



## September 2013 Newsletter

*The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem*

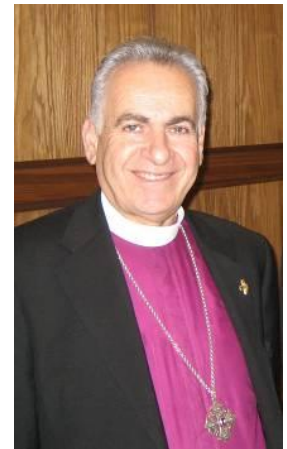
**Peace to you in the Name of the Lord**

Dear Friends,

Greetings from the Diocese of Jerusalem!

September began with an invitation by King Abdullah and Prince Ghazi of Jordan to all the Heads of Churches in the Middle East, as well as religious leaders from various parts of the world, to join with His Majesty and Royal Highness in Amman for a two-day conference to discuss the 'Challenges Facing Christian Arabs.' This crucial and timely event gave opportunity both to name the challenges and to examine ways to effectively overcome them. Of paramount importance was the direct support His Majesty gives to ensure that Indigenous Christian presence in Jordan and throughout the Middle East not only survives but indeed thrives.

During this month, the drums of war seemed to beat louder than usual. The majority of people throughout the Middle East prayed that the impending military intervention into Syria would not come to pass. Our prayers for peace were joined with men and women of goodwill from around the world and I am grateful to Almighty God that military intervention did not take place. As sons and daughters of the Middle East, we know in the most painful way that the outcome of such interventions brings only increased chaos and suffering for the whole region. Of course, we denounce the use of chemical weapons by any party, but violence simply breeds violence. The Land of the Holy One and the entire region cries out for peace with justice. We are grateful for the diplomatic efforts that have begun and pray that with their success will come greater peace and stability for Syria, the Middle East, and the whole world.



Finally, September brought several occasions to visit and be visited by friends. Accompanied by the Diocesan Medical Director, we were most warmly welcomed to the House of Bishops of The Episcopal Church, held in Nashville, Tennessee. Presiding Bishop Katharine once again demonstrated her tremendous support for the witness and ministries of the Diocese of Jerusalem. Later, we were visited here in Jerusalem by our dear brother and friend, Bishop Jon Bruno of the Diocese of Los Angeles. We also welcomed many groups of pilgrims from the USA, Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, Japan, and other parts of God's world, who came to the Land of the Holy One to grow in faith and in their commitment to sharing the Good News of God in Jesus Christ. I am grateful to each of you!

Blessings and Peace,

+ Suheil Dawani

---

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. Rev'd Bishop Suheil S. Dawani

Page 1

## **New Academic Year 2013 - 2014 Starts at St. George's School in Jerusalem**



The St. George's School (Bishop's School) in Jerusalem started its new academic year 2013 - 2014 with its primary and secondary levels today Monday, 02 September 2013, in the presence of Bishop Suheil Dawani, The Rev'd Dr. Lawrence Hilditch, The Rev'd Dean Hosam Naoum, and the school principals of the primary and secondary levels. Bishop Suheil opened the new school year with prayer, requesting God's blessing upon teachers and students. It is noteworthy to mention that the International Baccalaureate Programme (IB) will be implemented this year in the school, which will be the first leading school in Jerusalem implementing this new Programme.

## **A Two-Day Conference on "The Challenges Facing Arab Christians" Held in Amman, Jordan**

### **The Conference Calls for Concerted Efforts and Systematic Action to Confront Violence and Extremism**

Bishop Suheil Dawani participated in a two-day conference on "*The Challenges Facing Arab Christians*" held at the Le Royal Hotel in Amman, Jordan on 03 - 04 September 2013. The conference was sponsored by His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Custodian of the Holy Sites in Jerusalem, and His Royal Highness Prince Ghazi Bin Mohammad, Chief Advisor to His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein for Religious and Cultural Affairs and Personal Envoy of His Majesty.

The two-day conference aimed at identifying and responding to the difficult situation faced by Christians throughout the Middle East in 2013.

The Middle East is the birthplace of Christianity, but recent upheavals have resulted in Christian communities facing severe challenges in the region. Accordingly, the conference sought to bring together the leaders of all the churches of the Middle Eastern Christianity and give them a voice that will be heard worldwide. By identifying, discussing and documenting these challenges, solutions can be found that, God willing, ensure the continued safety and prosperity of Middle Eastern Christianity as an indelible and essential part of the rich tapestry of the Middle East.



During the two-day conference, Bishop Suheil Dawani, Head of the Arab Episcopal Synod in Jerusalem and the Middle East, gave a 10-minute speech, in which he said, 'The royal initiative to hold this conference involves two parts: the first, the awareness of His Majesty of the Christian presence as a dimension of the Arab culture; the second, the love for Christian Arabs which finds the attention by His Majesty.

In his speech, Bishop Suheil stressed the need to work hard to achieve systematic mechanisms to mitigate extremism based on false religion, and the need to develop the economic sectors to provide jobs for people, deter them from emigration, and provide a decent life for all people.

### **Bishop Suheil Awarded 'Medal of Recognition' by His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein**



Bishop Suheil Dawani was awarded a medal of recognition “Excellence and Service” by His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on Tuesday, 03 September 2013.

### **Ahliyyah School for Girls and the Bishop’s School for Boys Joint Board Meeting**

The Joint Board of the Ahliyyah School for Girls and the Bishop’s School for Boys held a meeting in Jordan, Amman on Tuesday, 03 September 2013. The meeting was chaired by Bishop Suheil Dawani. Board members discussed the agenda of the Joint Board, which included the following:

- ▶ The Director General’s report for the Ahliyyah School for Girls and the Bishop’s School for Boys for the new academic year 2013/2014;
- ▶ Report of the opening of the new academic year 2013/2014;
- ▶ The new project.

### **Palestine Hospital Board Meeting in Amman, Jordan**

Palestine Hospital Board members held a meeting in Amman, Jordan on Wednesday, 04 September 2013. Board members discussed the future development projects of the Hospital. The meeting was presided over by Bishop Suheil Dawani.

### **Heads of Churches (HoC) Hold Regular Meeting in Jerusalem**

Heads of Churches (HoC) held a regular meeting on Friday morning, 06 September 2013 at the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Jerusalem. Bishop Suheil Dawani and The Rev’d Hosam Naoum, Dean of St. George’s Cathedral and Secretary to the Meetings of the Heads of Churches were in attendance.



### **Bishop Suheil Meets with CCS**



Bishop Suheil hosted Robert Rice and Erica Campbell of the Community Consulting Services (CCS) on Friday, 06 September 2013. Bishop Suheil participated in a telephone conference with partners around the Communion to discuss the Draft Final Report of the Feasibility Study. The report is very encouraging and provides Bishop Suheil with important information regarding the potential success of conducting such a fundraising activity, should the Diocese of Jerusalem decide to do so.

### **Installation of Fr. Nael Abu Rahmoun in Christ Church in Nazareth**

Bishop Dawani installed Fr. Nael Abu Rahmoun as Rector of Christ Church, Nazareth, on Sunday, 8 September 2013. Fr. Nael was presented to Bishop Dawani by members of the parish pastoral committee.



Bishop Suheil thanked Fr. Imad Deibes, Former Rector, for his pastoral leadership of Christ Church Parish and wished him well in his new ministry at St. John's and St. Luke's Parish, Haifa.

On hand for the happy occasion were Fr. Zahi Naser and Canon Organ, Chaplain to Bishop Dawani.

After the installation service, the congregation held a reception in honor of Fr. Nael Abu Rahmoun and in thanksgiving for the ministry of Fr. Imad Deibes.

### **Clergy Meeting at St. George's Cathedral in Jerusalem**



On Tuesday, 10 September 2013, Bishop Suheil Dawani met with his clergy from the Israeli/Palestinian part of the Diocese of Jerusalem for fellowship and discussion of current activities. Those present were: The Rev'd Nael Abu Rahmoun, The Rev'd Canon Zahi Naser, The Rev'd Ibrahim Nairouz, The Rev'd Hanna Dally, The Rev'd Fuad Dagher, The Rev'd Canon Hatem Shehadeh, The Rev'd Emad Deibes, The Ven. Samuel Barhoum, The Rev'd Canon Samuel Fanous, The Rev'd Bilal Habiby, The Rev'd Salim Dawani, The Very Rev'd Hosam Naoum, Dean of St. George's Cathedral and Canon Fr. John Organ, Chaplain to Bishop Suheil.

### Embrace the Middle East Visits the Diocese of Jerusalem

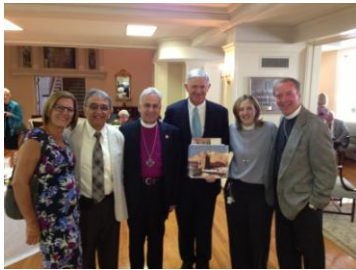
On Tuesday 18 September 2013, Mr. Jamie Eyre, Head of Partnerships of Embrace the Middle East, and Mr. Stephen Tunstall, Partnership Manager for Palestine, visited the Diocesan Office in Jerusalem and had a meeting with Ms. Sawsan Aranki-Batato, Head of the Diocesan Programs Development Department. During the meeting, Ms. Batato provided an update on the status of the Diocesan projects that they support. New areas of development programs that need funding were also discussed.

### Japanese Delegation Visit St. George's Cathedral

A group of parishioners from the Diocese of Tokyo visited St. George's Cathedral on Wednesday, 18 September 2013. The group met with Bishop Suheil and a group of the St. George's Cathedral Congregation. Bishop Suheil's wife, Shafeeqa Dawani, gave a welcome on behalf of the Diocesan Women's Movement. A reception dinner was hosted by the Bishop.



### Bishop Suheil Participates in the House of Bishops' Meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, USA



Bishop Suheil Dawani and Dr. Hisham Nassar, the Medical Director of the Diocese of Jerusalem, were invited by the Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori to attend the Fall Meeting of the "House of Bishops" (HoB) during the period between 19 and 24 September 2013 in Nashville, Tennessee, USA. The theme of the meeting was "Transforming Loss into New Possibilities." Bishop Suheil delivered a speech in which he provided a history of Christian Arabs in the Middle East, the current situation of Christian Arabs in the Middle East, and ways on how to strengthen the Christian community in the Holy Land and the Middle East through:

- ▶ Partnership;
- ▶ Promoting peace and building just societies;
- ▶ Helping Western governments become more informed and educated about the cultures and values of the Middle East;
- ▶ Helping the Diocese of Jerusalem become financially self-sufficient.

During his stay, Bishop Suheil also visited St. Paul's Church in Augusta where he delivered a sermon (homily) on the situation facing indigenous Christians in the Holy Land and the Middle East. Bishop Suheil began the homily with the reading from the Prophet Jeremiah, "My joy is gone, grief is upon me, my heart is sick. Hark, the cry of my poor people from far and wide in the land: "Is the LORD not in Zion? Is her King not in her?" These words apply to the current situation of Palestinians in Jerusalem and the Holy Land and indeed to the entire region of the Middle East. Palestinian people cry out for just treatment, mercy, compassion, freedom of movement, equality, opportunity and justice.

### Reception Dinner at St. John's Eye Hospital in Jerusalem



On the occasion of the Hospital Board of Trustees Annual meeting, a reception dinner was held at St. John's Eye Hospital in Sheikh Jarrah, Jerusalem on Saturday, 21 September 2013. Canon John Organ, Chaplain to Bishop Suheil Dawani, and The Rev'd Hosam Naoum, Dean of St. George's Cathedral in Jerusalem, attended the reception.

### Reception Held on the Armenian Independence Day

Canon John Organ, Chaplain to Bishop Suheil Dawani, attended, on behalf of the Bishop, the Armenian Independence Day held at the Notre Dame of the Jerusalem Centre on Sunday, 22 September 2013.



### Bishop J. Jon Bruno and his wife Mary Welcomed by Bishop Suheil



The Rt. Rev'd J. Jon Bruno, the Sixth Bishop of Los Angeles, and his wife Mary were welcomed by His Grace Bishop Suheil Dawani and his wife Shafeeqa on dinner at the St. George's Guest House, Jerusalem on Wednesday, 25 September 2013.

### St. Mark's Capitol Hill Pilgrimage from Washington, DC Visits St. George's Cathedral, Jerusalem

Bishop Suheil Dawani received a pilgrimage group from St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Capitol Hill, Washington, DC, in the Parish Hall of St. George's Cathedral, Jerusalem, on Wednesday, 25 September 2013. The group was represented by the Associate Rector, The Rev'd Rebecca Justice Schunior.



In this context, it should be noted that St. Mark's Episcopal Church has supported the Diocese of Jerusalem through the Good Friday Offering, the sale of olive oil and wood carvings, and contributions to the American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem. Recipients included the Al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza, The Jerusalem Princess Basma Center for Disabled Children in Mt. of Olives, Jerusalem, and Al-Zababdeh Penman Clinic.

### **Bishop Suheil Receives Turkish Group in the Parish Hall of St. George's Cathedral**



Bishop Suheil Dawani met with a Turkish group represented by Mr. Harun Tokak, Coordinator of Middle East and Jerusalem, in the Reception Hall of St. George's Cathedral, Jerusalem on Thursday morning, 26 September 2013. The delegation discussed interfaith dialogue and mutual cooperation between the Diocese of Jerusalem and Turkey. Canon John Organ, Chaplain to Bishop Suheil, and The Rev'd Hosam Naoum, Dean of St. George's Cathedral were in attendance.

### **Women's Day in Kufr Yassif**

Bishop Suheil led a 'Day Retreat' for the women of the Diocese of Jerusalem in Kufr Yassif on Friday, 27 September 2013. Bishop Suheil and the clergy of Israel and Palestine shared in a joyous of prayer and praise led by the Rector, Fr. Bilal Habibi, and Choir of Savior Church in Kufr Yassif.



Mrs. Shafeeqa Dawani addressed the women assembled about their important ministry and taking their rightful place within the life and witness of the Diocese. A lunch was held in Kufr Yassif. Some 350 women from around the Diocese attended this joyful event.

### **The First National Pilgrimage to the Holy Land by Members of the Friends of the Holy Land in the UK**



On Friday, 27 September 2013, Bishop Suheil Dawani together with The Rev'd Hosam Naoum, Dean of St. George's Cathedral, and Ms. Sawsan Aranki-Batato, Head of the Diocesan Programs Development Department, have received a group of 53 persons from the Friends of the Holy Land (FHL) in the UK. The pilgrimage was organized and led by FHL National Vice-Chairman, Mr. Peter Rand MBE. The group is focusing on meeting with Christian people and visiting projects that have been funded by (FHL), including Nablus, Reineh, Taybeh, Beit Sahour, Beit Jala, Bethlehem and Jerusalem.

The visiting group was welcomed by a reception at the St. George's Cathedral Guesthouse, followed by a tour in the Diocese Compound, which included the Cathedral of St. George The Martyr, the Bishop's Peace Garden and the Parish Hall where the group was welcomed by Bishop Suheil and briefed them on the Diocesan ministries. It is worth mentioning that Ms. Norah Whelan, the wife of the Chairman of FHL Dr. Michael Whelan who passed away recently, as well as the Spiritual Director Fr. John Deehan, FHL Diocesan Coordinator to the Westminster Diocese, also joined the group.

### Anglican Overseas Aid Visit to the Diocese of Jerusalem

On Monday, 30 September 2013, Mr. Robert Mitchell, CEO of the Anglican Overseas Aid, and Prof. Julian Rait, Chair of the Board, visited the Diocesan Office in Jerusalem and had a meeting with Bishop Suheil Dawani and another separate meeting with Ms. Sawsan Aranki-Batato, Head of the Diocesan Development Programs Department. During the meeting, Ms. Batato provided an update on the status of the implementation of the Diocesan projects which they support namely the 'Breast Screening Program' at Al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza. Further discussion took place on how this Program will serve as a nucleus for transforming Al-Ahli Arab Hospital into a comprehensive Oncology treatment service. The delegation will be visiting Al-Ahli Hospital during the next few days.



### Heads of Christian Churches in Jerusalem Visit Al-Aqsa Mosque in Solidarity with their Fellow Muslims



Heads of Christian Churches in Jerusalem paid a visit to the Al-Aqsa Mosque on Monday morning, 30 September 2013 in solidarity with the Muslims, as well as a protest against the Israeli practices against the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the third holiest site in Islam in the Old City of Jerusalem.

The delegation expressed solidarity and cooperation with the Islamic Waqf and the Islamic institutions in Jerusalem. It also expressed support for their fellow Muslims in the midst of the ordeal experienced by the Al-

Aqsa Mosque in these days.

---

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.