



AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE
EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF JERUSALEM
25 Old King's Hwy North, Suite 13, Darien, CT 06820

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*St. Nicholas
Day, Dec. 5
Fun with a
Purpose!*

ST. MATTHEW'S ZEBABDEH, THE FRUITS OF FRIENDSHIP

I do not call you servants any longer...but I have called you friends, because I have made know to you everything that I have heard from my Father...And I appointed you to bear fruit, fruit that will last...

(John 15:15-16)

This is the second article in a series which focuses on the work of individual institutions of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, institutions whose impact on the people and societies they serve indeed constitute "fruit that will last."

Tucked away in a hilly, agricultural region a 40 minute drive north of the West Bank city of Nablus, the town of Zebabdeh is that rarest of commodities in the Diocese, a village whose population is predominately Christian. There are Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches in the town as well as St. Matthew's, the Episcopal parish, which operates a primary care facility, the Penman Clinic, that serves some 60,000 people in Zebabdeh and more than a dozen surrounding villages.



The church and clinic were built by the Anglican Church of Australia in 1992; the clinic is named for one of its Bishops. Though small in size, the clinic operates six days a week, providing the only medical and dental care available in this isolated region. With the uncertainties of travel and access on the West Bank, the clinic is truly a lifeline. It treats all, irrespective of religion, and strives to keep the cost to the patient as low as possible. Donations are critical to meeting the annual budget of \$90,000.

Medical and dental services are provided daily, with a generalist physician present every day and a range of specialists, including pediatricians (key in a region of large families) available at specified times during the week. With a clinical laboratory and pharmacy on the premises, the clinic is able to offer comprehensive primary care to a large population that would otherwise have little or no access to basic health services.

Members of the Friends Board visited the Penman Clinic in 2008 as did participants in a 2009 pilgrimage from the Diocese of Washington, DC led by Bishop John Chane. On both occasions, it was evident that in operating the clinic, the Diocese of Jerusalem is meeting an absolutely critical need. An American physician who was volunteering in the Diocese at the time commented that the clinic in Zebabdeh was perhaps the least known and certainly one of the most valuable of all the Diocesan medical facilities. In a region of Roman Palestine that Jesus himself would have known, the Diocese of Jerusalem is carrying forward His work, bringing healing and a message of hope to those sorely in need of both. This effort deserves our support. - Ann Korcky



St. Matthew's Episcopal parish

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AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE
EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF JERUSALEM
BUILDING PRESENCE, BUILDING PEACE



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HELP BLIND CHILDREN SEE A FUTURE IN IRBID, JORDAN ARAB EVANGELICAL SCHOOL

In Jordan, public schools don't accept blind children. Until the Rev. Samir Esaid and his remarkable wife Sabah arrived in Irbid, blind children traveled 45 miles to Amman for an education – if they were able. Few made it. The Esaid's saw a need and found their calling. Over the next 5 years they built a school, Arab Episcopal School, which mainstreams blind, low vision and sighted children, a revolutionary concept at that time in Jordan. Today, 120 sighted and 30 blind and low vision children benefit from the dedication and ingenuity of a committed and determined staff.



Nabeel and Rania are five years old and best friends. Until last year, Rania had never met a blind person. Families often leave their disabled children at home out of shame and the misguided sense that they're protecting them. But these two little kids run and play together, talk and tease, visit each other's home and are slowly advancing the understanding and the rights of the disabled.

In 2003, AES opened a kindergarten which admitted 3 to 6 year olds. The school now goes through 6th grade and they hope to eventually continue through high school. They see a desperate need for a specialized vocational school

for blind and low vision high school students in particular.

Graduation is bittersweet. For many, public middle school is an option. For the disabled, no chance.

The library shelves are almost bear. Teachers design and make teaching tools for blind students from bits of plastic packaging, wood scraps and a lot of imagination. There's no bus to get the children to school and most families struggle to pay the fees. But AES's reputation for learning, caring and respect has spread far and wide. The wait list grows and as a result, some children miss out.

Parents of the blind are often completely unaware that their children have potential. They haven't heard of Braille and many don't know that blind children are capable of reading. Often children have never learned to feed themselves, walk or have friends. No one talks to them. So their language skills are deficient – for no reason. After a few months in school, whole worlds open up to them. Sabah told us that sighted students are excited as vacations approach. Blind children become sad. Educating parents and providing support groups is a constant need.

It takes 3 times as many teachers to fully integrate disabled children into a classroom, and costs 4 times as much because of extra equipment. But the commitment to this work is total. There is no government support for private schools, so without your help, the work cannot continue.

The wish list includes a bus for \$45,000, a computer teacher for staff training at \$250/month, braille books and desperately needed scholarship funds. Every gift will help a child.

In early August, the Rt. Rev. Suheil Dawani, Bishop in Jerusalem, arrived to consecrate the beautiful new St. Mary's Church on the school campus, a visual symbol of growth and hope here. Rev. Samir, a refugee from Israel himself, told us, "The role of the Church is not to just pray on Sunday. Jesus walked among the people; he provided for social needs. We will too." Amen.



WHY DOES HUMANITARIAN AID MATTER IN THE MIDDLE EAST?

*(Reprinted from the September 3,
2010 issue of Episcopal Life)*

As the world focuses on the U.S.-brokered Middle East peace talks, we're all cautiously hopeful that this could be the time. Let's all pray for peace now. The political issues in that volatile region get the headlines, but we as Christians and as human beings can't lose sight of the humanitarian price that has been paid on all sides. How can we address the suffering?

Lives are lost in many ways. Some involve violent death; but others are lost to despair, wasted potential and preventable tragedy. A significant proportion of the Christian population in the Middle East falls into that second category. They're a small and shrinking community and they need help stabilizing their future. Why should that matter to us?

1. Christian institutions represent neutral territory, accessible to all. Christian schools and hospitals are places of learning and healing, but also of tolerance and respect for differences. The region struggles every day to maintain a sense of security and normalcy. If those institutions were to disappear, some of those day-to-day opportunities for cross-cultural exposure and learning would be lost. The staff members, of all faiths, model cooperation, constructive engagement and conflict resolution while caring for families. It's been said that peace begins on a school desk – we believe we can build peace, child by child.

– continued inside



photo by Kara Flannery

THE HOPE FOR LASTING PEACE

*Message from the
President...*

I write this on the eve of the date set to end the moratorium on Settlement expansion (Sunday, September 26, 2010), a key issue in the Israel/Palestine peace process. I write knowing full well that when you read this that date will be behind us, and that new work will be in front of us because we care deeply about peace in the Middle East. It seems to me that this moment is illustrative of the critical place that AFEDJ holds as a "Friend" of the Diocese of Jerusalem.

If I followed only the peace negotiation process carried on by Government officials and passionately supported by wise, courageous and essential strategists at every level of civil and church society, I would be hard pressed to describe the hope that inspires and sustains these heroic men and women who advocate and urge us all to the negotiation tables. I get very discouraged at the many, many times documents are signed that are to herald a time of peace in the Holy Land, but yet, peace eludes us.

However, the hope that I hold, and that AFEDJ makes real on the ground, comes from the fact that during the times of successful, and not so successful, negotiations, AFEDJ steadfastly continues to be in Israel and Palestine with Bishop Suheil Dawani and people of the Diocese of Jerusalem as they live out daily Jesus' mission of healing, teaching and building a reconciled community of justice and peace.

A lasting peace that would allow all people in Israel and Palestine to live in harmony with each other is the fervently desired goal. As the peace process unfolds, with God's help, AFEDJ is working with the Bishop and the members of the Episcopal Diocese in support of the 33 institutions serving Muslim and Christian and Jew and the 22 parishes that sustain the courage and faith of the local Christian throughout Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

There are amazing witnesses to this steadfast hope in East Jerusalem, the conflict-ridden land at the center of negotiations which both Palestinians and Israelis claim for their capital. The Diocesan Center, Guest House, St George's Cathedral and St George's College are situated in East Jerusalem. Next to the Cathedral Close is St George's School, attended by 871 boys and now open to girls. One of the schools "banners" is the formation of many excellent Arab businessmen – soon to include women. While on a recent visit to St George's School, the parents of two young boys attending the school asked me if I couldn't find scholarships for their youngest children, two adorable little girls. These girls need to be part of the building of a society shaped by their education in an Episcopal School where the dignity of every human being matters!

The future of East Jerusalem is unknown. But what is known is that St George's School will continue to produce fine young people who can be part of building a new world shaped for peace. This is the unmovable foothold of the Anglican Church in East Jerusalem.

I hope that these current negotiations draw us all closer to living in peace. However, no matter what the outcome of this long and arduous process, sustaining and resourcing our Episcopal Family in this land called holy is an ongoing sacred obligation to which we are committed now and in the future.

Won't you please be there with us by making a donation today to do Christ's work in the land where Jesus walked by helping to sustain the Christian presence.

With love and hope,
Phoebe W. Griswold, President of the Board of Trustees



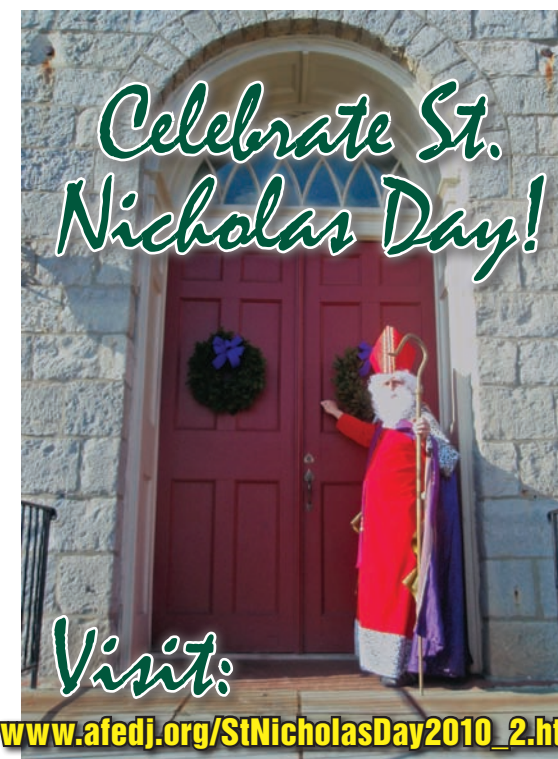
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- \$100 keeps a child in a high quality Diocesan school for a month.
- \$500 pays a nurse's salary for a month.

Go to www.afedj.org and click:

DONATE NOW

Have you considered a recurring gift? Would \$10 or \$25 a month be right for you? Please go to our website at www.afedj.org and click the Donate Now button. Would you like to remember a loved one or a recent occasion with a gift in memory of or in honor of a friend or family member? Your gift will mean so much to a child or family struggling in the Holy Land.



HUMANITARIAN AID – continued from front page

2. Humanitarian aid is business. We impact the economy by employing health professionals, teachers, janitors, cooks, etc, and by buying books, food, medical equipment, phone service and all the other components which support other local businesses. Staff members spend their salaries on goods and services, producing the same positive ripple effect on their gross national product as consumer spending does on ours. A healthy economy is an important step in a stable society. And a stable society is the foundation for sustained peace.

3. Christians living in the region are ethnic Palestinians, subject to travel, work and educational restrictions. Unemployment, lack of education and chronic health issues are common. On a trip this summer, I met parents who didn't know that blind children could be taught to read. Premature births, diabetes, hearing deficits and so much more can be addressed and permanently improved with just some resolve and resources. Library shelves are bare in rural areas. Local health care is often unavailable. The result is an unnecessarily dependent, unrealized community which is striving to grow, learn and stabilize. If we can help develop economic stability, self-sufficiency and hope, residents can rightfully consider volunteering at their child's school, civic engagement, starting a business. Peace and prosperity becomes a real possibility.

4. Imagine the Holy Land without a Christian presence. We think of the land where Jesus and the Apostles walked as eternally accessible. But if we fail to claim our faith heritage through responsible stewardship, we cannot legitimately expect to maintain a connection to the sites which inspire so many. Episcopalians don't make ahliyyah or a hajj as part of our faith journey. Most don't make pilgrimage. Our approach is usually more cerebral. Yet those who travel to the Galilee, to Jerusalem, to Nazareth, are almost universally transformed by the power of the experience. Pilgrims tell us that the reality of the place, the timelessness, the physical connection to events that changed history have a permanent impact on their relation to Scripture and to those contemporary guardians of the land. We need to know this land and this history spiritually and personally.

5. It's the right thing to do. The Rev. Samir Esaid, head of a school which mainstreams blind students, shared this: "The role of the church is not just to pray on Sunday. Jesus walked among the people teaching and healing. We need to provide for the social needs of his flock." They need our help.

In a flawed and fragile world, there will always be too many demands on our time and our resources. Earthquakes, floods, HIV/AIDS all break our hearts. And we respond. The Holy Land is different. It's not a charity; it's our heritage, our religious patrimony under economic and social siege. And our investment can make a significant difference.

The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem includes Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. It owns and operates 13 schools, 2 full service hospitals, 4 outpatient clinics, 4 institutes for the disabled, in addition to 4 guesthouses and 23 parishes. The institutions of the diocese are built on a philosophy of Christian charity, but also respect for differences, tolerance and a foundational spirit of reconciliation. These values are embedded in the school curricula and shared with students and patients of all religious backgrounds.

The American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem believes, as does Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem Suheil Dawani, that by helping to build a self-sufficient, stable, educated community, by living the model of a tapestry woven from many beautiful strands, by embracing Jesus' command to love thy neighbor in the land he walked, by teaching children to fish instead of giving them a fish, the Episcopal Church can directly contribute to a stable and lasting peace in our time.

Anne K. Lynn, Executive Director



On September 12, St. Paul's K St., Washington, DC was pleased to welcome the Rev. Canon Hosam Naoum from the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem. Canon Naoum, who has spent the last year at the Virginia Theological Seminary in nearby Alexandria, was the preacher at the morning Masses and was honored at a reception following Evensong and Benediction.

St. Paul's has been a generous supporter of St. Saviour's School in Zarka Jordan, which integrates blind and low vision students with sighted students in kindergarten through 10th grade. Canon Naoum encouraged those attending to visit the Holy Land to see and meet the heirs of those present at the first Pentecost as they live out the Gospel in the mission and ministries of the Diocese today.

Did you know...

that the Diocese of Jerusalem covers 5 countries and provides pastoral care and humanitarian aid through:

- 26 parishes
- 14 schools
- 2 full service hospitals
- 4 outpatient clinics
- 4 guesthouses
- 4 institutes for the disabled

Support this important work today.



St. Nicholas Ignites Parish Spirit

By Reverend Deborah Dresser

What's Christmas without St. Nicholas? Some may be more familiar with the name Santa Claus, even Kris Kringle. But Nicholas, the Bishop of Myra, the real Santa, is to my mind the ring leader of all the good gift giving at Christmas time.

As a parish priest I used to think that the Feast of St. Nicholas on December 6th was an intrusion on the solemnity of Advent. We would barely begin the call of the prophets to repent, when in came St. Nicholas regaling the congregation with charming stories of children and sailors and, then, inviting everyone within ear shot to perk up and take notice of the miracles that are God's gift. And the most perfect gift was just a few weeks away. So, actually Advent is just the right time to celebrate his feast day.

For a decade at our parish, St. George's in New York, on the Sunday closest to the sixth, immediately following the benediction a loud knock on the church doors alerted everyone that St. Nicholas was once more about to make an appearance. When his story telling time was finished, he always reminded all the children that there were gold coins hidden in the church – coins that symbolize the riches of God's grace. What delicious frolic ensued as St. Nicholas bade farewell.

Last year, 2009, St. George's Church produced a St. Nicholas pageant complete with the traditional Nativity Scene, narrated by none other than St. Nicholas. We chose to hold the pageant on a Saturday night, the eve of his feast, in hope of participation from the wider community. Barbara Laddick, grandmother of two shepherds and parish AFEDJ Missioner, said, "It was wonderful that children from several of our outreach programs participated along with parish children. And, the contribution of the Community Chorale Society made it a real community event." Barbara continues, "Parents really got into the spirit of the pageant – making costumes, rehearsing the children with their lines, and baking cookies for the reception following. It was just great." Taking advantage of the late afternoon light, the pageant was brilliantly enhanced by professional lighting – producing smoke for the angel Gabriel and the star of Bethlehem.



It was a dreamy event – who can resist those little angels with their big flappy wings! But St. Nicholas gave the pageant muscle with his reminder that our lives in Christ are called to mirror God's generosity to the world. We do that by offering our treasure and talents to the most vulnerable of God's children. This blessed saint who touched the lives of so many in the Holy Land, invites us to do the same in the name of the holy child born in Bethlehem. That night we collected \$1,000 in three golden bags, which was sent to the AFEDJ. The final destination of the collection was The Diocese of Jerusalem.

We hope that you will highlight St. Nicholas this Advent season. It is a great way to bring the parish together, engage the wider community in St. Nicholas and raise funds that support of lives of our brothers and sisters in the Holy Land. The AFEDJ website has a host of great ideas for your St. Nicholas celebration. One or more of them will be just right for you. *God bless you!*



2011 Course Schedule for St. George's College is now available at www.sgcjerusalem.org



ST. GEORGE'S COLLEGE SUMMER YOUTH COURSE

St. George's College, Jerusalem, a diocesan institution which offers educational pilgrimages for faithful Christians wishing to increase their understanding and personal connection with the Land of the Holy One, once again offered a summer Youth Course. This year, a varied and dynamic group of students and young adults with leaders from the U.S. and Canada, were greeted by Bishop Suheil Dawani as they explored the biblical landscape with four local diocesan youth from the Galilee region of Raineh and Nazareth.

These pilgrims learned about each other as people, as representatives of their dioceses and countries, and as followers of Jesus, visiting the sites where Jesus was born, lived, taught, ministered, died, and rose again.

Bishop Suheil Dawani invites you to explore a similar pilgrimage with St. George's College. For more information, please visit: www.j-diocese.org



The Missioners of AFEDJ are a group of 180 committed volunteers across the country. They find opportunities to share information and understanding about the work of the Diocese of Jerusalem. On September 18, the first Missioners Workshop took place at Christ Church in Rye New York. Missioners from Connecticut and New York met and got to know each other, shared ideas and learned about tools and resources to improve their capacity to reach and energize supporters. The next Missioners Workshop is October 30 in Washington DC for Missioners in Virginia, Maryland and Washington.

If you'd like information about becoming a Missioner, contact David Smith at davidsmith924@gmail.com.

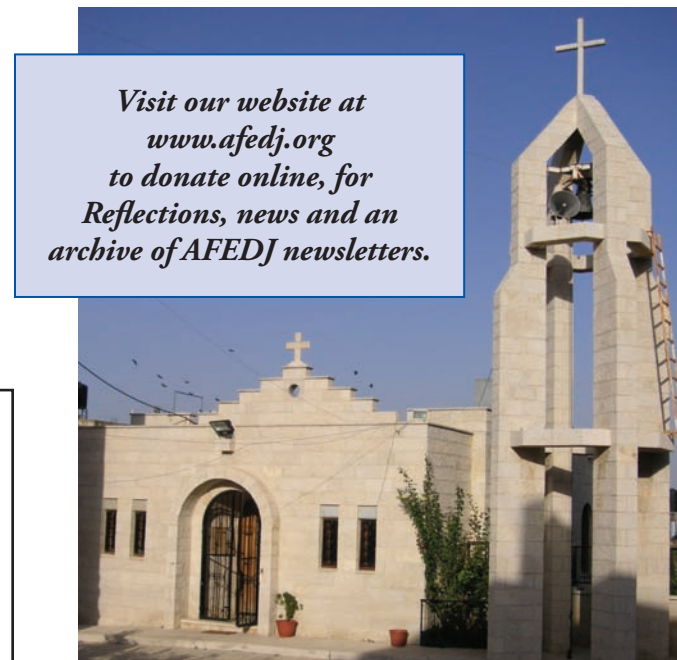
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