



NEWSLETTER

The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem

January 2010

NEW YEAR, NEW DECADE, AND EPIPHANY GREETINGS TO OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS.

We always wish and pray that the advent of a new year will bring hope to people in despair, reconciliation in conflicts, and a brighter future for all humankind. A spiritual advisor once advocated that we should not pray for anything we are not willing to work towards fulfilling. We start in January with best intentions, often to get distracted or knocked down by the daily business of managing our own lives. God's work requires faith. We must cling to the strong foundation of our faith, to the roots which nurture us, enabling us to persist in God's work.



As we reach out to the people of Haiti in this precarious time following the earthquake disaster, as we remember the people of Gaza who continue to cope with extreme hardships resulting from last January's conflict, as we advocate mutual respect for our neighbors and pray for peace around the world, let us commit ourselves to glorifying God in our ongoing and persistent efforts to help those less fortunate than ourselves. This year, let us live our prayers throughout the year, remembering that all things are possible with God.

*Salaam,
+Suheil Dawani
Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem*

“LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF”

These familiar words from Jesus are vital in maintaining balance in our lives. With God first in our lives, we are sometimes unsure in our discernment about what is next most important at any given time. Jesus gives us these words to guide us. We must love our neighbors as well as ourselves, which means we must also love ourselves so we can love our neighbors.



If we keep these two concepts in balance, we will take appropriate care of ourselves, as children of God, and reach out appropriately to our neighbors, also children of God.

During Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany, Bishop Suheil focuses his time on the priests and people of his Diocese. With day trips to the Galilee, and the West Bank, excursions to Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon, for clergy meetings, church and institution visits, Bishop Suheil reaches out to support his people who strive to maintain hope amidst ongoing tensions and restrictions, and who work every day to improve the lives of their neighbors.

The people of the Diocese, Christian parishioners and Muslim employees, work in companionship and in faith. As Christians teach peace and reconciliation, forgiveness and opportunity, our Muslim employees see their own faith in new light, following the command of Mohammed to help those less fortunate than themselves and view the ‘jihad’ as internal struggle of obedience to God rather than an external war.



These images of people living out the Love of God are vital to the communities which we serve, where decades of despair create a breeding ground for anger and intolerance. The work of nurturing seeds of promise, dignity, and mutual respect require vigilant attention and persistence. It is a job too big for one person alone. It is a job too big for one Diocese alone. It is God’s work and requires the help and support of our friends, for which we are always grateful, friends who go forward with us in faith and provide the financial assistance required.



We invite you to celebrate our diocesan family with us by visiting our website for a myriad of snapshots from the diocese and the Bishop's various visitations over the past two months. Ahlan wa sah'lan. Welcome.



Two photos from a Youth Event held in the Galilee in mid-January 2010. The first shows the clergy leaders, from left, the Revd Samuel Barhoum of Raineh, the Revd Imad Diabes of Nazareth, and the Revd Fuad Dagher of Shefa Am'r. The second shows a few of the youth enjoying lunch with peers from different churches. (Photos by Canon Samir Habiby)

Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches meet in Beirut and discuss ordination of women.

January 2010, the Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches, including Bishop Mouner Anis of Egypt, President Bishop of the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East, Bishop Suheil Dawani, and diocesan delegates from Jordan and Lebanon, joined together for a meeting of protestant Churches in the region. Several important business matters were conducted regarding the name and function of the group. Most significantly, after much discussion, the Fellowship unanimously voted to recommend the ordination of women. This vote does not mandate instant change in the affairs of regional Churches, acknowledging the many cultural factors in the various regions represented which affect the choices made in

each Church. The vote is an expression of the leaders conviction that the Churches should explore ways to validate and encourage the ministries of women within conservative societies.

GAZA UPDATE

Since January 2009, in the aftermath of the Gaza conflict, the staff of the Ahli Arab Hospital have been faithfully caring for the sick and wounded, mentally and physically. The rally of support from our brothers and sisters, known and unknown, has been a tremendous help in maintaining and expanding services to the people most affected.

With infrastructure, homes and businesses badly damaged, with severely restricted supplies entering Gaza through official border crossings, the goods that are available in the markets are not affordable for most residents. Families make tough decisions about how and who to feed family members each day. Sickness is prevalent given substandard housing and lack of sanitary water and facilities.

The staff at Ahli Hospital, with your support, continue to operate their vital mobile medical clinic, visiting the poor in their own neighborhoods. The programs for malnourished children and elderly, and for chronically ill women dramatically improve the quality of life for many.

A new mental health outreach program has been launched and expanded, providing many months of post and ongoing traumatic stress care for families. This specialized program was designed especially for Gaza, with training provided for mothers who then take learned stress reduction techniques and lessons home to their families.



The only functioning mammography machine in Gaza has been used to screen several hundred women for cancer and a new diagnostic center, unique for the region, in being explored. We commend Suhaila Tarazi, hospital director, and her staff for their ongoing heroism, love and care of their neighbors in Gaza. (Suhaila can be seen at right in the photograph.)

In Gaza, life is an ongoing crisis for many. At Ahli, comfort and care provide relief, restore hope and faith in a community struggling to maintain civil order amidst the ruins of last January's conflict. While we hope the world will continue to help Haiti the way our friends helped us, we also hope none of these people will be forgotten as the urgency passes and extreme hardships remain.

The Very Rev'd Michael H. Sellors, 1936 - 2010

We regret to share with you the news that the Very Revd Michael H. Sellors, Dean Emeritus of the Cathedral of St. George the Martyr in Jerusalem, entered his heavenly rest on Wednesday, January 27, 2010 at the age of 73 in Jerusalem.

The funeral will take place at noon on Tuesday, February 2, 2010, the Day of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, at St. George's Cathedral on Nablus Road in Jerusalem. The Rt. Revd Suheil S. Dawani, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and the Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem will be the celebrant. Condolences will be received by the Bishop and the Sellors family that same afternoon from 14:00 to 16:00 at the Cathedral.



Known affectionately as "Fr. Michael", Dean Sellors ministry continued in his retirement after his tenure as Dean of the Cathedral of St. George from 1997 – 2002. In the years following 2002, he was Coordinator of the Heads of Churches of Jerusalem which drew him into extensive ecumenical work on behalf of the indigenous Christian community in the Holy Land. He continued to provide pastoral care and support to a variety of schools, hospitals and nursing homes throughout the area. Fr. Michael also contributed his time on the weekly worship schedule at the Cathedral and assisted in ecumenical worship throughout Jerusalem. In addition, he served at the Armenian Seminary as a lecturer in Pastoral Theology. His close affection for the ministry of the Armenian Orthodox Patriarchate drew him to visit Armenia on three occasions. Fr. Michael, due to his daily walks throughout the Old City of Jerusalem, was well known among members of all three Abrahamic faiths.

Fr. Michael was ordained a priest of the Church of England in 1962 and prior to his appointment as Dean of the Cathedral of St. George served a variety of parishes in England including St. Mary's Willesden and St. Michael's Aldershot, St. John the Evangelist, Hale and St. Mark's Upper Hale, the Weybourne Group of Parishes and St. Edmund's Hunstanton with Ringstead.

Memorial contributions may be made to either the Emmanuel Ministries Trust (Home and School in Ramallah) or the Cathedral Church of St. George the Martyr, Jerusalem. Checks are best made out to the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and marked for either of these ministries.



The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, a diocese of the worldwide Anglican Communion, extends over five countries, including Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Palestine and Israel, within the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East. There are 27 parishes that minister to the needs of their communities, centered on the Cathedral Church of St. George the Martyr in Jerusalem. The church supports 33 institutions, which include hospitals, clinics, kindergartens and schools, vocational training programs, as well as institutions for the deaf, the disabled and the elderly, reaching out to interfaith neighbors in mutual respect and cooperation.

We invite you to learn more through our website at: www.j-diocese.org

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