Peace to you in the name of the Lord

Greetings from Bishop Suheil Dawani

Dear Friends,

Greetings for the New Year!

2013 began with prayer for a year of peace with justice for all people here in the Holy Land, as well as in all parts of the world experiencing conflict and distress. It also began with instant efforts on behalf of Al Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza. Her grace, Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts-Schori, and her delegation, joined me in a visit to Gaza on January 2nd, where we offered support to the staff and patients, and promised to do all we could to ensure this important hospital, with its Christian presence, will continue to be of service to the people of Gaza for generations to come. Our efforts are joined by Bishop John Chane and Canon John Peterson, who are working diligently to ensure the long term financial stability of Al Ahli Arab Hospital.

The Feast of Epiphany is day of great celebration for the Diocese of Jerusalem, as it marks the recognition of Jesus as King, Priest, and Prophet and also many important historic developments in the Diocese. The significance of the Feast was further added to this year by my ordaining to the Deaconate, Saleem Dawani and Owen Hoskin.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity began with a service at St. George’s Cathedral. Gathering with Christian Churches here in the Holy City of Jerusalem, we were reminded that our Lord requires our cooperation, fellowship, unity, and love one for another. With Christians everywhere, may we always bear witness to Him, beginning here in Jerusalem, and to the ends of the earth.

Peace, Salaam

+ Suheil Dawani
Presiding Bishop Katharine visits Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza

Bishop Suheil and the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church of the USA, Katharine Jefferts Schori made a visit to the Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza early in the New Year. Bishop Suheil and Her Grace Katharine spoke with the Director of Al Ahli Hospital, Suhaila Tarazi, and visited with patients and employees. Also in accompaniment were Bishop Suheil’s Chaplain Canon John Organ, The Revd Canon Bob Edmunds, former Chaplain to Bishop Suheil, Mr. Alex Baumgarten and Ms. Lynette Wilson from the Episcopal News Service.

Bishop Suheil also held a service at St. Philip’s Anglican Church where everyone prayed for peace and reconciliation in Gaza and throughout the Middle East.

Epiphany Celebrations and Ordinations at St. George’s Cathedral

Epiphany celebrates the 6th year of Bishop Suheil’s consecration as Bishop of the Diocese of Jerusalem. Bishop Suheil celebrated Epiphany at St. George’s Cathedral with a joint service on Sunday January 6th. During the morning’s service a warm welcome was given to Archbishop Jeffrey Driver and 17 youth from the Diocese of Adelaide who were on pilgrimage in the Land of the Holy One, and also to a group of pilgrims from Beverly Hills who have been with The Revd Canon John Peterson as they toured throughout the region.

This day was also a wonderful day in the life of the church in Jerusalem as Bishop Suheil ordained two to the Order of Deacons at an afternoon service at St. George’s Cathedral. Saleem Dawani and Owen Hoskin were ordained to the Deaconate as the large gathering of those in the community looked on. Local clergy from Jerusalem, Israel, Palestine, Jordan and Lebanon participated in the ordination service. A celebratory reception was held in St. George’s Guest House after the service.

A Visit with Bishop Chane and Canon Peterson

Bishop Suheil hosted Bishop John Chane and Canon John Peterson for lunch at his home on January 9th. Bishop Chane and Canon Peterson are working closely with Bishop Suheil and his staff to support Al Ahli Hospital in its important role of medical care to the people of Gaza.

A Visit to the US Consul General

On Friday, January 11th, Bishop Suheil, accompanied by Bishop John Chane, the Eighth Bishop of the Diocese of Washington, The Revd Canon John Peterson, Canon of Global Justice & Reconciliation, Washington National, and the Bishop’s Chaplain Canon John Organ, attended a meeting with the American Consulate General, Michael Ratney, to discuss direction and funding of Al Ahli Hospital, Gaza.
A Visit from His Eminence Cardinal McCarrick

His Eminence Cardinal McCarrick and Mr. Matthew McGarry, country representative for Catholic Relief Services in Jerusalem, visited Bishop Suheil, on January 15th. They came to bring greetings and to discuss matters of mutual concern, especially the presence of indigenous Christians in the Holy Land. Also in the meeting were Canon John Organ and the Very Revd Hosam Naoum.

Bishop Suheil visits Pope Tawadros II in Cairo

Bishop Suheil Dawani and the Very Revd Hosam Naoum, Dean of St. George’s Cathedral, went to Cairo on January 17th to pay a courtesy visit to Tawadros II, the newly installed Pope of Alexandria. Bishop Suheil was not able to attend the Pope’s installment at the time and had Fr. Faeq Haddad attend in his place.

Bishop Suheil was given a tour through the Bishoy Monastery and visited the ancient cathedral and the tomb of the late Pope Shenouda III. Bishop Suheil was also invited to tour the Syrian Monastery next door.

Pope Tawadros II was very gracious and hospitable and thanked Bishop Suheil for coming to see him. During their visit, the Pope Tawadros III and Bishop Suheil discussed ecumenical matters and issues of concern for the Christians of the Middle East and gave praise for the Anglican and Coptic relations that are historic in the region.

Towards the end of his time in Cairo, Bishop Suheil paid a courtesy visit to Bishop Mouneer, the Anglican Bishop in Egypt.

Bishop Suheil welcomes groups from the U.K.

On Sunday January 20th, Bishop Suheil welcomed Bishop Peter Price, of Bath & Wells, who preached at the 11am service, and Bishop John Inge of Worcester, who are here visiting with a delegation from Christian Aid. Bishop Suheil also welcomed the Bishop of Ludlow, visiting Jerusalem with an interfaith group from the UK.

Bishop Suheil met with both groups in his reception room after the 11am service. The main focus of discussion was the work of the Diocese and the Christian presence in the Middle East and especially the Holy Land. Bishop Suheil answered questions that centered specifically on three areas – the pastoral work of the Diocese, ecumenical work and interfaith work.

Bishop Suheil spoke about the vision of the Diocese of Jerusalem, and the three arms of ministry that work to promote the ministry of peace, reconciliation and justice.
Week of Prayer for Christian Unity at St. George’s

During the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (January 19 – 27th) ecumenical celebrations are held throughout the Christian Churches in Jerusalem. On Sunday January 20, a 5pm Evening Service was held at the Anglican Cathedral of St. George the Martyr. The Theme for the week was: What Does the Lord Require of Us? The theme for this Sunday was, ‘Walking in Conversation,’ which is based on the Road to Emmaus from St. Luke’s Gospel.

Bishop Suheil welcomed the large Christian congregation and spoke of the fellowship amongst the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, how “we often walk together and share our common interests and concerns.” Bishop Suheil spoke about the importance of “our care for and protection of Christian Holy Sites to ensure that Christian pilgrims of every denomination, and from around the world, can come to the Holy Land and experience the places sacred to the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord.”

Bishop Suheil said that “among our many important concerns and responsibilities, is our mutual sense of urgency about the dwindling presence of Christians here in the Land of the Holy One. Not so long ago, indigenous Christians were more than 20% of the population. Today we are less than 2%. Christian faithful have been in Jerusalem since the First Pentecost, and we must ensure we remain present and faithful witnesses here till our Lord comes again.

Christians in the Holy Land and throughout the Middle East have been peacemakers, building a bridge of understanding, tolerance, and acceptance between diverse peoples. The peace we seek and pursue is one with justice at its core. We are the voice of the voiceless and our voice needs to be heard here and around the world, as we remind Christians and non-Christians alike, that God demands justice for all God’s children.

This Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, with its theme, “What does the Lord Require of Us?” is answered in our context by being bold in our witness to our Lord Jesus Christ, of encouraging indigenous Christians to remain in the Holy Land, and of pursuing Peace with Justice.”

Following the service, The Olive Branch Choir played for the congregation. The Olive Branch Choir is made up of Palestinian Christians from Bethlehem, Beit Saour and Beit Jala and a number of resident foreigners. The director / accompanist for the choir is Fr. Aurelio Mule Stagno SDB. The congregation enjoyed an array of arrangements which included Vivaldi’s Gloria and W.A. Mozart’s Te Deum.

The Olive Branch Choir seeks to be a witness to the Christian faith and hope within the Palestinian people, while raising in song, prayer for a better tomorrow.

Bishop Suheil Visits Armenian Patriarch with Christmas greetings

On Monday, January 21st, Bishop Suheil and The Very Revd Dean Hosam Naoum visited the Armenian patriarchate to wish Archbishop Aris a happy and blessed Christmas, and to the Armenian Family in Jerusalem, and worldwide, a happy Christmas and Theophany.
Bishop Suheil hosts Bishop Gayle Harris

Bishop Suheil hosted Bishop Gayle Harris of the Diocese of Massachusetts on the evening of January 23rd. The Bishops met for discussion and time together, following which they gathered with friends at St. George’s Guest House for a lovely meal. Bishop Gayle is here leading a pilgrimage from the United States, consisting mainly of members of Epiphany Church in Winchester. Bishop Gayle brought a gift from the group as a contribution to support the health ministry of the Diocese of Jerusalem.

Bishop of Exeter and curates visit St. George’s

Bishop Michael of Exeter and Revd Adrian Hough with 22 curates from England attended the 11am service at St. George’s Cathedral, on January 27th, where Bishop Michael celebrated. After the service, Bishop Suheil greeted the group and they gathered in the Bishop’s reception room and discussed the position of Christians in the Middle East.

St. Paul’s Shefa’amr celebrates their Feast Day

Bishop Suheil Dawani joined Fr. Fuad Dagher, and the parish of St. Paul, to celebrate the Patronal Feast of St. Paul’s in Shefa’amr on Sunday, January 27th.

Bishop Suheil preached the sermon and following the service, there was a lovely parish dinner. Accompanying Bishop Suheil was Mrs. Shafeeqa Dawani, the Bishop’s daughter, Luban, and the Bishop’s Chaplain, Canon John Organ, with his wife Irene. Also in attendance were ecumenical partners from the community.

Bishop Suheil Dawani visits the Armenian Patriarchate

Bishop Suheil Dawani visited the Armenian Patriarchate on Tuesday, January 29th to bring congratulations to the Patriarch-elect, His Eminence Archbishop Nourhan Manougian, the 97th Patriarch and successor to the Throne of St. James the Brother of our Lord. Bishop Suheil was accompanied by his Chaplain, Canon John Organ, the Very Revd Hosam Naoum, Dean of St. George’s Cathedral and the Very Revd Graham Smith, Dean of St. George’s College.
Members of Evangelical Churches in Palestine meet with Bishop Suheil

Members of Evangelical Churches in Palestine met with Bishop Suheil on Tuesday, January 29th. Bishop Suheil greeted Dr. Bishara Awad, Bethlehem Bible College, Mr. Brian C. Stiller, Ambassador for World Evangelical Alliance, and Mr. Johnny Shahwan, Evangelical Council of Churches in the Holy Land to discuss their ministry in the Holy Land. Also attending the meeting were the Very Revd Hosam Naoum and Canon John Organ.

A Visit from the Jordanian Ambassador

The Jordanian Ambassador, Walid Obidat, and Shiek Azzam al-Khatib, the Director of the Muslim Waft, visited with Bishop Suheil for lunch at the Guest House on January 29th. Dr. Hisham Nassar, Diocesan Medical Coordinator was also in attendance. Bishop Suheil welcomed his guests and thanked them for their support, especially that of HM King Abdullah II who is known for his support and respect for Christians and Christian Holy Sites in Jordan.

Mayor of Jerusalem’s Reception on the Occasion of the New Year

Bishop Suheil attended the Reception on the Occasion of the New Year, at City Hall, entitled ‘In the Spirit of Inter-Religious Co-existence’ on the evening of January 30th. The Mayor of Jerusalem, Nir Barkat honoured the inter-faith diversity of Jerusalem, represented at the reception by members of all three Abrahamic faiths. A pleasant evening was had by all.

Accompanying the Bishop to this event was his chaplain, Canon John Organ.

Episcopal Church of the Redeemer Winter Camp January 2013

The Episcopal Church of the Redeemer in Amman held its Winter Camp for Sunday school children and youth during the week of January 23rd to the 25th. They hosted 77 children aged 4 to 16.

The theme for the three day program was ‘Living as Children of Light!!’ based on Ephesians 4:17 to 5:2. Led by Rev. Fadi Diab, and Youth leaders - Wadie El Far& Nader Zabaneh, and Rana& Dima ElFar, the children and youth divided into three age groups, and explored the concept of light, and living as children of light. The program included worship and praise, prayer groups, contests, and fun games.

We continue to pray that the Lord may use the camps as channels of grace and light, where his Word is sown and that it may give forth bountiful fruit for His kingdom.
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.