



## NEWSLETTER

The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem

January 2011

*Salaam, Peace to you in the name of the Lord*

*New Year's Greetings from Bishop Dawani*

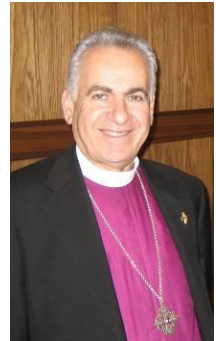
*Dear Friends,*

*This final week in January marks the week of Christian Unity – a time when all churches and all Christian people come together to mark what binds us together and not what sets us apart. As we look ahead to this new year of possibilities and beginnings I hope that this Diocese will continue to work with our Christian neighbours, as well as those of other religions, in building bridges of peace.*

*Our Diocesan ministries have a key part to play in this. In our schools and our hospitals we communicate the Christian message of love and peace to all who come regardless of race or religion. This year we hope to continue to improve and expand our ministries by raising support and funds to keep this vital part of our work alive. Improvements to our schools, on-going construction of community centres and the on-going development of our hospitals and clinics are a central focus of our work and I would like to thank all who have supported us in these efforts.*

*May this year be one of new beginnings, continued hope and every blessing for 2011.*

*+ Suheil Dawani*



---

## The Christmas & Epiphany Celebrations

### **Bishop Suheil receives the Greek Orthodox Patriarch for Christmas Greetings**

Bishop Suheil greeted His Beatitude, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Theophilos III as part of the annual Christmas Greetings traditionally extended at this time. His Beatitude was greeted by Bishop Suheil at the Bishop's residence and the two spent time in discussion and fellowship. Also present was Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina. Bishop Suheil was joined by Canon Andrew Mayes, The Rev Dr Stephen Need, Dean of St George's College, Canon Bill Broughton, and Canon Hosam Naoum.

## Christmas Eve in Bethlehem

This year the Christmas Eve pilgrimage from the Cathedral Church of St George the Martyr set off once again to worship in the Greek Orthodox chapel at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem.

Accompanying the convoy of three coach loads of pilgrims were the British Ambassador to Israel, Matthew Gould and his wife Celia; The British Consul General Sir Vincent Fean and his wife Anne, and the Rt Revd Suheil Dawani with his wife Shafeeqa and their family.

Our passage to Bethlehem was relatively swift and we arrived to enter the Church of the Nativity just before 9pm and the start of the service. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Prime Minister Salam Fayyad and Ministers from the Palestinian Authority, joined the first half of the service joining in the words of the traditional carol Laylatal Milad – the Night of Christmas - before being welcomed by Bishop Suheil Dawani.



The service continued with the traditional format of nine lessons and carols. Our fellow pilgrims were in good voice and, although there was no accompaniment, many knew the traditional harmonies to the carols and the natural acoustic in the chapel made for a beautiful sound. Archbishop Theophylactos, read the final lesson: John 1: 1-14 in Greek.



We returned to Jerusalem for the Cathedral's Christmas Eve midnight mass service which began with Benjamin Britten's 'Hodie' from the Ceremony of Carols sung unaccompanied by the choir who also performed John Rutter's 'Peace of God' later on in the service.

Bishop Suheil greeted all present in the name of Christ and emphasised the ecumenical nature of this celebration: *At Christmas we are no longer Lutheran or Anglican, Orthodox Christian or Latin Catholic. We are the Body of Christ.*

The Bishop spoke of the importance of the presence of the 'Living Stones,' the indigenous

Arab Christians here in the Holy Land, and of their vital role in providing a voice of peace in this troubled region.

Bishop Suheil concluded with a challenge to us all: *After the echo of the Christmas carols fade away, what action are you going to take to be a peacemaker in your family, within your church, at work, in your city?*

## Christmas Day Celebrations at The Cathedral Church of St George the Martyr

The morning celebratory Eucharist began at 10am on Christmas Day with trumpet accompaniment by Michael Flynn. The trumpet descants to the traditional Christmas carols provided a wonderful atmosphere to the morning celebrations. The Nativity scene set within the altar was lit with fairy lights and the Christmas tree at the west end of the church sparkled with its decorations.

Following the service the Cathedral family met in fellowship at a drinks reception hosted by the Bishop.

The Cathedral Close family attended a traditional Christmas meal in the Guesthouse with excellent food provided by the Guesthouse kitchen. Guests enjoyed lamb and rice with a variety of delicious salads and a fruit salad for dessert.

The Bishop graciously thanked the community for the hard work and commitment shown to the work of the Cathedral and the Diocese over the past year. Several of those present stood up to voice their thanks for the warmth, kindness, and hospitality always extended by the Bishop and Shafeeqa to his staff and the cathedral close community. It was a time of thanksgiving and celebration for the work of 2010 and a time of hope and expectation for the year to come.

---

## Epiphany and the Fourth Anniversary of Bishop Suheil's Installation



Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2011 was a day of celebration on two counts. It was of course the feast of the Epiphany, the journey of the Magi from the East to visit the Christ Child. It also marked another important and significant event in the life of the Diocese of Jerusalem and the Cathedral Church of St George the Martyr being, as it was, the fourth anniversary of Bishop Suheil's installation as the 14<sup>th</sup> Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem.

The 11am service was attended by many from across the Diocese and the Arabic Speaking community of the Cathedral. Fr. Fuad Dagher's sermon focussed on this

significant event and called again for the blessing of Bishop Suheil in the work he continues to do for the Diocese, as its Bishop.

Over the past four years the Bishop has worked to develop and support the many ministries of this Diocese and to nurture and encourage the Living Stones of this land, the indigenous Arab Christians. The Peace and Reconciliation Department, established four years ago also continues to strive to offer a voice of hope in these troubled times. Prayers were said for his ministry and his work in the year ahead. The service was followed by a time of thanksgiving and fellowship at a lunch to mark this special occasion.

---

## Improving our Ministries

### St. George's School: a new era in education

St. George's School, under the direction of Mr Eid Sader for the last four years, has, since his arrival, embarked on extensive renovations. With the kind and generous support of local donors the old stone classrooms have been fully renovated with new wiring, heating, light, and sound systems installed. The school intends to offer facilities on a par with those in the west and the students will benefit from the very latest in technology.

Elementary school renovations began early in 2010. Upstairs the new Creative Thinking Development Centre (CTDC) has almost reached completion. The renovations required knocking out most of the rest of the second floor for an updated computer lab, a new art and music room, and science lab. Brightly coloured tables and chairs fill the lab room with plenty of equipment for storage and display. A new smartboard is already installed along with the latest in lab safety with full emergency washing facilities in the classroom.



The Elementary School CTDC science lab: Before & After

Teachers, who had to manage with 'science on a cart' or teaching art and music in a tiny room of a detached building, will have the tools and space in which to teach important skills for success in modern society. Creative thinking, self expression, observation, communication, the power of music, experiments and the science of life are all necessary in this global economic world.

The High School is receiving a small overhaul to improve classroom facilities and provide the students with the school's first cafeteria. This year a CTDC for the High School is planned to reflect the facilities on offer in the Elementary school across the road. A new Science Lab will be installed with a sound system, computers and a smart board. Both sites make use of the School Hall which has also received a complete overhaul. A new and impressive sound and light system has been installed and the creation of a large stage with the provision of a screen so the space can be used for Cinema and theatre entertainments alike.

The school under Mr Sader's direction focuses on empowering the children to become responsible and respectful members of a reconciled peaceful society. With constant fundraising efforts, and the gracious support of generous donors, it is hoped that the school will continue to offer the best in educational practice allowing its students the best possible start for their future.

## Christian Unity Service at the Anglican Cathedral of St George the Martyr



This year's Christian Unity week ran from Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> January to Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> January. The Holy City of Jerusalem took on a significant role as Christians here were asked to choose the theme for the 2011 week of prayer. Jerusalem Christians, as members of the Mother Church, chose the following text which formed the focus of all services throughout the week: *'One in the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer.'* Acts 2: 42 – 47

Services were hosted by all denominations at churches across the city and the churches were filled to capacity each evening. The Cathedral of St George the Martyr hosted the closing service to mark the end of the week of prayer. Bishop Suheil's sermon emphasised that although this was the end of the calendar week of Christian unity it was not the end of the spirit of unity among Christians here.

*'Reconciliation, dear friends, is more than a word. It is an event, an experience, which should involve a person completely. It becomes a way of life.'*

Bishop Suheil focussed on the word 'reconciliation,' a word which should be at the heart of the Church and its teachings. It must form a central part of our relationships with other Christians, and with those from other religions:

*'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'*

The ecumenical nature of the service was reinforced in the joining together, as in the previous services, of the Heads of Churches present, to share in the reading of the Gospel and in the Blessing. Following a magnificent organ voluntary by Inna Dodakova of Widor's Toccata, which received a round of applause from all present, the fellowship continued in the Guesthouse where refreshments and conversations created a convivial buzz.

---

More stories and information are available at: [www.j-diocese.org](http://www.j-diocese.org) Email enquiries to: [info@j-diocese.org](mailto: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.

Contributors: Mr Eid Sader and Lydia Patmore

---

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