



American Friends *of the*
Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem
Building Presence – Building Peace

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



Blind children learn to read Mainstreaming in Irbid, Jordan

Greetings!

Balance. Fairness. Simple concepts, but difficult to connect to the struggling, sputtering peace effort in the Middle East. Some working toward peace in the US see humanitarian aid as a weak response to a muscular problem.

But Bishop Suhail Dawani has observed that you can't make peace with hungry people. A lasting peace is only possible if there are educated leaders, stable communities and hope in the future -- on all sides.

The institutions of the Diocese of Jerusalem feed the mind and the body, develop job skills and strong value systems. These in combination with prayer and advocacy are the bricks and mortar of a sustainable peace and a Holy Land that will be open to pilgrims of every faith tradition. Without healthy, educated, working citizens, we have no hope.

Please help us build toward peace using books and medicine as tools. Your gift is very important.

-- Anne K. Lynn
Executive Director

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[Congratulations to Phoebe Griswold](#),
President of the Board of the American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem! She'll be the recipient of the Deans' Cross for Servant Leadership given by Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, VA at their Service of Lessons and Carols, Dec. 5 at 4:30.

Arab Episcopal School teaches blind with the sighted

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 bare. 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.

St George's Cathedral in Jerusalem, a welcoming place of reconciliation, is looking for support to increase its capacity to provide for the pilgrims, dignitaries and worshipers from throughout the Anglican Communion who visit each day. They're seeking a commitment of \$300 a year for three years to support their ministry. Make contributions online using the Donate Now button above or mail to AFEDJ, designated for the Cathedral.

The Bishop's School in Amman, Jordan asks for scholarship funds for Christian students who otherwise would not be able to attend. The number of Christians in the area continues to dwindle and offering quality education is a proven way to encourage families to stay. Help stabilize the Christian community by contributing using the Donate Now button above or by mailing a contribution to AFEDJ. Our address is at the top of the page.

Thank you, thank you to **St. Paul's K Street** in Washington DC for responding to an urgent need at **St. Saviour's School** in Zarka, Jordan. The floor of the kindergarten (ages 3 to 6) was in such disrepair that it needed to be removed. St. Paul's generous parishioners raised the funds to replace the floor and provide additional scholarship aid. Now the little ones can learn in a safe environment!

The Princess Basma Centre

in Jerusalem seeks support for its sheltered workshop for disabled adults. The workshop provides employment and training for the mentally and physically challenged. The shop repairs furniture, does weaving, refinishing and painting. They request funding for a lathe (\$5,000), an industrial sander (\$3,000) and a year's supply of wood and bamboo (\$10,000). Contributions of any size are welcome: using the Donate Now button above or by mail to AFEDJ, designated for Princess Basma. Help provide independence and self-esteem for this under-served and desperately needy population.

Ideas, Trips and Activities

Don't forget to order **Palestinian olive oil**, soap and herbs for holiday giving through Importing Peace

at <http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?llr=4dmurvcab&et=1103872031324&s=531&e=0017s4pRbP51WbUt8eKyE1XNJNTRfMP5V-bILfRRsXZ-ldU3QToY4wPoR-FOTpAb8sykDjxfkt7EVY8WRsvXTbMvGUvbuMQMMb0wfxqqVnoe5FKipqZISdgQ==>.

This volunteer run Presbyterian effort supports Palestinian farmers and contributes proceeds to AFEDJ each year. An ecumenical and yummy way to help our brothers and sisters in the Holy Land! Thank you, Peter Mann!

And when doing your shopping on **Amazon**, remember to get to it through

http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?llr=4dmurvcab&et=1103872031324&s=531&e=0017s4pRbP51WYZsbX2zUzCJ2Exd9JUKghCqiE5n8Gf_4Ew7rUmqsomXvWPRYNs4B4FtVcWtJh6gQLgpPnSMwl0ZJJctm2nv71Us66e2Agh4c=. Go to this website, follow

the easy navigation to Amazon, and make your purchase as usual. A percentage goes to support Ahli Hospital in Gaza. Thank you Rev. Lynda Hergenrather!



January 18 to 25, 2011 is the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The focus will be on Jerusalem for this World Council of Churches event. Resources are available in 5 languages and 350 churches are engaged in finding common ground among all denominations. More information at <http://www.oikoumene.org/>.

If you're in the Stamford CT area, mark your calendars for the local premier of the acclaimed documentary, **Budrus**. This award winning film follows a small town in the West Bank that uses

passive resistance to save its olive trees. At the Avon Theater in Stamford on Wednesday, **February 16 at 7:30**. Tickets will be available at the door. Contact dmaloof@maloofandbrowne.com for further information.

Check out the Awareness Course at http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?llr=4dmurvcab&et=1103872031324&s=531&e=0017s4pRbP51Wa0Q0skXkOAE3_w9nxwVZff00g8LCxhHj468nR6DgFkIDChuTk4cYOgyPo08IOQukdK_97OTVqD-zA8xVtKEj782YnNLBxyVYf8d5A6JhJaKLMIdu9d1yx8 to view educational materials for groups and individuals. Diversity, exploring faith, understanding Islam, etc.

TRIPS

January 5 - January 18, St. George's College in East Jerusalem will be offering Palestine of Jesus, their popular course that combines class work and travel. Accommodations included. More information and the entire 2011 course schedule at

http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?llr=4dmurvcab&et=1103872031324&s=531&e=0017s4pRbP51WajiqQaH3i8aM9oAdtV1Fmagno0qWe0As6zs4T_hSP8gSbtIT0fcwpuX61tbU4IDmcm3h1Fn8_10XJLFPIt00R3K_x_NH3BH1MCuIKS5XQ==.

January 27 - February 6, The Rev. James Shannon of the Philadelphia Theological Institute will host a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Further information at

www.philadelphiatheologicalinstitute.org/program/holy-land-pilgrimage/

February 23 - February 28 in Jerusalem, the Sabeel International Conference. Challenging Empire: God, Faithfulness and Resistance. For more information visit

http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?llr=4dmurvcab&et=1103872031324&s=531&e=0017s4pRbP51WZqu9iF9KMqNIGVK2Q9QcyztoXAlSW93ftmtgdm59fjqYxMcEnryp3I_ToFQNH3g9be63KJcc-Mcd6m6HRGah-vUHQKok3n4Ik=.

March 22 - April 4. Join the Rev. David Anderson and members of St. Luke's Church in Darien CT for a pilgrimage to include Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Galilee. For more information contact judy.barnett@saintlukesdarien.org

June 4 - June 18, Friends of Sabeel North America are offering a two week fact finding trip to Jerusalem, the West Bank, Nazareth and Hebron. More information at <http://www.fosna.org/>.

October 5 - October 18, Dr. Pauline Coffman of Chicago will lead a Traveling Seminar through Lebanon and Syria. Combine archeology, pilgrimage and contemporary issues. Contact Dr. Coffman at p.coffman@sbcglobal.net