



NEWSLETTER

The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem

December 2011

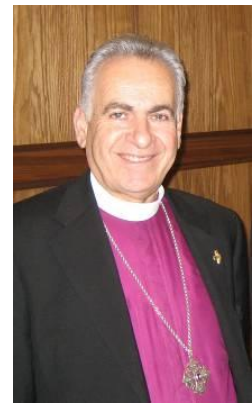
Peace to you in the name of the Lord

Greetings from Bishop Suheil Dawani

Dear Friends,

As we enter into a new year, full of the anticipation of God's work in us, I pray for you and your families, that this year will be peace-filled and joyous.

At this time of Epiphany, we remember our Baptism into the faith of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. We also remember that we are baptized into a community; not only our family parishes but also the world wide family. This past year has seen trials and tribulations for many of our brothers and sisters but we look forward with hope that God's love will prevail and peace will come.



The birth of the Prince of Peace inspires us with hope that we all may continue to build positive relationships with each other. Building on the foundation we share in our love of God and how God's love is shown in the world by how we love our neighbor.

God continues to challenge our lives, to extend and expand our role as his disciples. And our faith always invites us to be open to what is possible even in the face of what looks impossible. Truly, we step forward into this New Year with courage and confidence.

I wish you all a Happy and Joyous Epiphany Season!

May God bless you and keep you safe in the knowledge of His everlasting love.

Peace, Salaam,

+ *Suheil Dawani*

Courtesy Visits

Courtesy visits, to give good wishes on his health, were made to Bishop Suheil on the weekend of December 3-4th. His Grace Archbishop Anba Abraham, of the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, came to the Bishop's residence on the morning Saturday, December 3th bringing warm greetings. On Sunday, December 4th in the afternoon, His Beatitude Patriarch Fouad Twal, of the Latin Patriarchate visited the Bishop with good wishes on his wellbeing. Bishop said that it was a kind and generous gesture, to have the Coptic and Latin Patriarchates come to call. It is very much appreciated to have such bonds of friendship and ecumenism!



400th Anniversary of the King James Bible



The year 2011 marked the 400th Anniversary of the King James Bible. On December 4th, St. George's Cathedral celebrated with an Ecumenical Choral Evensong held in the Quire (High Altar). Bishop Suheil was the main officiant with assistance from the Revd George Shand, from St. Andrew's Church of Scotland. Also serving in the celebration was The Revd Canon Hosam Naoum, pastor to the Arabic and English Congregations of St. Georges; The Very

Revd Dr. Graham Smith, Dean of St. George's College; The Revd Lawrence Hilditch, Principal of the Anglican International School of Jerusalem; and The Revd Kristen Brown of the United Methodist Church. The many people who attended enjoyed the ecumenical service held in celebration of this auspicious occasion.



Executive Meeting for Al'Ahli Arab Hospital, Gaza



Bishop Suheil met with Mrs. Suhaila Tarazy, Director of the Al'Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza, Dr. Maher Iyad, Medical Director, and Haleem Bashlawi, Chief Accountant of the Diocese on Wednesday, December 7th at the Diocesan Offices. This meeting was to discuss the ongoing concerns for the Al'Ahli Arab Hospital including financial issues, expenses, staff salaries and other management issues.

On Thursday, December 8th a luncheon was served in St. George's Guest House. Bishop Suheil, Mrs. Suhaila Tarazy, Dr. Maher Iyad and Mr. Haleem Bashlawi, were joined by Ms. Deborah Neal, Bishop's Personal Secretary, Mr. James Laing, representative from the Church of Scotland and Mrs. Shafeeqa Dawani, the Bishop's wife.

On December 9th, Bishop Suheil, Mrs. Suhaila, Dr. Maher, and Dr. Hisham Nassar met for a very productive discussion on the Al'Ahli Hospital. The Al'Ahli Hospital in Gaza offers to serve all who seek treatment without prejudice to any religious or ethnic community and irrespective of social class, gender and political affiliation. These services are delivered in a spirit of love and service.



Bishop Suheil meets with Headmaster of St. John's School, Haifa.



St. John's School is one of the best primary schools in Haifa. With so many requests for new students to attend St. John's KG-8th grade classes, St. John's is now in the planning stages of enlarging the school to double its size. This is a multi-year plan and Bishop Suheil met with Mr. Aziz Da'em, the Headmaster of St. John's School, Haifa and Haleem Bashlawi, Chief Account of the Diocese, to discuss steps of the current year's progress within the general plan. They are looking ahead, with anticipation, to the bright future of an expanded St. John's School.

Bishop Suheil meets with a delegation from the Jewish Council of Public Affairs USA

Bishop Suheil was invited by Patriarch Twal to attend a meeting with a visiting delegation from The Jewish Council of Public Affairs from the United States. Rabbi David Rosen, AJC International Director for Interreligious Affairs requested that His Beatitude Patriarch Fouad Twal host the meeting with the twenty members of this delegation. He kindly invited other Christian leaders in the Holy Land to join His Beatitude. Bishop Suheil found the meeting to be informative and productive. The meeting was held at the Latin Patriarchate in Jerusalem.



Executive and Foundation Meetings of St. George's College



The Executive and Foundation Meetings for St. George's College were held over a two day period on the 12-13th of December. Bishop Allen Bartlett from the United States, Bishop Keith Slater from Australia / New Zealand and Bishop Robin Smith from the United Kingdom gathered with Bishop Suheil for the Annual Meetings for St. George's College. The Revd Janet Trisk, from South Africa, was the Anglican Church Council representative. Among a number of topics of discussion, including finances, building maintenance and upgrades to the security and computer systems, the members gave a warm welcome to the new Dean

of the College, The Very Revd Dr Graham Smith. Dean Smith and his wife, Sherry, are from Chicago, Illinois and have been here since early October. During their stay at St. George's College a dinner was held for them in St. George's Guest House and a reception/dinner was held at the Deanery.

Lunch for the Children at the Arab Episcopal Evangelical School in Ramallah

Bishop Suheil and Shafeeqa joined the children at the Arab Episcopal Evangelical School in Ramallah for a Christmas Lunch. They brought presents and goodies for the children. The children were so please to have this visit and it made their day. Sister Najah Rantisi was thrilled to have the Bishop visit with his family.



Christmas Greetings in Jofeh- Jordan Valley/ Jordan



Father Christmas came to Jofeh. The Rehabilitation Centre was full of excited children (and adults!!) as Christmas began with a party. After and morning or entertainment by the children, adults and staff, the honoured guest, Father Christmas spent a happy time giving out presents.

Each year the Jofeh Center holds a Christmas event for the children from the surrounding villages and for the adults who use the Center throughout the year. Although this Institution is run by the Diocese, those who come to learn and socialize very much consider the Center as theirs. This was very apparent as they enjoyed the festivities and welcome the guests. This year the Marriott Hotel from the Dead Sea, supplied all the refreshments and some of the presents. The Center is very grateful for their support and trust that this relationship will continue in the future.

Many of those who came are physically and mentally challenged, some of whom are deaf but all find a place where they can come and find a home! Many learn a craft which can help them provide an income for their families and others come to learn computer skills and literacy. This centre is important for the area and Christmas is a time when they can all come together and celebrate.

Meeting with the Moderator of the Church of Scotland



Bishop Suheil had the pleasure of meeting with the Rt. Revd David Arnott and his wife, Rosemary, on Friday, December 16th. The Rt. Revd Arnott is the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. He has been visiting various churches institutions during his time here in Jerusalem. He will be participating in various Christmas festivities and hopes to be involved with the Christmas Eve Service at St. George's. The Revd George Shand, the Revd Ian W Alexander from the World Mission Council, James Laing, Regional Manager for Israel/Palestine and the Dean of St. George's College, the Very Revd Dr Graham Smith also attended the meeting.

Bishop Suheil meets with Consolidated Contractors Company

Bishop Suheil met with Samer S. Khoury, President of Consolidated Contractors Company in Amman, Jordan Thursday. They met to discuss the Diocesan Project that will be underway in the next few years. This is an exciting project that will bring revenue in to the Diocese and will work toward the Diocesan vision of becoming self-sufficient



Bishop Suheil welcomes the Revd Major John Organ



Bishop Suheil had the pleasure of welcoming the Revd John Organ at the Holy Eucharist Service on December 17th. The Revd Major John Organ will be returning with his wife, Irene, in July to become the Bishop's Chaplain here at St. George's Cathedral in Jerusalem. The Revd Major John Organ is visiting from Ottawa, Canada over Christmas and into the New Year. This is a wonderful opportunity to get to know the people he will be working with and to see where he and his wife will be living once they arrive in the summer.

Simulcast of Bethlehem Prayer Service

Bishop Suheil joined Bishop Munib Younan at the Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church in Bethlehem, Palestine for a simultaneous service with Washington National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. The Welcome was given by the Revd Dr. Mitri Raheb, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bethlehem. The Lessons in English were read by Bishop Marion Budde, Diocese of Washington; The Revd Canon Jan Naylor Cope, Vicar of Washington Cathedral; Gretchen Theobald, Palestine/Israel Advocacy Group; Nan Hildebrand, Chaplain, Washington Cathedral; the Revd Elizabeth McHan, Communication Assistant, Evangelical Lutheran Church; The Revd Canon John L. Peterson, Canon for Global Justice and Reconciliation, Washington Cathedral; Grace Said, Palestine/Israel Advocacy Group; The Revd Fred Stickert, Pastor of the Church of the Redeemer, Jerusalem. The lessons in Arabic were read by Mrs. Mai Nasser, Church Elder, Lutheran Church; Dr. Alfred Khoury, Washington; The Revd Canon Hosam Naoum, St. George's Cathedral, Jerusalem. The Revd Richard Graham, Bishop of the Metropolitan Washington, DC Synod of the ELCA, led the Prayers and gave the blessing in English; and Mr. Adel Khader, Christmas Lutheran Church; Bethlehem led the prayers in Arabic. Bishop Suheil gave the Arabic Blessing. Hymns were sung by the Wartburg Choir in Washington and by the Dal al-Kalima School Choir in Bethlehem. The Christmas Message was given by The Rt Revd Munib Younan, Bishop of the Evangelical and Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land. This was the fifth annual service of lessons and carols held jointly with the USA.



Lessons and Carols for St. John's Eye Hospital, Jerusalem



The Annual Family Carol Service and Sancta Lucia Procession were held at St. George's Cathedral on the evening of Monday, December 19. The Revd Canon Hosam Naoum and the Revd John Organ led the service of Lessons and Carols. Readers included Sir Vincent Fean, British Consul General; Mr. Rod Bull, CEO; Mrs. Ruth Wilson, Human Resources Manager; Mrs. Margaret Disby, Theatre Supervisor; Mrs. Rana Bullata, Personal Assistant; Ms. Sylvia Qirry, Admissions Officer; Mr. Philip Hardaker, Order Hospitaller and Mrs. Judith Musallam, Head Orthoptist. The organist for the evening was Mrs. Ina Dudakova and the soloist was Amira Dibs. Proceeds of the collection will go to the St. John "Children in

Need Fund" which helps needy children with drops, medication, eye glasses and diagnostic tests. The highlight of the evening was the Sancta Lucia Procession with Children from the St. John Family. A reception was held after the service in St. George's Guest House Dining Hall.

Christmas Celebration for the Staff of the Bishop's School and The Ahliyyah School and Kindergarten, Amman, Jordan

Bishop Suheil joined The Staff Christmas Lunch for the Bishop's School and the Ahliyyah School and Kindergarten which was held at the Four Seasons Hotel in Amman, Jordan on Monday, December 19. The Opening Welcome was given by Mrs. Haifa Najjar, Superintendent of all three institutions, under the auspices of Bishop Suheil. Bishop Suheil gave the Blessing and thanks for the great achievements of the institutions and the development of the Bishop's School, as it is now back as one of Jordan's top schools.



Board members from all the institutions were also present to enjoy the lovely lunch. The program included Christmas Carols in Arabic and English, sung by choirs from the schools. There was also wonderful entertainment with singing and dancing by the school staff.

Christmas Dinner for Christ Church School, Nazareth



Bishop Suheil attended the Christmas Dinner celebration in Nazareth for Christ Church School. Joined by his Chaplain, the Revd John Organ, Haleem Bashlawi, Chief Accountant, Amin Abu Hanna, Property Manager and Deborah Neal, Bishop's Personal Secretary, the Bishop opened the festivities with Grace and good words. The meal extended through the evening with entertainment. Bishop Awards were given to a number of teachers for their dedication and hard work. Mrs. Manal Shofani, Head of the Secondary School; Mrs. Ava Nousair, Head of the Elementary School; Mrs. Rana Odeh,

Head of the Kindergarten, Mrs. Niva Mabgish, Head of Middle School, Mrs. Zenat Joubran, Head of BTG Department were there to enjoy the festivities.

Christmas Lunch and Board Meeting at St. Luke's Hospital

Bishop Suheil, with his chaplain, the Revd Major John Organ, and Chief Accountant, Haleem Bashlawi, attended the annual Christmas Lunch and Board Meeting at St. Luke's Hospital in Nablus. Thank you Awards were given to the Bishop from the Employee Committee of St. Luke's and the Police of Nablus. Mr. Ghassan Shakaa, lawyer and member of the Executive Committee of the P.L.O., also received a thank you award from the Bishop for all his hard work. Dr. Walid began the celebration with a welcoming word. Bishop Suheil also spoke emphasizing the good relationships between the Christian and the Muslim communities for which Nablus is known. Governor Major Gabriel Al- Bakri and the Mayor's assistant of the municipality and Dr. Hafez Shaheen, Dr. Fawaz Siam, managers and representatives of the Palestinian Authority Security Department were also to all in attendance.



Meeting of the Heads of Churches



Bishop Suheil met with the Heads of Churches on Wednesday, December 21st. The clergy gathered to exchange Christmas greetings and discuss common concerns regarding this holy season. His Beatitude Patriarch Theopholis III graciously welcomed the members of the Heads of Churches to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate. The Revd Canon Hosam Naoum has been formally appointed as the Secretary for the Meetings for the Head of Churches in Jerusalem.

The Arab Evangelical Episcopal School, Ramallah celebrates Christmas in the community



The Arab Evangelical Episcopal School (AEES) students, teachers and administration started the Holy month of Christmas with the theme of "God is Love".

A call was published to collect clothes, children toys and food to be distributed at Christmas. The children took this opportunity to show their love to their people and brought in thousands of great things... the school's bus, full of God's love, God's blessings, students and teachers visited several elderly and special needs houses sharing the message and spreading the word of love. This noble notion was

received with a lot of gratitude.

Students of from the KG and primary School presented the annual celebration of Christmas parties. Grandparents, parents and teachers enjoyed the Christmas spirit watching their children in Christmas plays and singing hymns. AEES also hosted the Heart to Heart group who gave a great Christmas show for the students.

With Santa, AEES students visited Al-Nahda Women Association, danced, sang and gave their gifts to special needs children. AEES also responded to Caritas Association call to give baskets of food to needy families.

Santa also visited the classes, ringing the bells and giving gifts to each student at AEES. On the 23rd of December, a teachers' gifts exchanging meeting was held. Father Hanna Dalleh opened with prayers and ended with the School's invitation for all teachers and board members to the Christmas lunch at one of the city's restaurant.



St. George's School Staff and Children celebrate Christmas



The children of St. George's School, Jerusalem, celebrated Christmas with singing carols and greeting Santa. The children were so excited to see Santa arrive. Bishop Suheil and Head of School, Mr. Eid Sader, were also there to enjoy the festivities with the children. The School staff then visited the Diocesan offices with seasonal greetings. Christmas wishes were extended by Bishop Suheil to all. The School staff then enjoyed music and lunch at St. George's Guest House.



Christmas Eve in the Shepherd's Field, Beit Sahour



Bishop Suheil gave the homily at the Lessons and Carols Service in the Shepherd's Field at the YMCA in Beit Sahour on Christmas Eve. Renewing a long held tradition that had been put on hold for 55 years, lamb was cooked in the cave ovens and served in the Shepherd's cave to all in attendance. It was delicious. Fr. Hosam Naoum, on keyboard and Fr. Graham Smith, with his violin, played the music for the carol service. Fr. John Organ, Bishop's Chaplain read one of the lessons.

The YMCA in Beit Sahour was established in 1949. Today, it hosts a variety of diversified programs and activities in order to work with all sectors of Palestinian society without discrimination.

Christmas Eve in Bethlehem



Bishop Suheil and 150 worshippers arrived in Bethlehem in the pouring rain to celebrate the Lessons and Carols Services in the Greek Orthodox Chapel of St. George in the Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem. Despite the weather, the celebration was lovely, as everyone sang hymns and listened to the readings of the evening.

It was an honour to have His Excellency, President Mahmoud Abbas "Abu Mazen", His Excellency Prime Minister Salaam Fayad, and the Jordanian Foreign Minister, His Eminence Naser Joudeh. Also attending the service was Her Majesty's Consul General Sir Vincent and Lady Fean, other High

Officials and representatives of various Palestinian and Jordanian civil authorities. The service was lead by The Revd Canon Hosam Naoum, who welcomed everybody to the annual celebration, and thanked the people for their patience and graciousness in coping with the weather and the logistics of the evening.

Readers included H. M. Consul General, Sir Vincent Fean; The Revd Dr. Yazeed Said; The Very Revd Dr. Graham Smith; The Right Revd David Arnott, The Revd Dr. Lawrence Hilditch; Ms. Marion Jadoun; The Revd Major John Organ and Archbishop Theophylaeos, Archbishop of Jordan. Bishop Suheil gave the Homily and the Blessing.

It is with great thanks to His Beatitude Theophilos III, Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate for his generous hospitality for once again giving us permission to worship in the chapel on such a special and holy occasion.

Christmas Eve at St. George's Cathedral



Christmas Eve celebrations began at St. George's Cathedral with a glorious midnight service. The cathedral was full to overflowing with worshippers from around the world who came to welcome in Christmas with hymns and songs of praise. Bishop Suheil preached and gave the blessing for a peace-filled and joyous New Year.

Also helping in the service was Canon Hosam Naoum, Pastor to the Arabic Congregation; The Revd Major John Organ, Bishop's Chaplain; The Very Revd Dr. Graham Smith, Dean of St. George's College; The Revd Dr. Lawrence Hilditch, Head Master of Secondary School at Anglican

International School in West Jerusalem; The Revd Dr. Yazeed Said, Tantur Ecumenical Institute and The Revd London Salzburger, Christ Anglican Church, Adelaide, Australia.

Christmas Greetings at The Ahliyyah School in Amman, Jordan



Bishop Suheil travelled to the Ahliyyah School in Amman to bring Christmas greetings. The Bishop met with the Prime Minister of Jordan Aun El-Khawni, Assistant to the Prime Minister and Legislation, Ayman Audeh; Minister of Commerce & Ministry, Sami Kamurah, several members of parliament and High House Members . All



Heads of Churches were also represented there. Joined by Mrs. Haifa Najjar, Superintendent of the Ahliyyah School, Bishop Suheil and his guests were served Bedouin coffee and enjoyed fellowship in the great hall.

Jerusalem- Heads of Churches in Jerusalem exchange Christmas Greetings.



His grace the Rt. Revd Suheil Dawani and the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, together with many clergy from the different Christian traditions, gathered on Monday, December 27, 2011, at the Latin Patriarchate to exchange the Christmas greetings, which was hosted by His Beatitude Patriarch Fuad Twaal. Bishop Suheil was accompanied by his new Chaplain, the Revd John Organ and the Revd Canon Hosam Naoum, Pastor to the Arabic and English Speaking Congregations at St. George's Cathedral, and Secretary to the Meetings of the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem.

The same day His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III, Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church in Jerusalem, made a courtesy visit to Bishop Suheil Dawani to wish him and the Anglican Church in this region a blessed and holy Christmas. Bishop Suhail and his Beatitude reaffirmed the warm and strong ties between the two churches, especially the tradition that allows the Anglican Church to use the Church of the Nativity (St. George's Chapel) and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher (The Abraham Chapel) for its worship services, particularly on Christmas Eve.



Also, a delegation from the Palestinian National Authority made a courtesy visit to Bishop Dawani at the Bishop's Residential Hall. The delegation was led by Dr. Hussein Alaa'raj, the Chief of Staff of the President's Office, Mr. Adnan Alhuseini, the Governor of Jerusalem, Mr. Ziad Albandak, the President's Advisor of the Christian Affairs, and Mr. Essa Kassisia, member of the presidential committee for Christian Affairs. Dr. Alaa'raj and his party conveyed warm wishes and greetings from His Excellency President Abbas "Abu Mazen" and the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian people at this holy season of Christmas and the New Year.

Bishop Suheil in return thanked the delegation for their kind visit and good wishes and praised His Excellency President Abu-Mazen for his continuous support for the Palestinian people. Bishop Dawani valued the president's presence among those who celebrated the Feast of the Nativity on Christmas Eve in Bethlehem, together with His Excellency the Palestinian Prime Minister, Salaam Fayad, and the Jordanian Foreign Minister, His Eminence Mr.Naser Joudeh.

Dr. Alaa'raj congratulated Bishop Dawani for his Christmas message given at the Church of the Nativity on Christmas Eve, and the moral support of the Church to his Excellency President Abbas and His Majesty King Abdullah Bin Al Hussein II for their commitment for peace and justice.

A New Year and a New Beginning for Sama Dawani



Sama Dawani, Bishop Suheil's eldest daughter, has been accepted at the University of Brussels to complete her PhD. in Special Education, Psychology. Sama received a full scholarship from the European Commission. This is a 3-year program that includes teaching, learning and research. Bishop Suheil took a well deserved holiday to Brussels to help settle his daughter into her new living quarters. Sama will be studying at the University but hopes to come home to Jerusalem regularly as part of her research.

More stories and information are available at: www.j-diocese.org Email enquiries to: info@j-diocese.org
Donations may be sent to: The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, PO Box 19122, Jerusalem, 91191



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.