

Fall 2020

WELCOME BISHOP HOSAM NAOUM — Bishop Hosam was consecrated as Bishop-Coadjutor in June at St. George's Cathedral in East Jerusalem. He has served as dean of St. George's since 2012. In 2021 he will become the diocesan bishop upon the retirement of the Archbishop Suheil Dawani.



We look forward to working with with Bishop Hosam in this new role. He said recently, "The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem is grateful for the friendship and partnership in the gospel with our Episcopalian counterparts in the USA. This historic partnership is all about giving and receiving of God's precious gifts for the human family through our shared faith in Christ and God's mission in and for the world."

At Princess Basma Centre virtual therapy is here to stay

With the arrival of coronavirus and the subsequent lockdown - when all therapy sessions were forced online - the Centre's leaders made a surprising discovery.

A core program at the Jerusalem Princess Basma Centre (JPBC) has been a two-week residential session for families with children with disabilities called the Mother Empowerment Program.

In the best of times, the ability of Palestinians to journey to East Jerusalem from towns and cities in the West Bank, and particularly from Gaza, is difficult because of the need for travel permits and delays at checkpoints. For parents of children with disabilities, the residential program at JPBC allowed them time and space to concentrate on their child's therapeutic plan and be trained to serve as the therapist once they return home.

During the spring lockdown, when physical, occupational, and speech therapy sessions were conducted over various online video platforms, it became clear to leaders at JPBC that virtual therapy offered a way to extend the Centre's services to more families who might find taking part in a residential program impossible.

In June JPBC re-opened for on-site rehabilitation services and over the summer 85 families took part in the residential program. In the past, families might return for multiple residential stays for reevaluation and to update their child's therapeutic plan. Now follow-up therapy sessions will be virtual. This residential/virtual hybrid model is less expensive and avoids the difficulty of arranging for travel and childcare for other children in the family.

continued on page 4



Under the guidance of JPBC therapists, Nadine's father has created a mini-rehabilitation center at home

The economic impact of the pandemic —

With hope and persistence Holy Land Christians turmoil and uncertainty

As our brothers and sisters across the Holy Land live with the threat of a widespread COVID-19 outbreak, they also must negotiate the devastating impact that intermittent shutdowns and the disappearance of tourism have had on the economies in the region.

In recent months, American Friends has talked with many leaders of Diocese of Jerusalem's schools, hospitals, and centers for children with disabilities about their faithful work to keep the doors open, pay staff, and continue the good work God has set before them to do.

WEST BANK

Dr. Walid Kerry, director of St. Luke's Hospital in Nablus, a northern West Bank city of 350,000, spoke eloquently about the difficulties facing people across Palestine.

"Many families have completely exhausted their savings. The traditional fabric of Palestinian society - extended families supporting each other - which has served our culture for millennia, has begun to unravel as those resources have been depleted," he said.

"The entire middle class is going bankrupt, but, in the midst of this gloom, we remember that St. Luke's is a charity hospital. We provide care for those without, and in such trying times we feel blessed we can provide so much protection and support for those who desperately need it."

"We will continue to do our best to extend your good work to our community."

- Dr. Walid Kerry

Many patients who would normally be able to pay for treatment at St. Luke's now seek a reduction in fees. While the decrease in income over the past six months has impacted the hospital's fiscal health, Dr. Kerry and his staff believe that charity care to all who enter St. Luke's doors is at the core of its mission as the only Christian hospital in Nablus. In appreciation for the support they receive from their American Friends, he said, "We will continue to do our best to extend your good work to our community."

EAST JERUSALEM

East Jerusalem's residents have been hit hard by the pandemic. While the first cases were confirmed on February 21, no testing sites were set up on the Palestinian side of the separation wall until mid-April.

Lack of access to healthcare coupled with the disappearance of religious tourism, compound the impact on families in East Jerusalem. Of the Old City's 1,400 shops, 45 percent have closed due to the pandemic and the number of daily visitors, which would normally average 200,000 is down to 5,000.



The empty marketplace in the Old City of Jerusalem Photo: Don Binder

During a recent conference call with the AFEDJ Board of Trustees, Archbishop Suheil Dawani thanked all of you American Friends for your support of his emergency fund to assist needy families. The Archbishop shared that more than 120 families have benefited from the fund. As the economic turmoil continues in the coming months, people's situations will become increasingly desperate.

LEBANON

The people of Beirut continue to struggle to recover from the massive explosion on August 4. Archdeacon Imad Zoorob, vicar of All Saints Episcopal Church in Beirut and the director of St. Luke's Center for Rehabilitation in nearby Beit Mery, recently explained that the devastation of Beirut's central city only further strains the effects of inflation and instability all Lebanese face.

"We are grateful for the help of our American Friends that allowed us to assist the members of our congregations whose homes were damaged as well as other neighbors. With God's help I am able to support those who despair over their lives," he said. St. Luke's Center, a day and boarding school for 57 students with cognitive disabilities, was closed at the start of the pandemic, yet staff members maintain contacts and continue lessons with the children. "We worry about them," said Archdeacon Zoorob. "Many of them are not well-cared for by their parents and suffer neglect."

He said that if the government allows the school to re-open he is concerned that government subsidies will not be enough to even feed the children. "We Lebanese used to buy a [liter] of milk for 10,000 Lebanese Lira, about \$6US. Now we pay 90,000 Lira, which is equivalent to \$50US."

He added, "In God, we have hope. Otherwise, I don't know what will happen."

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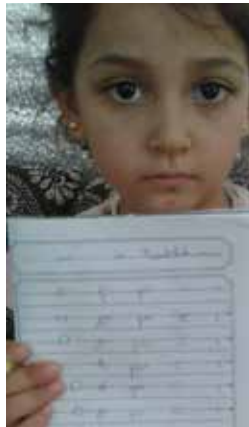
JORDAN

Dua'a Bisharat, principal of Saviour's Episcopal School in the city of Zarqa reported that many families are suffering because of the economic downturn caused by the pandemic.

"Government salaries have been reduced by as much as 50 percent, and many parents have lost their jobs which makes them unable to pay their children's school tuition," she explained. With no promise of tuition dollars flowing from vulnerable families, Saviour's teachers still received training over the summer to conduct online classes in the event of a quarantine.

Bisharat and her staff remain committed to serving the students in their care even in the midst of uncertainty. "I tell my teachers, take an umbrella. God will provide the rain."

At the Holy Land Institute for the Deaf in Salt, Archdeacon Luay Haddad, the institute's director, explained,



A young Syrian refugee shows her lesson book at Al-Azraq camp

"Despite all the rough circumstances we face, we must continue being part of God's ministry here on earth." The loss of income from teacher training courses and student boarding fees, coupled with the expense of developing and enabling online education for all students, puts HLID in a precarious financial position.

Archdeacon Haddad added, "The future of our beloved institute is not certain yet."

Teaching and learning at HLID continues both at the school and out in the community. The third cohort of students in the three-month culinary arts program is in full swing with safety precautions in place and distance learning continues for deaf children at the Al-Azraq refugee camp.

Live from the Holy Land

A series of conversations with Diocese of Jerusalem leaders - Watch at www.afedj.org

Dr. Walid Kerry,
Director
St. Luke's Hospital
Nablus, West Bank



Ibrahim Faltas,
Director
Princess Basma
Centre, Jerusalem



Giovanni Anbar,
Director
ETVTC
Ramallah, West Bank



Suhaila Tarazi,
Director
Ahli Arab Hospital
Gaza City



Fr. Imad Zoorob,
Director
St. Luke's Center
Beirut, Lebanon



Dua'a Bisharat,
Principal
Saviour's School
Zarqa, Jordan

Thank you for keeping your connection with Christians in the Holy Land and for keeping us in your prayers. We hope that soon you can come and see our school in Ramallah.

- Giovanni Anbar
Episcopal Technological and
Vocational Training Center, Ramallah

"Everybody at the hospital knows that today there will be a meeting between me and our partners in this mission. They said, 'Oh, Suhaila, we are not left alone.'"

- Suhaila Tarazi
Ahli Arab Hospital, Gaza City

This Advent engage with Holy Land Christians in a fun and informative way



Who knows what you'll discover behind each new door! You'll have to return every day to find out.

Give a Christmas gift that makes a difference in the Holy Land

Beginning on November 1, when you make a secure donation on our website, you will be offered the option of making a gift in honor of a loved one. We will send a personalized Christmas card announcing your gift directly to your recipient (or you can opt that it be sent to you to deliver in person).

Gift donations may be directed to where the need is greatest or to a specific school, hospital, or center for children with disabilities. As always, AFEDJ ensures that 100 percent of all dedicated donations go directly to the intended institution.

In mid-November look for an email with a link to AFEDJ's first-ever online Advent calendar.

Each day in Advent open a new window to encounter a photo or brief video of children served by the humanitarian institutions of the Diocese of Jerusalem as well as a quote, reflection, or a fascinating tidbit about the ministry.

Celebrate St. Nicholas on December 6

The St. Nicholas Center, now in partnership with Virginia Theological Seminary, offers many wonderful resources to mark St. Nicholas Day. Visit www.stnicholascenter.org for more.

virtual therapy is here to stay continued

"We've had to reinvent some of the services we offer, but we still visit the field - daycare centers, clinics, hospitals - 60 times a year to identify children and refer them to the Centre," explained Ibrahim Faltas, JPBC's general director.

Thanks, in part, to AFEDJ supporters and several diocesan Sustainable Development Goals grants, children with disabilities

who live outside of East Jerusalem now have the opportunity to continue therapy online and stay on a path toward rehabilitation and promise. For many other families for whom a journey to JPBC is impossible, the proven success of the virtual therapy model - though propelled by the challenges brought by the pandemic - may result in a life-changing opportunity that might be otherwise unavailable to them.

Become a Jerusalem Saint

By leaving a gift in your will to AFEDJ, you assert your faith that we can build a world where all human lives have value and all people are treated with dignity and respect.

The humanitarian institutions of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem are the diocese's witness to Jesus that testify every day to the love of God, the forgiveness of God and the grace of God. It is the fulfillment of these institutions' mission that brings us closer to God's kingdom.

Adding a bequest for AFEDJ to your will or retirement plan is

a simple act with impressive results. It's easy to do, and it is for everyone. We'll welcome you into the Jerusalem Saints Society with a gift of any size.

Questions about making a charitable bequest? Please contact AFEDJ Executive Director John Lent at jlent@afedj.org to schedule a phone call.



Our 4-star rating from Charity Navigator and our Gold Seal of Transparency from Guidestar mean we're accountable, transparent, and financially healthy!
We invite you to give generously at www.afedj.org

Sign up for the AFEDJ monthly e-newsletter at www.afedj.org