

## The Syria Lebanon Partnership Network of PC(USA)

facilitates ministry between PC(USA) churches and mid councils with churches from both countries. Working primarily through the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon (NESSL), SLPN encourages coordination of information, support of educational and missional ministries, and sharing the love of Christ with the people of the region.



Compassion Protestant Society (CPS), NESSL's diaconal nonprofit, distributes agrobaskets so people can grow fruits and vegetables to feed their families.

### Contact information

**Subscribe to the SLPN newsletter,** or be in touch via the website.

**Website:** [www.syrialedonpn.org](http://www.syrialedonpn.org)

**Facebook:** Friends of Syria Lebanon Partnership Network – PC(USA)

## The SLPN Mission Statement

- **Pray** with and for the people of Syria and Lebanon.
- **Listen** to the concerns of all parties in the region.
- **Partner** with our brothers and sisters in Syria and Lebanon as they strive to live out their witness to Jesus Christ.
- **Inform and equip** PC(USA) members and friends for active engagement.
- **Create relationships** between PC(USA) churches and mid councils and the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon (NESSL) churches and institutions.
- **Advocate** for PC(USA) and US policies that promote peace, justice, reconciliation, and development in the area.
- **Raise funds** through membership pledges, and gifts from individuals and PC(USA) churches and mid councils for the work of SLPN and in support of relief work within Lebanon and Syria.



Syria Lebanon Partnership Network  
Presbyterian Church (USA)



*In each time and place, there are particular problems and crises through which God calls the church to act.*  
**Confession of 1967**

## A Long History of Christian Partnership

Presbyterians have been part of the fabric of “greater Syria” (Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Israel/Palestine) since 1823. Known as “evangelicals” for their devotion to scripture and a desire to follow Christ, they began to form churches, and establish schools, universities, hospitals, and a seminary. Today the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon (NESSL) supports the ministry and mission of churches in Syria and Lebanon, homes for the elderly, a conference center, traditional schools in Lebanon and Syria, schools for Syrian refugee children in Lebanon, and many other ministries throughout the region.

PC(USA) partners with NESSL and other NGOs as they live out Christian servanthood under difficult circumstances.

Rev. Elmarie Parker is PC(USA)'s Regional Liaison in Syria, Lebanon and Iraq.



## Our Partners in the Region

In the US and other countries, there is currently a backlash against Syrians and Lebanese. Caused by political actions, government leaders, deep-seated fear after September 11 attacks, economic fears, or an inability to see ‘others’ as the neighbors Christ calls us to love, these issues can be overcome. SLPN works with many organizations, including Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) as it works to assist our siblings in the region.

The National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon (NESSL), and its diaconal non-profit Compassionate Protestant Society (CPS), function through the congregations of that denomination to assist those in need. The Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), headquartered in Beirut, combines 26 Orthodox, Evangelical (Christian), and Catholic denominations to offer programs of support in the region. The Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches (FMEEC), a WCC member, brings Christians together from 18 denominations in the region.

## How you can help

- ✦ Pray for our partners in Syria and Lebanon
- ✦ Become a partner church with one in Syria or Lebanon
- ✦ Financially support NESSL, MECC, FMEEC, PDA, SLPN

## The Current Situation

Both Syria and Lebanon trace their histories to ancient Biblical times. Following WWI, the region came under League of Nations control, and the Sikes-Picot Agreement established the geographic boundaries of today's countries. Lebanon gained its independence from France in 1943 and Syria in 1946. Since then, the political history of both countries has been difficult, with much unrest, crises, civil war, and crippling financial upheaval.

Bashar al-Assad became Syria's President in 2000; in 2021 he was elected for seven more years. During the 'Arab Spring' in 2011, dissenting groups appeared, resulting in the killing of many Syrians. Anti-governmental crackdowns responded with both non-violent civil disobedience and armed attacks. Since 2011, Syrians have endured fighting, financial crises, international sanctions, a multiyear drought, and atrocities by jihadist groups. Fundamental religious beliefs, combatants recruited from over 80 countries, the destruction of villages, towns, cities and six World Heritage Sites, public executions, and dehumanizing treatment of women and children have all combined to create a nightmare existence for all Syrians. The government has been accused of using chemical weapons, torture and unjust treatment of its own citizens. Russia, the U.S., Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Israel, and Iran have all been engaged in the Syrian conflicts.

The UN reports a currency depreciation of 99% with more than 90% of the population living below the poverty line; in 2021, 2.5 million were food insecure. Fuel shortages persist and electricity is unreliable; most cannot afford to rebuild their destroyed homes. The water supply is unsafe and medicine is incredibly expensive and difficult to find. Twenty million Syrian refugees are hosted mainly by Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt.

The collapse of the Lebanese economy beginning in 2019, and the concurrent political instability has profoundly impacted the country. The currency has lost 90% of its value; stores have closed; people are out of work; electricity is unreliable and sporadic and food is sparse. Overall, 80% of the population now lives in poverty. Since 2011, Lebanon has hosted almost 2 million Syrian refugees; many cannot return - or are unwilling to do so. While some object to the presence of the refugee population, many Lebanese continue to support their Syrian neighbors despite their own devastation. The explosion at the Port of Beirut in 2020 killed more than 200, wounded 7,000 and left 800,000 homeless, and damaged or destroyed homes, schools, hospitals, and houses of worship. Protests and antigovernment rallies resulted in the Prime Minister and his Cabinet resigning and a state of emergency being declared. Elections in May 2020 resulted in a weak government being formed which is attempting to bring normalcy to the country.

Despite all these conditions, Christians in the region maintain their hope in God and their communities. Our siblings in Christ appreciate our prayers, our words of encouragement, and our work on their behalf.