Peace to you in the name of the Lord

Greetings from Bishop Suheil Dawani

Dear Friends,

Greetings to you as you journey through this Lenten season.

The Diocese of Jerusalem continues to work diligently to support its institutions by seeking funding for the Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza, and scholarships to support children and families in education.

We welcome Ibrahim Faltas as the new General Director to the Princess Basma School and Rehabilitation Center in Jerusalem, and give great thanks to Mrs. Betty Majaj, who has worked tirelessly over many years, and has now retired from her position as Chief Executive.

We held a Clergy Retreat, for the clergy of the Diocese, here at St. George’s College. This was a productive time as we focused on ‘Empowering Clergy to meet the Challenges of this Region’. It was an important time of fellowship for everyone.

Our focus this month has been on ‘Living a Holy Lent’ – through fasting and prayer we consider the ‘desert times’ of our lives as we move ever forward in the knowledge of the glorious Resurrection. It is our hope that keeps us focused on the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Peace, Salaam

+ Suheil Dawani
New General Director for Jerusalem Princess Basma School and Rehabilitation Center

On Saturday, February 2, 2013, the Board of the Jerusalem Princess Basma School and Rehabilitation Center appointed Mr. Ibrahim Faltas as General Director. The Board of the Institution includes: Bishop Suheil Dawani – Chairman; Dr. Hidmi Arafat – Vice-Chairman; Dr. Hisham Nassar; Dr. Rustom Namari, Dr. Sami Nabalsi; Mrs. Abla Nasser; Mr. Yousef Sabbagh

On the recommendation of Mrs. Majaj, the previous director, who retired at the end December 2012, the Board approved and appointed a new director, Mr. Ibrahim Faltas. Mr. Faltas comes highly qualified for the position, with a background in Business Administration.

Mr. Faltas succeeds Ms. Betty Majaj who has served as the Chief Executive Officer of the Jerusalem Princess Basma School and Rehabilitation Center for more than 30 years. Bishop Suheil, on behalf of The Diocese of Jerusalem, expressed his deepest appreciation and gratitude to Ms. Majaj (Betty) for her years of dedicated and extraordinary service. Bishop Suheil, as Chairman of the Board, welcomed Mr. Ibrahim Faltas as the new director and prayed that God will enable him to build on the strengths of the Past and help the Center achieve an even brighter future of service to the children in need of the Center’s services.

Bishop Suheil attends Ninth Hi-Tech Bible Competition

On Sunday evening, February 3rd, Bishop Suheil attended the Ninth Hi-Tech Bible Competition in Nazareth with The Ven. Samuel Barhoum, Holy Family Church, Raineh, and The Revd Imad Diebes, Christ Church, Nazareth.

The Diocese of Jerusalem hosted this event and also had young people participating in the competition. The Ven. Samuel Barhoum is on the Executive and Planning Committee of the Bible Competition.

Bishop Suheil continues to support the young people of the Diocese and the importance of Biblical literacy.

Finance Committee Meeting in Amman

Bishop Suheil met with his Finance Committee in Amman on Thursday, February 7th. Present at the meeting included committee members, finance committee members and the standing committee. Meetings are held regularly to discuss investment in diocesan institutions in Jordan.
The Ahliyyah and Bishop's Kindergarten Board Meeting

Bishop Suheil attended The Ahliyyah and Bishop's Kindergarten Board Meeting on Friday, February 8. Present at the meeting included Superintendent Mrs. Haifa Najjar and Headmistress Mrs. Mirna Musharbash, Archdeacon Luay Haddad and other board members. A productive meeting was held, discussing school matters and future vision.

A Visit from St. Timothy’s, Agincourt

On Tuesday, February 12th, The Revd Dr. John W. Stephenson from St. Timothy’s Anglican Church Agincourt, Scarborough, Ontario Canada visited with Canon John Organ. Revd Stephenson brought with him, from St. Timothy’s, a generous donation of $1,000.00USD to our Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza.

Ash Wednesday

The celebration of Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent was held on February 13. The imposition of ashes and Holy Eucharist was given by Bishop Suheil to a large congregation on Wednesday evening. Visitors from Malaysia, England, the United States and other places from around the world filled the Cathedral to overflowing. Serving with the Bishop at the Altar was The Very Revd Hosam Naoum, Dean of St. George’s Cathedral, Canon John Organ, Bishop’s Chaplain, the Revd Lawrence Hilditch and Deacons Saleem Dawani and Owen Hoskin.

It was a reflective evening as we gathered as the body of Christ in remembrance of Jesus’ time in the desert and His sacrifice for us.

A Lenten supper of ‘Mujadarah’ was offered to all in the Guest House, after the service. This is a meatless meal of lentils and rice with onions on top.
A Visit from the Church of Scotland

On Thursday, February 14th, Bishop Suheil greeted a group from Scotland, led by the Revd Ian Alexander. The group included senior staff members from the Church of Scotland World Mission Council, a senior staff member and Covenor from the Church and Society Council, a leader of the Iona Community, the Scottish Director of Christian Aid and the Revd Donald Reid, from the Scottish Episcopal Church. The new Middle East Secretary for the Church of Scotland, Mr. Kenny Roger, the Revd George Shand, and The Very Revd Hosam Naoum, Dean of St. George’s Cathedral were also present.

Renewal of Baptismal Vows at the Jordan River

Bishop Suheil gathered with his Jordanian clergy and parishes on Friday, February 15th for a Service of Baptismal Renewal and Celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

An estimated 800 people assembled at Bethany beyond Jordan, a site by the Jordan River thought by many, including archeologists, to be the authentic site where John the Baptist ministered.

Bishop Suheil encouraged the faithful and assured them of the presence of the Holy Spirit at work in their lives to fulfill their calling as followers of Jesus Christ.

The occasion was enhanced by a flowing Jordan River, a warm sunny day, and a joyous people, grateful to God and their being together as brothers and sisters in Christ.

First Sunday of Lent

On the First Sunday of Lent, Bishop Suheil preached at the 9:30am service. The Bishop focused on living a ‘Holy Lent’. In fasting and prayer, we turn our souls to God as we move through Lent, and then we arrive at Easter with a renewed commitment to our Christian faith.

The Revd Canon John Armson preached at the 11am service. Canon Armson is the former Canon of Rochester Cathedral in the U.K. He is here on sabbatical doing research at the Tantur Ecumenical Institute in Jerusalem.
A Visit from the Bank of Palestine

Bishop Suheil met with Mr. Hasham Shawa, the General Director of the Bank of the Palestine, on Monday, February 18th to discuss investments and general financial issues concerning the Diocese of Jerusalem.

The Bank of Palestine PLC is the first and the largest national bank in Palestine. The Bank of Palestine has a banking network of 38 branches and sub-branches spreading from Jenin in the North to Rafah in the South.

A Visit from Propst Schmidt of the Church of the Redeemer

Bishop Suheil greeted Propst Wolfgang Schmidt, from Church of the Redeemer, in the Old City of Jerusalem, on Monday morning in his offices.

This was courtesy visit, by the Propst, to discuss mutual matters of interest and concern to the Anglican and Lutheran Churches. Both churches have many common affiliations and ministries.

Also in attendance at this meeting were Canon John Organ, Bishop’s Chaplain, and the Very Revd Hosam Naoum, Dean of St. George’s Cathedral.

Pilgrims visit St. George’s

Fr. Brett Ward, from Holy Trinity Church, and a group of pilgrims from various parts of the U.K., visited the cathedral bringing a kind gift to the Diocese of Jerusalem. Sawsan Batato, Diocesan Programs Development Director and Deborah Neal, Bishop’s Secretary met with the group to discuss the Diocesan Institutions and ministries.

Bishop Suheil and Dean Hosam Naoum met with the Bishop of Southwalk, The Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, Dean of Southwark, Andrew Nunn and 132 pilgrims on Tuesday, February 19 for an afternoon Eucharist in the Cathedral of St. George’s.

Visit to Birzeit

The Diocesan Property Manager, Amin Abu Hanna, made a visit to Birzeit on Tuesday, February 19th to assess the continued construction on the Birzeit Elderly Home adjacent to St. Peter’s Anglican Church in Birzeit.

The building is almost to completion and the hope is to have the Elderly Home opened soon.
Diocesan Clergy Retreat

Bishop Suheil gathered with his clergy from around the Diocese of Jerusalem and the Middle East for a three day Clergy Retreat from February 20-22nd. This joyful gathering was held at St. George’s College on the Diocesan campus in Jerusalem, and was a time of refreshment, renewal, empowerment and hospitality.

The Clergy Retreat was led by Br. Mark Brown, SSJE of the Society of St. John the Evangelist, Cambridge, Massachusetts. The theme for this event was ‘Empowering Clergy in the Challenges of this Region’.

A Visit from Brigadier General Karl McLean

Bishop Suheil was paid a courtesy call by Brigadier General Karl McLean, Chaplain General of the Canadian Forces on the morning of Tuesday, February 26th. Also attending the meeting were Canon John Organ, Bishop Suheil’s chaplain, The Very Revd Hosam Naoum, Dean of St. George’s Cathedral, and The Very Revd Graham Smith, Dean of St. George’s College. The Chaplain General is here in the Holy Land attending a course at St. George’s College.

A Visit from Embrace the Middle East

Jeremy Moodey and Brian Jolly of Embrace the Middle East met with Bishop Suheil and Canon John Organ over lunch at St. George’s Guest House on Tuesday, February 26th. They are visiting Jerusalem, and surrounding area, on business to discuss the ongoing emergency situation at the Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza, and other important issues concerning the Diocese. Jeremy and Brian also had a separate meeting with Sawsan Batato, Programs Development Officer for the Diocese.

Embrace the Middle East is a non-profit organization that works in partnership with local Christians to provide health, education and community development programmes for the most disadvantaged people in the lands of the Bible – regardless of their faith or nationality.

A Visit from CMJ

Bishop Suheil met with Bishop Neil LeBhar from the Diocese of the Gulf Atlantic, The Revd John E. Howanstine, Rector of Christ Church Parish in Port Republic, Maryland, and The Revd David Pileggi, from Christ Church, Jerusalem. Also attending the meeting, on Thursday, February 28th, was Canon John Organ. This meeting was held to discuss the common concerns and issues of Christians living in the Land of the Holy One.

Christ Church is an evangelical Anglican congregation that worships in our historic church in the Old City of Jerusalem.
A Visit from Friends from the Diocese of Tokyo

Bishop Suheil met with Toshihisa and Ikiko Iwaasa, laity from the Diocese of Tokyo on Thursday, February 28th to discuss the wonderful ongoing relationship that the Diocese of Jerusalem holds with the Diocese of Tokyo. This courtesy visit was a pleasant occasion and there are hopes that Bishop Suheil will also visit Japan in the future. Canon John Organ also attended the meeting.

A Visit to the Arab Episcopal Medical Center in Ramallah

On February Thursday 28th, Canon John Organ, Chaplain to Bishop Suheil Dawani, and Sawsan Aranki-Batato, the Programs Development Officer of the Diocese of Jerusalem, paid a field visit to the Arab Episcopal Medical Centre in Ramallah. They had the pleasure to see that the medical equipment, including the Echo test system, the Stress test system, Holter Monitor system, as well as the ECG recorder system, have been received and installed. The operational supporting systems including the computers and networking have also been installed.

The centre is fully computerized which shall ensure a paperless environment.

The Arab Episcopal Medical Center will be the sole centre in Palestine to provide a comprehensive program for Diabetic complications, including diabetic foot care and cardio-vascular health care, all under one roof. This will reduce the burden on patients as they will not have to move from Center to Center in order to complete their treatment cycle.

The centre is expected to be fully functional during the forthcoming few weeks.

Arab Episcopal School, Irbid, Jordan

The Arab Episcopal School in Irbid, Jordan is back in session, and our students have had a great start to their second semester. The Kindergarten classes had a fun time on a visit to the Tailor's shop. They learned about how clothes are made and especially enjoyed watching the tailor as he sewed buttons on a dress shirt.

In Art class students had a great time making masks. Our teachers enjoyed a special training session with a guest speaker. We find it very important for our teachers to continuously strive to grow and enhance their teaching skills. We are so thankful that our students are back and starting their second semester with enthusiasm and pleasure!
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.