



Building Hope in the Holy Land

Summer 2021

American Friends responds to deepening economic crisis in Lebanon

Your donations to the Food for St. Luke's Families program provide a safety net for families of students and staff members at St. Luke's Rehabilitation Center in Beirut

In the year since the explosion at the port of Beirut, living conditions across Lebanon have worsened at an alarming rate. The devaluation of the Lebanese Pound by 90 percent, the rationing of gasoline, the shortage of imported food and an increasingly unstable central government are pushing Lebanon to the brink of a humanitarian catastrophe. The World Bank reported that the financial situation in Lebanon is among the three worst international crises since the mid-1800s.

As the crisis worsens and the international community is slow to respond, the Lebanese people may be forced to resort to methods they used to survive the Civil War between 1975 and 1990: every ethnic and religious community takes care of its own. Under such conditions the tiny Anglican presence in Lebanon will become more vulnerable than ever before.

Several times a week Archdeacon Imad Zoorob waits for hours in line to buy a half tank of gas. "I get up at 6 a.m. to secure a place in line to get enough fuel to go to church," said



Long lines at gas stations are a common sight across Lebanon (Photo: Shutterstock)

"People are still receiving their old wages which weren't enough to keep them afloat when the currency was normal. Imagine now with this rate. God help us all."

— Archdeacon Imad Zoorob

Zoorob, the sole Episcopal priest in Lebanon. Zoorob serves as rector of All Saint's Church in Beirut as well as director of St. Luke's Rehabilitation Center, the nearby boarding and day school for children with cognitive disabilities owned by the Diocese of Jerusalem.

Though St. Luke's Rehabilitation Center closed in March 2020 due to the pandemic, Zoorob has stayed close to the students and staff and their families, who are struggling financially. For a time, with the outpouring of financial support from AFEDJ donors after the August 2020 explosion in the port of Beirut, Zoorob was able to offer food cards to the 83 families in the St. Luke's community.

American Friends' generosity has allowed Zoorob to resume purchasing monthly food cards for student and staff families. "I am really grateful for such great and generous support for St. Luke's families because the staff and the children are in great need."

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Your generosity allows Ahli Arab Hospital to extend care and compassion to traumatized families

Two months after the destruction of Gaza, leaders and staff at Ahli Arab Hospital continue to extend hope and care to families affected by the 11 days of bombardment in May. Ahli continues to treat the injuries of war - broken bones, shrapnel and glass injuries - and provides care for those with severe trauma and families with a wide range of health care needs.

With the ceasefire holding, Ahli Hospital's long-time director, Suhaila Tarazi, has turned her attention to the aftermath of war. "There is no family that has not been affected by this war either physically, emotionally, or economically. Families have been shattered by its devastating impact, especially children," she said.

With the ongoing closure of government health centers, demand for Ahli's services has increased. With the outpouring of support from its American Friends, the hospital has been able to ramp up staffing in surgical, nursing, laboratory, X-ray, and psychosocial departments.

Your generosity has enabled Ahli Hospital to:

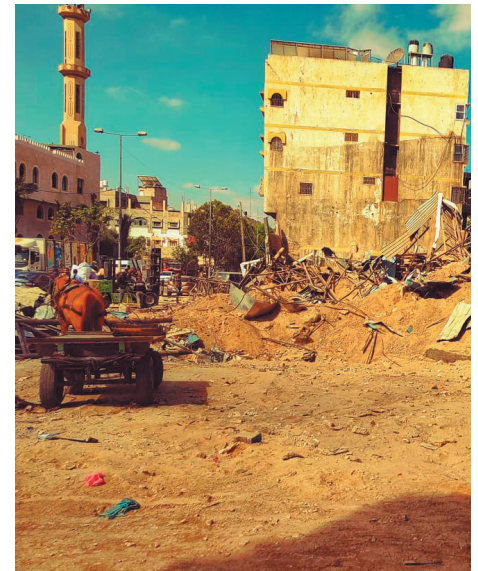
- Increase the free community clinic from one day to four days a week
- Purchase fuel for generators



A drawing by a Gazan child traumatized by war. The clean up of the destruction of Gaza begins. (Photos by John McCulloch)

- Expand its psychosocial rehabilitation program to treat children and their caregivers traumatized by the war
- Purchase medicine and medical supplies
- Expand its burn center to treat an increased number of children with burns

The Rev. John McCulloch, who serves at the St. Andrew's Scots Memorial Church in Jerusalem, was granted a permit to visit Gaza in early June. He visited a center that offers a program for traumatized children similar to Ahli's. "I heard stories



of families lying awake at night as the bombs fell, trying to comfort their children. I saw the trauma in the eyes of those I spoke with, telling me of their desperation and fear of having nowhere to go, nowhere safe where they could take their children." One parent told him, "We are tired of war. We just want to live in peace and to be free. We don't hate anyone."

**Questions about AFEDJ or our work?
Please be in touch!**



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Back at Ahli Hospital, Tarazi had this word for AFEDJ donors: "We are very grateful to our American Friends who are giving us a hand to plant seeds of hope for all those hopeless in Gaza. Ahli staff members are ready to work day and night and sometimes to risk their lives to eliminate the suffering of the patients. With your help, we can continue to offer the most compassionate response to people in Gaza."

New Archbishop offers vision for support of Holy Land Christians and their ministries

Since his May 2021 installation as Archbishop, Hosam Naoum has traveled to schools and hospitals across the diocese to listen and to share his vision for the future.

On June 19 Archbishop Naoum met with supporters of the Jerusalem Princess Basma Center from across the world via Zoom. His message speaks to all who stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in the Holy Land. Here are a few excerpts of his conversation:

“Being brother and sisters - family is such a moving image. We are the one body of Christ. We are one despite the cultural differences, despite the geographic distance. What we do here in the Holy Land we do on behalf of the whole Christian world. Why? Because we are custodians of these holy sites, the places that continue to witness to the stories of Jesus where everything began.

“If we, the church, don’t do this ministry, who are we expecting to do it? We cannot turn our back on these institutions and say “Someone else will provide for them.’

Jesus commands us to care for people.

“As the body of Christ, when we see our brothers and sisters in different parts of the world in need and God has blessed us, we are to share the love, share the peace, share the resources. And that’s why we are Christians. That is why we are part of the one body of Christ spread throughout the world.

“The pandemic is a challenge for people across the world, for all of us. Despite the challenges that are happening around us, despite the war in Gaza, the violence in Jerusalem, the church will continue to be a beacon of hope for everyone.”

On the same Zoom call, Ibrahim Faltas, director of Jerusalem Princess Basma Center spoke frankly about the needs of the rehabilitation center and inclusive school.



After presiding at graduations at diocesan schools across the Diocese, Bishop Hosam met deaf-blind students at the Holy Land Institute for the Deaf in Salt, Jordan.

“We continue to be steadfast no matter what the challenge. The past year has been traumatizing. The violence is not just what you see on television or on social media. The violence is continuous. And it will continue until there is a just solution,” he said.

Archbishop Hosam Naoum to gather with American Friends in Boston



Archbishop Hosam Naoum plans to visit Boston in October to participate in AFEDJ’s board meeting and speak to a gathering of donors and friends. He also plans to preach on Sunday, October 17 at a church to be determined.

We hope all American friends of the Diocese of Jerusalem in the Boston area will attend to hear the Archbishop share current conditions and news from the region and speak about his vision for the Diocese and its partnership with AFEDJ. We will share details on these events soon.

Lebanon...

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The value of savings, pensions and wages have been reduced to virtually nothing.

Zoorob explained, “People are still receiving their old wages which weren’t enough to keep them afloat when the currency was normal. Imagine now with this rate. God help us all.”

Every donation of 50 US dollars will help a St. Luke’s Center family purchase one month of groceries. Give at www.afedj.org/give/give-online.



Our Gold Seal of Transparency from Guidestar means 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



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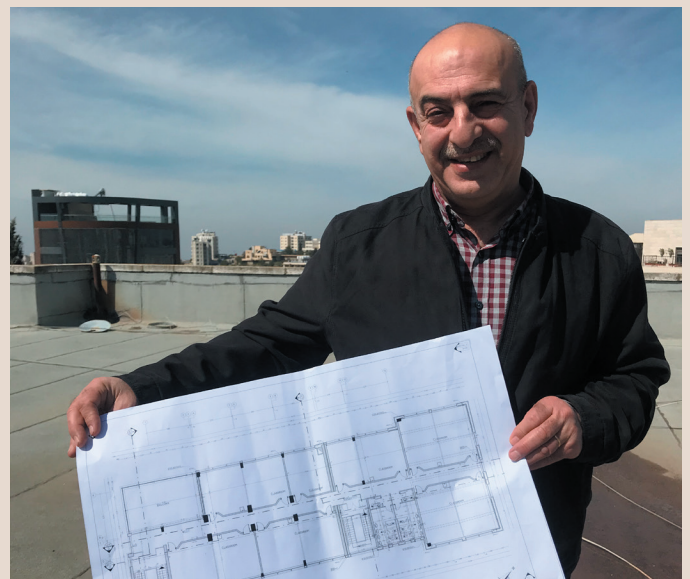
Generous gifts from Shaheen Charitable Trust will transform Ramallah school

Mr. Shouky Shaheen's desire to fund a large construction project at the Arab Evangelical Episcopal School (AEES) in Ramallah, West Bank, was not deterred by two years of delays in acquiring government permits or a world-wide pandemic. The project will add an entire floor to the main school building to be named after his father, Aziz Shaheen.

Founded in 1954 as a home for impoverished and orphaned girls, AEES has evolved into a K-12 academic co-ed school serving 845 students and their families.

Its headmaster, Iyad Rafidi, says of this transformative gift, "Mr. Shaheen's long support for our school has helped us maintain our mission for our students and to the Ramallah community. His generosity has enabled us to pass through much sociopolitical and economic turmoil."

The project, set to be completed by the end of the 2021, will provide additional classrooms and create new labs for technology and science instruction at the secondary level.



AEES Headmaster Iyad Rafidi with blueprints of the construction project now underway

Learn more about the schools, hospitals, and centers for children with disabilities owned and operated by the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem.

Check out our institution pages and factsheets at www.afedj.org/find-an-institution