



## NEWSLETTER

The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem

November 2011

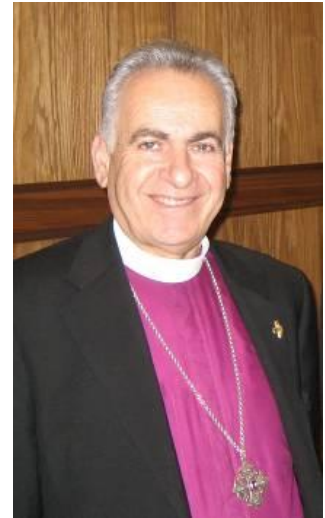
*Peace to you in the name of the Lord*

*Greetings from Bishop Suheil Dawani*

*Dear Friends,*

As we head into the Advent Season we take the time to reflect on the past year and await the surprise of God's future for us. Recently The Annual Church Council meeting of the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East was held in Amman, Jordan. This year the theme was "Serving to the Glory of God". We listened to reports from our Diocesan institutions and noted that 'in all we do, we give Glory to God'.

At St. George's Cathedral we continue to welcome visitors from around the world and recently made a new partnership, with the Diocese of Ottawa, Canada. There is deep hope and profound peace in knowing that throughout the world, wherever we may be, we are the Body of Christ. Together we pray for a peaceful and joyous Advent, as we await the Christ, our Lord and Saviour.



Salaam,

+ *Suheil Dawani*

## The Annual Church Council Meeting (Majma) – “Serving the Glory of God”

The Annual Church Council meeting of the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East was held in Amman, Jordan during the 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> November 2011. It was attended by Clergy from all the countries that are represented in the Diocese with their church representatives and took part in business sessions discussing and affirming the work of the Diocese.



The Majma opened with a service at the Church of the Redeemer, Amman led by Bishop Suheil. During the first session the following day, he addressed the Majma, emphasizing the theme of the conference and encouraging the body of Christ, the church to relinquish our selfish thoughts and opinions and give glory to God in all that we do and say. Our purpose must be to serve and glorify God. In his address he said “the hope of the church is built upon the efforts of men and women who create a stronger unity, greater love and deeper faithfulness to our mission and ministry among all Christians and non-Christians”.

This year, HRH Princess Basma Bint Talal was invited by the Bishop to attend and he welcomed her on behalf of the Diocese. He highlighted her interests in the women’s work, the Alliyah School for Girls and the School for the Handicapped in Jerusalem which carries her name. HRH brought greetings on behalf of the people of Jordan and emphasized the continuing need to work together for the good of humanity. During her address to the Majma she honored Hanna Abu Hanna and Mrs Haifa Najja for their services to the community and to Jordan



Reports were presented by the Churches in the Diocese as well as the institutions which number more than 30. These include the work in pastoral care, hospital, schools, and homes for the elderly and meeting the needs of the disabled. Serving in the Diocese does have its challenges but the Majma was encouraged to learn of new ventures and the development of existing projects which are able to minister to the community and to those with particular need regardless of faith or belief.

## Bishop John Chapman of Ottawa, Canada and visiting Delegation



Bishop John Chapman, his wife Catherine, the Rev. John Bridges, his wife Gail, The Rev. Jan Stanifortz, The Ven. Christopher Dunn, Archdeacon of Ottawa West, Monica Patten, and Sue Garvey, made up the delegation from Canada who recently spent time in Jerusalem, the Galilee and Ramallah. They have been visiting our churches and institutions with a serious intent to begin a partnership with the Diocese of Jerusalem.

At the 9:30 am service on November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011, Bishop John and Bishop Suheil signed an agreement that seals the Diocesan Relationship. Bishop John preached to the congregation on the parable of the bridesmaids (Matt. 25 v. 1ff). The Bishop and his delegation also spent time visiting with Bishop Suheil and Mrs. Shafeeqa Dawani at their residence.



## Bishop Suheil with the Council of Religious Leaders visits the Pope

Religious leaders in the Holy Land refuse to be discouraged by the current climate of pessimism that



shrouds the Middle East peace process. Though they admit there are very real obstacles to overcoming hostilities, they believe that as the spiritual leaders of the communities involved, they can make a difference. It's a question, they say, of the political will to involve them in dialogue:

"I hope the voice of the Council will be heard more, even on a political level. We try to address both the Israeli and Palestinians. Right now, we continue to pray and work toward peace. Our hope is to work more together in the future. The situation is far from hopeful at the moment but this just means

that we have to work even harder" says the Anglican Archbishop of Jerusalem, Suheil Dawani, who is a member of the Israeli Council of Religious leaders who met Thursday morning with the Pope.

He says. "This Council was founded four years ago in Jerusalem. It is composed of Christian, Muslim and Jewish representatives. Of course the five heads of the Churches, the Muslims and the Jewish Rabbinate, we meet every other month and recently we have been working on a peace education curriculum, which we hope will be accepted in both Israeli and Palestinian schools.

I believe that peace will start only from the grass roots, the people. I mean, we must teach our children how to live together and respect each other. There is a great ignorance in the lives of the children and young people. They don't know each other; they don't know their neighbours and I believe that this is our most important task for future generations."

*(Excerpt reprinted from Vatican Radio <http://www.oeumene.radiovaticana.org/en1/Articolo.asp?c=536630> 10/11/11)*

## Visit from Keith Larson and the Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem



Bishop Suheil had the great pleasure of meeting with the team from the Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem. The national president, Keith H. Larson and his team - Richard T. Aleks, Patrick M. Carney, Hon Geoff Connor, Prof David T. Fautua and Mr. Asaad Bahbah came on November 1<sup>st</sup> bringing greetings from their membership in the United States and a donation of \$20,000 for the Anglican Church in Jerusalem.

Ordo Supremus Militaris Templi Hierosolymitani (OSMTH) is a world-wide ecumenical Christian Chivalric Order, accredited by the United Nation as an NGO with consultive status with about 6000 members. The Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem (SMOTJ) is the OSMTH organization within the United States has a little over 2000 members. For a number of years this US based component has chosen to focus our charitable outreach on helping the Palestinian Christians by supporting the church based schools and clinics in the greater Holy Land. As they have done in the past, their visit here is to try and combine the spiritual renewal of a pilgrimage with seeing for themselves what the need is and how they can help. Their gift to the Diocese of Jerusalem is greatly appreciated.

## Two Anglicans appointed to the High House of Parliament in Jordan

Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem

[www.j-diocese.org](http://www.j-diocese.org)

info@j-diocese.org

Editor: The Rt Revd Suheil S. Dawani



Bishop Suheil made a special trip to Amman, Jordan this week to congratulate his Honourable Mr. Wasef Azar and Mrs. Haifa Najjar on their appointments to the Upper House of Parliament. His Majesty King Abdullah of Jordan appoints 60 people to the parliament and we appreciate the trust and respect that his Majesty gives to the members of our church by appointing both Mr. Azar and Mrs. Najjar.

The Bishop, accompanied by Rev. Hanna Mansour and Mr. Ameen Abu Hanna Property Manager, visited his Honourable Wasef and Mrs. Abla Azzar in their home.

He then made a call on Mrs. Haifa Najjar, who is General Manager of all education institutions in Jordan and Superintendent of Ahliyyah School, the Bishop's School and Kindergarten in Amman.



The relationship the Diocese of Jerusalem and Bishop Suheil has with His Majesty King Abdullah of Jordan and the royal family is honoured and appreciated.

### **A Visit from St. Mark's Episcopal School in Jacksonville, Florida**



A delegation of 45 from St. Mark's Episcopal School in Jacksonville, Florida presented Bishop Suheil with a gift of \$1,574.00 for the Bishop's Scholarship Fund. They have a relationship with the Evangelical School in Ramallah. Bishop Suheil was also given a hand painted angel from an Angel for Allison. Profits from this organization will help a family who has lost a child. It comes with a prayer for all the lost children in this part of the world. Everyone from St. Mark's has enjoyed their journey in the Land of the Holy One, especially two teachers who rang the St. George's bells for evening prayer while skyping their students back home.

### **Rev. Lawrence Hilditch installed as a priest of the Diocese of Jerusalem**

The Rev. Dr. Lawrence Hilditch Head Master of Secondary School at Anglican International School in West Jerusalem was installed as a priest of the Diocese of Jerusalem this past Sunday. He and his wife, Rhoda, are from Ireland but have come here most recently from Cyprus.

Fr. Lawrence is looking forward to serving at the Cathedral whenever possible.



## Bishop Suheil brings Eid El-Adha greetings to the Druze Community



Bishop Suheil and local clergy and laity from Jerusalem and Galilee visited the Druze Community with the purpose of giving good wishes for a Happy Eid. The Bishop expressed his gladness for the good relationship that exists between our two communities and especially the bond that he has with Sheik Muwafak Tarif, the Spiritual Leader of the Druze Community, and the other leaders from the towns of Jules and Yarka. The Bishop spoke about the value of this relationship and stressed the point that our communities play an important role in the peace process and reconciliation between the different peoples and religions of this region.

## A Visit with Bishops from Scotland and Ireland

Bishop Suheil had the pleasure of meeting with a number of Bishops, clergy and laity from Ireland and Scotland. The Most Revd Richard Clarke, Bishop of Meath and Kildare, The Revd Dr. Mary Cotes of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Very Revd Sheilagh Kesting, of the Church of Scotland, the Revd Peter Colwell from the United Reformed Church and Gillian Kingston of the Methodist Church in Ireland are here in the Land of the Holy One to visit with fellow clergy and parishes and to hear the stories of the 'Living Stones'.



The Bishop also had the pleasure of meeting with the Revd Ian Galloway from the Church of Scotland, along with Mr. James Laing and The Revd George Shand.

## Archbishop of Westminster visits the Land of the Holy One



The Archbishop of Westminster, Vincent Nichols, and 100 pilgrims, met with Bishop Suheil in Jericho for lunch on Nov. 8<sup>th</sup>. This was a follow up meeting to the Lambeth Conference held last July in London. Bishop Suheil extended his invitation to The Archbishop to come and visit and worship together at St George's in the future. The Archbishop said he appreciated Bishop Suheil's ministry in this land and welcomed the invitation. During their stay here, The Archbishop and his 100 pilgrims have been visiting the Holy sites and talking to the people of this land.

## Consecration of St. Luke's Chapel, Holy Land Institute for the Deaf, Salt



Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2011 was a very special day for the Holy Land Institute. Bishop Suheil Dawani came to Salt to consecrate a new Chapel particularly designed for use by the Deaf and Deaf-blind children of the Institute. This chapel replaced the previous chapel creating a light and airy space which is able to be used as a hall as well as for worship. It has specific features to assist the Deaf in participating with a raised floor at the front and special wooden covering for the walls to help resonate sound.

During the service the children of the school participated through signing songs with music accompaniment aided by a drum beat.

The Chapel has three beautiful Icons which show the Last Supper, the Virgin Mary and Abraham with Issac and Ishmael. Ashford School from the UK under the guidance of Alexandra Le Rossignol, designed and created a stained glass window which was installed at the rear of the chapel overlooking the font. A group from the Ashford school with their art teacher and Alexandra Le Rossignol came to stay in Salt for a few days and were able to attend the opening ceremony.

The Chapel was completed during this summer and was the result of many generous donations from the local community and from supporters overseas. These included the Issam and Samia Salfiti family, The Maurice and Hilde Laing Foundation, UK, Fr Luay Rezeq Haddad, Salt, Mrs Fadua Debabneh, Salt, Leo c. de Carpentier, Holland, Hanna Issa Farraj, Salt, Habash Noussa Farraj, Salt, Hani and Melina Farraj, and the Paulinenpflege, Germany.

At the end of the service Brother Andrew, the Director of the Institute, thanked all those who contributed in any way to the building and furnishing of the chapel and invited all to share in light refreshments.

## Fall Marriage Conference



Rev. Khalid and his wife Rana led a weekend for couples in late October. Thirty people attended the conference at Schneller School in Marka, Jordan, where accommodation and hospitality was provided. A special program was arranged for the children whilst their parents attended sessions on maintaining a good marriage. Assisted by speakers, Dr Abeer Alfar and Dr Hani Jahshan, Rev. Khaled and his wife Rana encouraged the couples in their marriage relationships, bringing up children and how to use discipline wisely.

It was not all serious. There was a special evening dinner with entertainment for all. Miss Luna Malouf was the musician for the weekend.

---

## Women Bishops from the United States

Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem

[www.j-diocese.org](http://www.j-diocese.org)

[info@j-diocese.org](mailto:info@j-diocese.org)

**Editor:** The Rt Revd Suheil S. Dawani



In November an ecumenical group of women bishops' from Four Christian denominations (United Methodist, Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal and Christian Methodist Episcopal) visited Palestine and Israel. Through their own initiative they travelled to the Land of the Holy One with a sincere desire to learn more in an effort to facilitate change upon their return home. The group consisted of 12 women bishops (10 from the US, one from Mozambique and one from Jamaica).

Bishop Suheil met with the bishops and they discussed the issues of the diocese and of the people of this land. On Sunday, November 20, the bishops attended St. George's Cathedral services in which Bishop Laura Ahrens, Hartford, Conn. helped to serve at the altar. The bishops met with the congregation after service for coffee and refreshments.



Goals of the trip were to stand in solidarity with women from Christian, Muslim and Jewish traditions working for peace in the region; gather facts and stories to equip the delegation members as educators and advocates for peace after returning home; and to explore partnerships for ongoing education and advocacy to affect positive change.

### Advent Service and Thanksgiving Potluck at Emmanuel, Ramleh



Emmanuel Church in Ramleh celebrated the beginning of the Advent Season with a lovely candle-lighting service and family potluck. The Rev. Samuel Fanous invited the Rev. Heather Mueller to read the Gospel in English and also to say a word about Advent.

Mrs. Sherry Smith, wife of St. George's College Dean, The Revd Dr. Graham Smith, gave a quick explanation of how Thanksgiving began in the United States. Ms. Deborah Neal, Personal Secretary to Bishop Suheil was invited to light the first Advent Candle – the "Candle of Hope." It symbolizes faith in God keeping his promises to humanity.



The service was followed by a delicious Potluck Thanksgiving Supper. It was wonderful to see the church full of family and friends.

More stories and information are available at: [www.j-diocese.org](http://www.j-diocese.org)