Peace to you in the name of the Lord

Greetings from Bishop Suheil Dawani

Dear Friends,

I begin by offering my thanks to you for your prayers and continued support during the upheaval between Israel and Gaza. Our deepest condolences go out to all who have suffered and are in pain. We thank God that the cease-fire is holding and continue to pray for peace and justice in the Land of the Holy One.

During the month of November, we held our MAJMA – Diocesan Synod - in Jerusalem. This was a wonderful time to gather with clergy from throughout Israel, Palestine and Jordan and with special guests from England and Canada. This was the first time in ten years that we have been able to hold our Diocesan Meeting here.

All Saints, Beirut, Lebanon celebrated 100 years of ministry this month. I had the pleasure of visiting there and rejoicing in the occasion with parishioners and old friends who came from around the world to celebrate. While in Beirut, I also visited with our clergy at NEST (Near East School of Theology) and the St. Luke’s Centre, our institution for the mentally challenged.

As we begin Advent we focus on the beginning of a new year in the church calendar. We remember the humble beginnings of our Lord and Saviour and trust in the greatness of God through all things tender. We look forward to a new year of exciting possibilities and give Glory to God in the highest and pray for peace to God’s people on earth.

I wish you blessings of peace and kindness.

Salaam,

+ Suheil Dawani
MAJMA

Day 1

Majma – the Diocesan Synod was held in Jerusalem on 5-7th November. Clergy from Israel, Palestine and Jordan gathered at St. George’s Cathedral under the theme of “You are my Witnesses”.

The Opening Service of Holy Communion was at 6pm on Monday with Bishop Suheil presiding and The Very Revd Hosam Naoum, Dean of the Cathedral, preaching. In attendance was the representative for the Archbishop of Canterbury, Bishop Brian Castle and the Bishop of Ottawa, John Chapman.

The Cathedral was full as all the clergy and parish members gathered to celebrate the opening of Majma. The St. George’s Boys Choir sang during Communion. After the Service, all were invited to enjoy a meal at the St. George’s Guest House.

The 99th Session of the Church Council, since 1905, and the 35th Session of the Diocese of Jerusalem, since 1976, began with a morning meditation by The Revd Canon Hanna Mansour. Greetings were given by his Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III, Green Orthodox Patriarch. Bishop Brain Castle, representing the Archbishop of Canterbury brought greetings from Canterbury and Bishop John Chapman brought greetings from the Canadian Anglican Primate Fred Hiltz and also from the Diocese of Ottawa and the country of Canada.

Day One of the Majma focused on Bishop Suheil’s Report to the Synod and the Diocesan Report presented in video format.

Bishop Suheil honoured 5 people who had served on the Council with faithfulness and commitment: Dr. Sami Khoury, Director of the Palestinian Hospital in Amman, Jordan; Advocate Fuad Shehadeh, Ramallah; Saba Kirreh, father of Walid Kirreh who accepted the award on his father’s behalf, Wajeeh Awad, from Haifa who once taught at St. George’s, and Suhaila Tarazi, Director of the Al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza.

The Bishop’s Chaplain, Canon John Organ, presented the Diocesan Capital Campaign that has been given the go ahead blessing from the Archbishop of Canterbury. This Campaign will be launched in early 2013 and should be producing benefits within the first 3 years. To kick start the Campaign, Canon John Organ, Dean Graham Smith of St. George’s College, Bishop John Chapman from the Diocese of Ottawa, Canada, the clergy of the Diocese of Jerusalem, and Bishop Suheil pledged a total of $22,000. The Majma passed a resolution to approve this campaign.
The new Programs Development Officer, Sawsan Batato, gave her report and expectations of future fund development for the Diocese of Jerusalem.

Bishop Suheil also reported on the status of Al-Ahli Hospital. He gave sincere thanks to the Diocese of Los Angeles who raised nearly $40,000 at a special luncheon given in support of our hospital in Gaza. He also announced that Suhaila Tarazi has asked to step down from her position as Director of Al-Ahli Hospital but will remain as Director until a suitable replacement has been found. The Bishop reiterated that Suhaila has been and is a good shepherd, faithful to her ministry. She has never left even when under the threat of violence.

Al--Ahli Hospital has been under study by Price Waterhouse Cooper and they will be sending in their re-organization feasibility report soon. UNWRA funding will stop on December 31st 2012, and the Diocese has been looking into new and innovative ways to continue the hospital and its ministry in Gaza.

Evening Prayer closed the end of Day One and the Bishop invited all to his residence for aperitifs and then dinner was served in the Guest House Garden.

MAJMA - Day 2

Day 2 of the Majma opened with a morning meditation by Bishop Younan Munib, Lutheran Bishop in Jerusalem. Greetings were given by Andrea Mann, Global Relations Coordinator from the Office of the Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada. She brought greetings from the Primate of Canada, Fred Hiltz, the Diocese of Westminster, B.C. and her parish of St. Alban’s in Richmond, British Columbia. Ms. Mann spoke with enthusiasm about the formalizing of the relationship between the Diocese of Jerusalem and the National Church of Canada.

Reports were given from various departments throughout the Diocese, including Women’s Empowerment; Christian Education/ Youth Ministry in Jordan, Israel & the West Bank; Properties and Investments in Jordan, Israel and the West Bank; and Medical Ministries in the Diocese.

The afternoon focused on Pastoral Committees, Appointments and Elections. A report was given by the Diocesan Legal Advisors and the Standing Committee was elected for the coming year.

Bishop Suheil closed the 2012 Majma with prayer- remembering all those who could not be with us from Syria and Lebanon. He prayed for peace in the region and for guidance from the Holy Spirit as the Diocese moves forward into a new year of exciting expectations and renewal.

A visit to St. Paul’s, West Jerusalem, was offered to the clergy and delegates attending the MAJMA.

Music and song throughout the Majma were courtesy of the Revd Fuad Dagher, St. Paul’s Shefa’Amr and Dean Hosam Naoum, the Cathedral of St. George.
Jordanian Clergy visits Diocesan Institutions

On November 8, Bishop Suheil provided the Jordanian delegates to Majma with an overview of the history, and future plans for St. Peter’s Church, Jaffa.

Traveling on to Haifa, Bishop Suheil opened and dedicated the new St John Elementary School.

Bishop Suheil was greeted warmly and thanked by the school’s representatives. The Bishop also congratulated Moussa Daher who had a great hand in building the school, and the school’s Principal.

This was a joyous occasion for St John School Haifa. Canon Hatem Shehadeh was thanked and congratulated also.

A visit from the US Consul General

Bishop Suheil had a visit from the US Consul General Michael Ratney on Friday, November 9th. This was the first time the new US Consul General had visited the Cathedral of St. George in Jerusalem.

Mr. Ratney and Bishop Suheil spent time in pleasant conversation discussing areas of mutual concern. Joining them were Ms. Cheryl Igiri, Religious Affairs Officer at the US Consulate, and the Bishop’s Chaplain, Canon John Organ.

Patriarch Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia, visits the Holy Land

On November 11, Bishop Suheil, accompanied by the Very Revd Hosam Naoum, Dean of the Cathedral of St. George the Martyr, was invited to a luncheon at the King David Hotel to meet Patriarch Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia. During lunch a new book written by the Patriarch was launched.

Later in the Evening the Bishop and the Dean, together with the Heads of Churches, clergy, and Palestinian and Israeli representatives, shared in a reception at the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in honor of his Beatitude Patriarch Kirill.

Remembrance Day Services held on Mount Scopus, Jerusalem

The Commemoration Service to mark Remembrance Day took place at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery on Mount Scopus on Saturday November 10th. Bishop Suheil gave the blessing, and his chaplain, John Organ and the Very Revd Hosam Naoum also participated in the service. Sir Vincent Fean, the British Consul-General, the British Defense Attaché, Colonel Philip Stack and other clergy were in attendance.

After the service the congregation was warmly invited for refreshments at the Residence of HM Consul General in Jerusalem.
A Visit to N.E.S.T.

During their visit to Beirut, Lebanon, Bishop Suheil Dawani’s Chaplain, Canon John and Mrs. Irene Organ, and the Bishop’s secretary, Deborah Neal visited the Diocesan Offices at NEST (the Near East School of Theology).

The Near East School of Theology is an inter-confessional Protestant Seminary of the churches which confess the historic Christian faith as contained in the Holy Scriptures and expressed in the Nicene-Constatinopolitan Creed and the Apostles’ Creed. It is a Seminary in the heritage of the Protestant Reformation in its Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican and Episcopal traditions. The churches in the Reformed tradition (Arab Presbyterian, Armenian Congregational) find their theological identity expressed in the major confessions and catechisms of the Reformed tradition. The Lutheran Church represented in the Seminary subscribes to the Augsburg Confession (1530). The Episcopal Church is part of the Anglican Communion and is faithful to the Anglican tradition with strong emphasis on the Book of Common Prayer and the historic ecumenical creeds of the undivided church of the early centuries.

The primary purpose of the School is to train pastors and church workers for ministry in the churches and other evangelical organizations in the Middle East. It is also concerned with continuing education for pastors and church workers in active service and with theological education of the laity.

100th Anniversary of All Saints Beirut

All Saint’s Church in Beirut, Lebanon celebrated its 100th Anniversary on Saturday evening of November 17th. Due to unfortunate circumstances Bishop Suheil was unable to arrive in time for the event. However, his chaplain, Canon John Organ, brought greetings on Bishop Suheil’s behalf. Mrs. Irene Organ and the Bishop’s secretary, Deborah Neal were also there to celebrate the occasion.

All Saint’s started in the 19th century with a community not with a building. An ‘extended family’ of American and British merchants and missionaries formed the core of the English-speaking congregation that met for worship, and from 1868 used the premises of the Anglo-American Church (now the National Evangelical Church opposite the Grand Serial). When the congregation numbered 90 persons, with sixty Anglican, the Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem, +G.F. Pophan-Blyh, created the Beirut chaplaincy. The first Anglican bishop of Jerusalem, +M.S. Alexander, had arrived from the UK via Beirut in 1841. The first baptism recorded in the archives of All Saints is in 1847.

The present church building came into being through the efforts of the members of that Beirut community who gave the land (donated by Ernst Joly), fund-raised and built the church. The first building to be completed was Church House (named St. George’s Club in 1948 and demolished in 1996); it was dedicated in 1912, at the same time as the laying of the foundation stone for All Saints. Construction was interrupted by WWI, and the church was finally consecrated in 1929. The International Congregation of All Saints continues to serve an English-speaking community drawn from around thirty nationalities.
There has been an Arabic-speaking congregation at All Saints since the tragic Palestinian and Diaspora of 1948. All Saints is part of the Anglican Diocese of Jerusalem under Bishop +Suheil Dawani, in the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East. The diocese had been under local leadership since 1976.

All Saints survived the bombs and bulldozers, and it was the first building restored in downtown Beirut after the civil war. It was re-consecrated in 1992; the terracotta roof was added around 2004. As Beirut was being rebuilt around us, we have seen the addition of the new bell tower in 2008, and the building of the church hall in 12/2011. A new All Saints’ Square is being designed between All Saints and the new marina, as part of a landscape scheme by Solidere call Beirut Shoreline Walk, a reminder that All Saints use to be on the waterfront.

**Sunday Celebration at All Saint’s, Beirut**

Bishop Suheil and Mrs. Shafeeqa Dawani, and some diocesan staff joined with the congregation of All Saints Episcopal Church, Beirut, Lebanon to celebrate their 100th Anniversary. A joint Arabic/English Service was held at 10:30am on Sunday, November 18th. Assisting Bishop Suheil were his chaplain, Canon John Organ and the clergy of the church, The Revd Imad Zurob, Priest of the Arabic Speaking Congregation, The Revd George Al-Kobti, Priest of the Arabic Speaking Congregation, The Revd Nabil Shehadi, Priest in Charge of the International Congregation and special guests.

Bishop Suheil re-dedicated the church hall, in which a reception was held after the service. It was a morning of great celebration as past and present parishioners gathered to enjoy the day.

**A Visit to St. Luke’s Centre, Lebanon**

Atop Mount Lebanon sits St. Luke’s Episcopal Centre of Rehabilitation for Special Needs Children and Young Adults. On November 19th, The Right Reverend Suheil Dawani and several diocesan personnel were received enthusiastically by the residents and staff. The children greeted Bishop Suheil with songs and told him they miss him and always pray for him. The bishop interacted with the children with great warmth and ease.

A tour of the centre revealed much progress in recent months. The number of individuals receiving care has risen to 45 from 15. Staffing has increased and additional services added, including care for several autistic children.

The centre is financially supported by some government assistance and such fund raising efforts by the staff and residents as making crafts and chocolate candy, which are sold at All Saints Anglican Church in Beirut. In addition, the centre raises funds through a small farm, which includes laying hens and the growing of vegetables and fruit.
A Sunday Morning of Celebration

At the 9:30am service on Sunday, November 25th the Cathedral of St. George the Martyr celebrated with the Bishop’s Chaplain Canon John Organ, his 25 years in ministry. Canon John was ordained in 1987 and has served in parish ministry, as chaplain to the Canadian Armed Forces, and now as chaplain to Bishop Suheil in Jerusalem.

At the 11am service, Dean Hosam Naoum greeted Bishop Vedanayagam Devasahayam from Madras, India, visiting here with his clergy.

The Dean also welcomed The Revd Marcus Walker, who was baptized and confirmed here at St. George’s Jerusalem, and is visiting from St. Paul’s, Winchmore Hill, England.

A Visit from Lord Hylton

Bishop Suheil hosted Lord Hylton, from the House of Lords in United Kingdom, on November 26th. Joining him to discuss the situation in the Middle East were the Dean of St. George’s Cathedral, The Very Revd Hosam Naoum, the Bishop’s chaplain, Canon John Organ, the Dean of St. George’s College, The Very Revd Graham Smith, George Akroush, and Dr. George Assoussa.

Clergy on Pilgrimage from Madras, India

On Monday, November 26, Bishop Suheil met with Bishop Vedanayagam Devasahayam and his Clergy from Madras, India while they were in Jerusalem attending a course at St. George’s College. This is the first group of four who will be coming to the Holy Land on Clergy Pilgrimage through St. George’s College.
Property Meeting in Amman, Jordan

On November 28th, Bishop Suheil presided over the property meeting in Amman, Jordan. Present at the meeting included committee members, finance committee members and the standing committee. This was a follow up meeting to discuss investment in diocesan institutions in Jordan.

Emmanuel Church, Ramleh welcome visitors from Calgary, Canada

On the 1st of November Emmanuel congregation of Ramleh welcomed a group from their partner church - St. Laurence Church in Calgary, Canada. Leading the group was the Revd Vic Cabel and his wife. During the All Saints service Father Vic greeted the congregation and exchanged gifts with Canon Samuel Fanous of Ramleh. The guests had early lunch with the congregation. This was the first visit between the partner churches.

Arab Evangelical Episcopal School learns about ‘Forms of Prayer’

Sonya Dykstra, volunteer from Canada, gave a presentation on ‘forms of prayer’ to the senior class of the AEES during the week of November 20th. The Sisters of St. John the Divine in Toronto, Canada heard about the presentation and made handcrafted Anglican rosaries for each of the students, which they mailed to Sonya in Ramallah. This is a photo of the students holding their rosaries.

The sisters' gift of rosaries was a symbol of support for the renewed relationship between the National Church of Canada and the Diocese of Jerusalem.

Confirmation Service at the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, Amman.

The Episcopal Church of the Redeemer celebrated the laying of hands ceremony for 34 of its boys and girls. Bishop Suheil Dawani presided the service and was joined by Rev. Fadi Diab, ECR rector, Rev. Khaled Freij of The Savior Church in Zarka, Rev. Hanna Mansour of St. Luke’s church in Marka, and Rev. Lex Macqueen, rector of the English Speaking congregation in Amman.

The boys and girls accompanied by their Godparents confirmed their baptismal promises and professed their growing faith. Family, relatives and friends attended this joyous occasion.

Join us in praying for the strengthening and growth of these youth in their walk with God, and the living out of their faith so that they would be light and witness for Christ!!
St. Luke’s Hospital initiates programs for Children

In partnership with the Social Services Center at An-Najah National University, St. Luke’s Hospital in Nablus has begun several entertainment programs for the sick children in the hospital. These initiatives are in order to provide psychological support to the children and to put a smile on their faces before and after any medical procedures.

These activities were done under the supervision of Dr. Sami Kilani and Dina Kaddoumi from the Social Services Center at An-Najah National University and Miss Ni’mat Shaheen from the Social Services Center of St. Luke’s Hospital.

Dr. Walid Kerry, the General Manager of St. Luke’s Hospital, said that, according to the instructions of Bishop Suheil Dawani, the Head of the Diocese and the President of the Board of Trustees, our mission is not only providing medical care and services to patients but also providing the psychological support necessary from the moment of their arrival to our medical facility, and during their treatment by the doctors and nursing staff, until they are discharged.

St. Luke’s is a general hospital of 60 beds that provides general and subspecialty medical and surgical services; intensive care; general and subspecialty outpatient clinics; rehabilitation; obstetrics; and neonatal intensive care.

More stories and information are available at: www.j-diocese.org
Email enquiries to: 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.