

## 6. Report of the Delegates to the National Council of Churches of Christ

The National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA focused on various issues throughout 2023, including gun violence in the US and violence in areas of conflict around the world.

The NCC issued a number of statements on the hostilities in Israel and Gaza, condemning the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas and also calling on Israel, “with its overwhelming firepower to temper its response in the name of human decency.” As casualties in Gaza mounted, the NCC spoke out against the killing of innocent civilians, the bombing of churches, and other atrocities causing a humanitarian catastrophe. The council joined many others, including the Church of the Brethren, in calling for a ceasefire in the Middle East.

Other statements focused on the war in Ukraine, various shootings in the US, the massive earthquake in Turkey and Syria, and the plight of Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh. The NCC took part in a White House roundtable on the opioid crisis and has increased emphasis on health and wellness issues. The council provided Bible studies and prayer gatherings on relevant topics.

The NCC named Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie as president and general secretary of the ecumenical organization, the first African American woman to serve in this role.

The theme of this year’s Christian Unity Gathering, held in Nashville in October, was “Faith Under Fire: The Church in the Public Square.” The scriptural reference was 1 Peter 1:7: “So that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.”

This first in-person gathering since 2019 served as a platform for worship, dialogue, advocacy, and reconnection within the Christian community. Sessions focused on such topics as courageous and faithful witness, Christian extremism and supremacy, religious nationalism and the persecution of religious minorities, and gun violence. The conference included worship services, Bible study, and sessions on ecumenism.

Nathan Hosler, the Church of the Brethren representative on the NCC board, served on the board’s task force on race, which affirmed a commitment to addressing racial injustice within the broader Christian context. He also served on the bylaws subcommittee and as the NCC board’s liaison to a newly formed policy roundtable, which brings together member communions, policy experts, and advocacy leaders to discuss matters of concern and take action together.

The Church of the Brethren’s participation in NCC initiatives reaffirms the

1 church's call to promote peace, justice, and Christian unity nationally and glob-  
2 ally. We are grateful for the opportunities to collaborate, advocate, and stand  
3 united with fellow Christians in the pursuit of a more just and compassionate  
4 world.

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6 David Steele, General Secretary

7 Nathan Hosler, proxy

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