians in the Holy Land

[Full information on the gathering is here.](#)

Palestinians in the occupied territory face increasingly difficult circumstances due to the Israeli occupation. This has led many Palestinian Christians to emigrate, leading to a diminished Christian presence in the Holy Land. This week, as the World Council of Churches publishes the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle for Palestine and Israel, the Kumi Community is focusing on this problem.

Our guest will be **Bishop Munib Younan** of the

## Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL).

**Time:** Tuesday, December 28, at 6:00pm East Jerusalem, Palestine time (UTC+2) That's...

- Pacific (Seattle/Vancouver): 8am
- Central (Chicago): 10am
- Eastern (New York/Toronto): 11am
- Atlantic: 12pm
- Newfoundland: 12:30pm
- Greenwich (London): 4pm
- Central Europe (Paris/Stockholm): 5pm
- South Africa: 6pm
- Manila: 12am
- Sydney: 3am (+1 Day)
- Auckland: 5am (+1 Day)

**Zoom Meeting:** <https://zoom.us/j/94679502800> (There might be a quick registration form, and please set an alarm for yourself for Tuesday.)

Remember, if you'd like to receive a reminder about the gathering an hour before it begins, please use the [registration form at the bottom of the page](#).

## This Week's Kumi Now Entry

**Please note:** To match the dates in the book, we will now be posting a new entry each Friday, and this newsletter should go out each Friday or Saturday.

**Sharing and publicizing:** The graphics in this newsletter are designed to be the perfect size and shape to share to Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. So each week you can help the cause simply by sharing these images online. It's one more option you have to help.

### **Kumi Week #52: Christians in the Holy Land**

Week 52 of Kumi Now is now available [on the website](#). Palestinians in the occupied territory face increasingly difficult circumstances due to the Israeli occupation. This has led many Palestinian Christians to emigrate, leading to a diminished Christian presence in the Holy Land. This week, as the World Council of Churches publishes the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle for Palestine and Israel, the Kumi Community is focusing on this problem.

Please read the essay on the Syrian Golan along with the story by Munir Fasheh. And here are some facts for you:



## Just the facts...

Christians make up just 12 percent of that population today.

About half of Christians in the Holy Land are Greek Orthodox.

In Latin America, Christian Palestinians make up approximately 85 percent of all Palestinian immigrants.

Surveys show that the desire to emigrate is much higher among Palestinian Christians than Palestinian Muslims.

Because of the Nakba, Christians in the Holy Land dropped from 8% to 2.3% of the population.

26.4% cite the worsening economy as the reason for their emigration.

Christians were 80 percent of the population in and around Bethlehem when Israel was founded.

There are between 200,000 and 300,000 Christians in Israel and Palestine.

20 to 25% of Christians in Palestine feel discrimination when searching for jobs or when seeking government services.

32.6% of Christians cite lack of freedom and security as a reason they emigrate.

Christians in other Middle Eastern countries, such as Syria and Egypt, have also faced problems and persecution that are leading to emigration.

Sources: Forward, PCPSR, NBC News

<http://kuminow.com/ChristiansintheHolyLand>

## Understanding Christians in the Holy Land. Just the facts...

- Christians were 80 percent of the population in and around Bethlehem when Israel was founded.
- Christians make up just 12 percent of that population today.
- There are between 200,000 and 300,000 Christians in Israel and Palestine.
- About half of Christians in the Holy Land are Greek Orthodox.
- In Latin America, Christian Palestinians make up approximately 85 percent of all Palestinian immigrants.
- 20 to 25% of Christians in Palestine feel discrimination when searching for jobs or when seeking government services.
- Surveys show that the desire to emigrate is much higher among Palestinian Christians than Palestinian Muslims.
- Because of the Nakba, Christians in the Holy Land dropped from 8% to 2.3% of the population.
- 32.6% of Christians cite lack of freedom and security as a reason they emigrate.
- 26.4% cite the worsening economy as the reason for their emigration.
- Christians in other Middle Eastern countries, such as Syria and Egypt, have also faced problems and persecution that are leading to emigration.

### Source

- [“Why Christians Are Fleeing the Holy Lands”](#) by Klaus Wivel for Forward
- [“Migration of Palestinian Christians: Drivers and Means of Combating it”](#) from Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR)
- [“Holy Land Christians feel abandoned by U.S. evangelicals”](#) from NBC News

## Learning More

To learn more you can watch [The Stones Cry Out](#). And we have a [playlist of related videos](#) on YouTube.

Once you understand the situation you'll want to get involved. Here's the Kumi Action for this week:

## Kumi Action

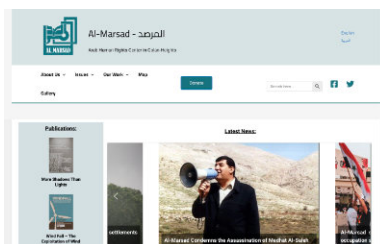


Regardless of what religion or philosophy you hold, call and write your nearby churches and say, “This is the week of prayer as part of the World Council of Churches prayer cycle for Palestine and Israel. Palestinian Christians have made a call for churches around the world to listen to their cry for justice. They implore you to not ignore the injustice they suffer and ask: Can you help us regain our freedom, so that peace, justice, and love can prosper in the Holy Land? Please stand in solidarity with them and make their voice heard.” To learn more about the World Council of Churches prayer cycle you can visit the [website](#), and specifically the page for the Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and [Palestine](#).

Attend a service at the church you have asked to speak. If they say Yes to speaking about or praying for Palestine and Israel, name the church and say #SheSaidYes on social media. If the church says No, name the church #SheSaidNo. Include a link to [this page](#) of the Kumi Now website along with the hashtags #ChristiansintheHolyLand, #KumiNow, and #Kumi52.

## You Should Know

*One or two people, companies, or organizations generally related to the issue of the week you should know, and how you can follow them online.*



### The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land

**The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL)** is a worshipping community. We have six Arabic-speaking congregations: in Ramallah, Jerusalem, Beit Jala, Bethlehem, Beit Sahour, and Amman, Jordan. They also have a joint ELCJHL/ELCA English-speaking congregation in Jerusalem.

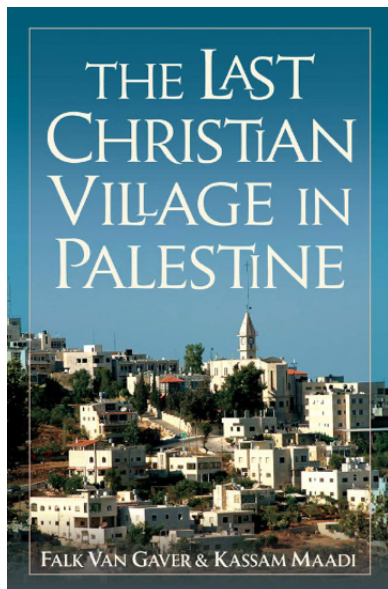
The ELCJHL ministers closely with the other twelve

Christian churches in the Holy Land. Together, they promote unity, bear witness to God's saving grace, and speak out against injustice. Their communion of Christian Churches seeks to minister within a majority Muslim context to live into healthy Christian-Muslim relations. In the same way, the church strives to serve alongside those of the Jewish faith in a just and equitable coexistence.

You can find ELCJHL on their [website](#) and follow them on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#).

## You Should Watch or Read...

*One (or maybe two) recent or not-so-recent film, book, video, article, or other piece of art that you should consider reading or watching this week. Have a recommendation? Let us know.*



### ***The Last Christian Village in Palestine* by Timothy Brennan**

Published in 2018 by the Crossroad Publishing Company, ***The Last Christian Village in Palestine***, by **Kassam Maadi** and **Falk van Gaver**, tells the story of Taybeh. Kassam Maadi is a journalist in Palestine and co-director of the youth development department of Caritas Jerusalem. While Falk van Gaver is a journalist, essayist, and travel writer. About the book:

“In the West we have all but forgotten the Christians in the Middle East. This tender elegy paints the land of Jesus in new light. Taybeh's deep-rooted faith illuminates these stories of saints, olive trees, and the echos of war.”

You can order it from your favorite local book store, or directly from the [publisher's website](#).

### **What's Next**

We hope to see you in the online gathering on Tuesday, after which you'll receive another newsletter next Friday/Saturday, beginning a [New Kumi Year](#). And remember, if you have any feedback at all please email us at [kumi@kuminow.com](mailto:kumi@kuminow.com) or fill out the [feedback form](#). Once again, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Sincerely,

The Kumi Now Team

[Go to Kumi Now Page](#)

[kumi@kuminow.com](mailto:kumi@kuminow.com)



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