



NEWSLETTER

The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem

June 2009

Pentecost Celebration Brings More than 800 Anglicans to Jerusalem

An overflowing crowd of more than 800 parishioners from across Israel and Palestine filled the Cathedral of St. George the Martyr in Jerusalem to celebrate the Pentecost with a joyous birthday service led by Bishop Suheil Dawani.

“We give thanks to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was gathered us here this morning as one family from across the Diocese for the birthday of the one Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church,” said the Bishop in his sermon. “We are witnesses to our Lord’s death and His resurrection here in Jerusalem, the City of Peace, the City of the Resurrection and of a new covenant.”

Children and adults, men, women, couples, grandparents, uncles and aunts, nieces and nephews, friends and colleagues, left their communities very early Sunday morning and rode tour buses to Jerusalem for the 10:30 a.m. joint Arabic and English Eucharist. The congregation packed the Cathedral’s nave into the north and south transepts, the three chapels, the Baptistery, and the Cathedral choir to welcome the coming of the Holy Spirit with hymn and prayers.

“No longer are we strangers,” noted Bishop Suheil in his sermon. “No longer do we feel left out of our homes, our church, or our society. We belong to a re-born community that welcomes the stranger and the homeless, heals the sick, gives strength to the weak, upholds the oppressed, comforts the brokenhearted and gives witness to the love of God in the example of Jesus Christ.”

The Bishop spoke of the many diocesan institutions that follow Christ’s example by providing compassion, healing and teaching for those in need. He cited as examples two diocesan hospitals in Nablus and Gaza. The diocese’s 11 institutions offer health care, education and rehabilitation services across five countries. To read the Bishop’s sermon, please visit our website at www.j-diocese.org.



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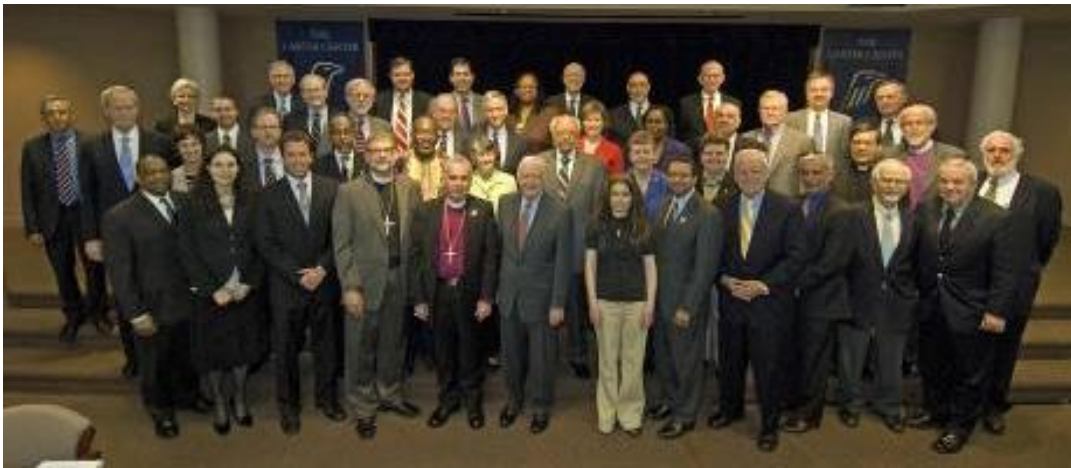
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Following the service, the congregation gathered in the Cathedral courtyard for a community “sing along” of Christian Arab folk music led by the Rev. Fouad Daher on guitar and the Rev. Canon Hosam Naoum on the electric piano console. The singing was followed by a traditional Arab Luncheon Feast hosted by the Bishop.

Bishop Dawani presents paper at Carter Center Conference;

Meets with former President Jimmy Carter in Atlanta and Jerusalem

In a paper presented at an invitation-only conference convened by former President Jimmy Carter in Atlanta, Bishop Suheil Dawani urged political and spiritual leaders to help preserve the presence of Christianity in the Holy Land and outlined a series of positive steps that can be taken as interim measures until a permanent peace is established.



The Bishop, whose paper is titled “Traditions of the Christian Community in the Land of the Holy One and Threats to its Continuing Presence,” noted that while the situation in the Middle East is complex, “Christians have historically played an important role in the spiritual leadership and politics of the region, as well as in the various public and private sectors of the economy.” In the past decade, however, the percentage of Christians in the Holy Land has declined dramatically, from about 18 percent to less than 2 percent.

“The education and values of local Christians help create a respectful and constructive dialogue among people of different faiths and economic conditions,” said the Bishop.” The urgency to preserve an indigenous Christian community is crucial to its ability to continue to serve as a moderating and reconciling element in the social and cultural fabric of the Middle East.”

In his paper, the Bishop laid out a series of initiatives to provide temporary bridges for conciliation until the peace process is resolved.

The Bishop represented Jerusalem’s Palestinian Christian community at the conference, which was chaired by Carter and entitled “Toward a New Christian Consensus: Peace with Justice in the Holy Land.” The conference participants included leaders from the Kairos Project, the World Council of Churches, and Churches for Middle East Peace.

The Bishop also met with former President Carter when he visited Jerusalem in late June. The Bishop said he was “deeply impressed with the both the upbeat spirit of the conference and especially in President Carter’s “continuing commitment and strong belief in the two-state solution to the Palestinian/Israeli conflict.”

Following the Carter Center Conference, Bishop Dawani stayed in Atlanta as the guest of the Right Rev’d Dr. John Neil Alexander, Episcopal Bishop of Atlanta. On Sunday, May 17, he was the preacher at the Cathedral of St. Phillip at the invitation of the Very Rev’d Dr. Samuel G. Candler, and the speaker at the Dean’s Adult Forum.

Episcopal Diocese marks graduation at 13 Schools

Around the world, June is the month for graduations. The Diocese of Jerusalem is no exception, with approximately 400 students graduating from 13 diocesan schools from across four countries.

The Right Rev’d Suheil S. Dawani, Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem expressed his great admiration as he addressed each of the graduating classes, praising the quality of education provided as well as the academic excellence of the students.

“We have sought to continue our tradition in education by holding to that which is true, and reaching out to that which enlightens our minds and captures our imagination in these days of instant internet information,” said the Bishop, who serves as Chairman of each School Board.



St. George’s School, Jerusalem



Holy Land Institute for the Deaf

He paid tribute to the dedicated parents, school administrators, teachers and staff. He noted that the diocese continues to excel in providing special education institutions for the schooling of those who are sight or hearing impaired, or have other disabilities. The diocese also provides technical training for vocational opportunities.

“Our tradition” Bishop Dawani said, “is built on the well-tested Anglican emphasis of a collaborative team between the school, the student, and the parent. We strive to enlarge the imagination and creativity that gives strength to the natural intuitiveness of our young people while keeping faith with the tradition of the families”.

The Bishop noted that many students today face “increased hardships stemming from the global economic downturn, worsened by unresolved long standing political issues, especially among the Palestinians.”



Episcopal Evangelical School, Jordan mainstreaming sight impaired children

The diocese works to provide support and help for parents who continue to make considerable personal sacrifices for the education of their children and young people. Together with partners at home and on the international scene the diocese will launch a financial scholarship assistance program that will assist all sectors of the school community.

“In our schools,” the Bishop stressed, “we seek to foster a sense of hope in the future as well as for the present. We honor our students for their personal moral character, their merited scholastic achievements, their participation in the extracurricular programs as sports, music, and other cultural community pursuits that enlighten their minds to new horizons in God’s created order. And in this we are, in the certainty of the biblical sage, to ‘train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray from it’ (Proverbs 22.6).

Diocesan Conference looks at “Liturgy in the Life of A Priest”

This year’s Diocesan Conference, themed “Liturgy in the Life of a Priest”, was held recently at the popular Rosary Center in suburban Amman. The conference attendees participated in five lectures on the impact of the Liturgy on the life ministry, the witness of those in the Priesthood and the centrality of the Liturgy to the sacramental life of the Church.

The priests came from the five countries that compose the Diocese of Jerusalem, including several



expatriate clergy licensed as Mission Partners. The priests enjoyed the collegiality of common purpose that fosters new friendships, and strengthened existing bonds among those who have long served the diocese.

The retreat not only provided time for reflection on the Liturgy and its influence on the life of an individual priest, his family and his congregation, but it was also a time for one-on-one private sessions between the individual priest and his Bishop.

The retreat will be followed by the annual Clergy Conference in the third week of September and a biennial October Provincial Conference of the Clergy and Wives from the four Dioceses that comprise the Provincial Synod of the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East.

Welcome and Appreciation

Welcome to the Rev'd Canon Dr. Andrew Mayes and his family who come to join the staff at St. George's College. With his decades of experience in the Holy Land, Dr. Mayes has been appointed Course Director at the College. His wife, Ann Margaret, and his children, Lucy and Adam, are accompanying him to his post in Jerusalem.

We extend warm appreciation for the ongoing support of Dr. Harry Gunkel, who is currently back in Jerusalem, as he continues assist Dr. Hisham Nassar with medical issues relating to the two diocesan hospitals, Al Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza and St. Luke's Hospital in Nablus.

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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.

Cathedral Staff:

Bishop of the Diocese of Jerusalem: The Rt Rev'd Suheil Dawani

St. George's Cathedral Church, Arabic Speaking Congregation, Jerusalem: The Rev'd Canon Hosam Naoum

The Cathedral Church of St. George, English Speaking Congregation: The Rev'd Canon Robert Edmunds