



AMERICAN FRIENDS *of the*  
EPISCOPAL DIOCESE *of* JERUSALEM

November 2011

25 Old King's Highway North, Suite 13, Darien Connecticut 06820



## The Blind Teach the Blind

Arab Evangelical School  
Irbid, Jordan

### Greetings!

We're grateful for all our blessings as we enter Advent and the coming of a babe in a manger in Bethlehem. But that manger is located in one of the most volatile places on earth. And we pray for those stewards of our faith tradition as they struggle to make ends meet and protect their families. Thank you, thank you for all you do to help our Christian family survive in a hostile place.

The West Bank is close to economic collapse. International aid, including USAID funding, plus the taxes that West Bank residents pay to the Israeli government and foreign aid from many countries have all been either stopped or reduced. The Palestinian Authority has laid off workers, construction projects stopped, clinics closed and now families are starting to take their children out of school. They can't pay the fees.

The Princess Basma Centre lost \$100,000 in USAID funding and is closing its entire outreach program. Parents are trading janitorial work for reduced tuition.

You have kept those children in school, provided physical therapy, hearing aids and hope. Your prayers and gifts are often the difference between a family packing up to leave the Holy land and making the decision to stay, engage in their communities and promote peace. Please continue to remember those Christians living there today. They need our prayers and support more than ever. The babe is coming. Listen.

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Order St. Nicholas Day mite boxes now at [adelavis@afedj.org](mailto:adelavis@afedj.org)

Celebrate Dec. 4 or whenever the spirit moves you!

Visit [www.afedj.org](http://www.afedj.org) and click on St. Nicholas Day for activities, information, prayers and more.

## The Blind Teach the Blind in Irbid, Jordan

*Isaiah: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has sent me to recover the sight of the blind.*

A priest and his wife were sent to a small, struggling parish in Irbid, a bustling city in northern Jordan. Samir Esaïd and his wife Sabah Zurikat met families who said they had three children, but they only ever met two - or one. They came to learn that the "missing" children were kept at home because they are blind.

From this observation came an extraordinary ministry, the Arab Evangelical School in Irbid. The school was the first in Jordan to mainstream blind and sighted children in each class. The King of Jordan visited the school to honor this achievement and to bring attention to the need for more



This Braille machine creates textbooks

schools like it.

Last month, Phoebe Griswold, President of the Board of AFEDJ along with 18 pilgrims, visited the school. This is what she reports:

for blind students. It was purchased by AFEDJ donors last year.

"We visited this tiny jewel of a school, K-5 of 170 students where 37 are blind and in spite of this, are being mainstreamed. We watched as the elementary children formed 4 competing groups that were racing against each other. Each group held the hands of several blind children who were able to participate as if they were sighted. The children pulled, tugged and shrieked with glee in the game.

"We learned that children with special needs are traditionally kept at home hidden out of view. Shame accompanies the birth of a disabled child. Without this school and this opportunity for friends, education and exercise, these children could be lost.

"The Arab Evangelical School prepares young blind women for further study and these women return to teach others. The energy and expertise of the teachers and administrators in these institutions is hard to believe until you see it. The Spirit of the Risen Lord fills their hearts and minds. We were deeply touched by the span of history that makes our founding story not just a two thousand years old event. That spirit is alive today through the work of the Diocese of Jerusalem.

"Please be part of a two thousand year history in our Holy Land and respond to the call to bring education to blind children by donating to AFEDJ." Amen, Phoebe.

## Trips and Ideas



Do your holiday shopping, get those hostess gifts and help Palestinian farmers sustain their olive trees! Check out Import Peace for olive oil, herbs, soap, etc. at [www.importpeace.org](http://www.importpeace.org). This is a volunteer Presbyterian ministry and part of the proceeds come to AFEDJ.

Washington DC and live online at [www.nationalcathedral.org](http://www.nationalcathedral.org), the annual simulcast of the Bethlehem Prayer Service. Come to the Cathedral if you're in the Washington area or join from anywhere online on **Saturday, December 17 at 10 am EST**. This service brings together via internet people from many languages and lands to celebrate the birth of the Prince of Peace.

**St. George's College** in Jerusalem seeks a volunteer Warden for 2012. Have you always wanted to live in Jerusalem for an extended time? Do you have the time and resources to volunteer at the college to help adult students during their stay? If you'd like to explore this possibility, contact Dean of the College, Graham Smith at [grahamsherry@gmail.com](mailto:grahamsherry@gmail.com). Housing and some meals included. Experience of a lifetime.

**St. George's College** offers its popular Palestine of Jesus, January 12-25, a 14 day course with travel and housing included. Go to [sgcjerusalem.org](http://sgcjerusalem.org) for more information. Be patient; the website is tricky. See the entire course catalog through 2012.

Want an amazing video of the Holy Land? Go to <http://vimeo.com/15034110>. Guaranteed to bring back wonderful memories or motivate you to visit.

**Pendelton, Oregon. Church of the Redeemer** is showing the moving feature length film "Little Town of Bethlehem," about three men's journey toward peace. Two showings on **Wednesday, Dec. 28**, at 4 pm followed by a service at 6 and a potluck supper. Second showing at 7 pm in the Parish Hall. The film is free and contributions will go to AFEDJ.

Many will be celebrating **St. Nicholas Day** this weekend. St. Mark's in New Canaan CT and St. Luke's in Darien CT will celebrate with visits from St. Nicholas at intergenerational teas. Others will bake cookies, put on pageants, sing hymns, fill mite boxes and invoke the spirit of the patron saint of needy children. Please remember those struggling in the Holy Land this St. Nicholas Day

and honor them with a [gift](#) dedicated to a child you love.



The AFEDJ is an independent, non-political 501c3 which helps sustain the humanitarian institutions of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem -- schools, hospitals and institutes for the disabled. All contributions are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law. Diocesan institutions foster mutual respect and tolerance in a land torn by turmoil and poverty. Learn more about the work of the AFEDJ or the Diocese of Jerusalem. Visit the AFEDJ website to learn about or contribute to any of the important work done in the region.