Peace to you in the name of the Lord

Greetings from Bishop Suheil Dawani

Dear Friends,

August has been a busy month throughout the Diocese. Summer Camps have been held in Nazareth and Jordan with over 400 youth attending. We have also received visitors from around the world in Jerusalem, and also from Germany and England in Jordan.

For the 5th consecutive year we shared the ‘breaking of the fast', Iftar, with our Muslim brothers at St. George’s Guest House. I also traveled to Jordan to attend their fast breaking meal of Ramadan, held by the king of Jordan, His Majesty King Abdullah Eben Al Hussien.

We celebrated a number of confirmations throughout the Diocese. This is always a special time, when we gather to embrace our children into the faith of Christ through the laying on of hands. It is a time when we all remember that through the Holy Spirit, in the name of Jesus Christ, we find our strength, our comforter, and our peace.

As always I ask that you please continue to pray for the Diocese of Jerusalem and its work. We are making great strides in pastoral care and development and we continue to strengthen our fellowship with local churches and partners from all around the world.

I pray that as you head into the full activity of Autumn, that the Holy Spirit be with you, guide you and grant you the peace that is beyond understanding.

Salaam,

+ Suheil Dawani
Summer Camps in Nazareth and Jordan

Children and youth from Primary, Elementary, and Secondary grades gathered from throughout Israel and Palestine at St. Margaret’s Guest House in Nazareth for Summer Camp. Over 200 youth participated and a good time was had by all. Six young people from The Diocese of Southwell Nottingham came to assist at the first summer camp, adding an International flavour to the week.

In Jordan, 200 youth and children, of all ages, met at Schneller School for Summer Camp, bringing the total of those going to Diocesan Summer Camps to 400.

A visit from Germany to St. John’s Church in Al- Husun – Jordan

The Revd Thomas Cornelius, accompanied by the congregation from the Aoberasngen Church in Germany, visited St. John’s Church in Husun. They were welcomed by the Rev. Canon Fa’eq Haddad, the Rev. Iyad Ajji, and members of the vestry committee.

The guests spent time visiting the City of Madaba, Petra and Wadi Rum. They returned to Al- Husun and stayed in the homes of the St. John’s congregation for three days. During their stay they visited the archaeological sites in Jarash and Oum Qays and were briefed on the condition of the Old Church. They also spent a night in the Schneller guest house.

Rev. Thomas and Rev. Canon Faeq exchanged gifts, and everybody joined the service that Rev. Thomas held in English and Arabic. The Gospel was read by Deacon Gunter Hill.

Muslims and Christians Break Ramadan Fast with Iftar

The Iftar feast at St. George’s Guest House has become a tradition in Jerusalem. On the evening of Thursday, 8 August, Bishop Suheil Dawani welcomed many dignitaries, clergy and friends to the Diocesan Guest House for the fast breaking meal of Iftar. This is the 5th year in which the community has gathered to break fast together. Iftar refers to the evening meal when Muslims break their fast during the Islamic month of Ramadan. Iftar is one of the religious observances of Ramadan and is often done as a community, with people gathering to break their fast together. Iftar is done right after Maghreb (sunset) time.
On behalf of Bishop Suheil Dawani, Dr. Hisham Nassar, Master of Ceremonies for the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and the Middle East’s Fifth Annual Iftar, welcomed Muslim and Christian leaders to St. George’s Guest House. Dr. Nassar acknowledged, with deep respect and appreciation, the presence of Patriarch Theophilos III, Greek Orthodox Patriarch, Bishop Joseph Alzeriei, of the Latin Church, Archbishop Arstakhos of the Roman Orthodox Church, Archbishop Nouran Manoogian, representative for the Armenian Church, Father Antonios Al-Orshalimi of Jerusalem, representative for the Coptic Orthodox Church, Sheik Azzam al-Khatib, Prime Minister Salaam Fayyad, and leaders from the business and social sectors of Palestinian society. He commented on the historical significance of the gathering and its importance not only for interfaith understanding and goodwill but that such events strengthen the whole community.

In his opening remarks, Bishop Suheil Dawani expressed his sincere gratitude to his distinguished guests for their generous acceptance of his invitation to come together in a spirit of friendship and brotherhood to share Iftar during the holy season of Ramadan. He stated that such occasions give concrete expression, ‘to our daily prayer for peace and justice for all people in the Land of the Holy One.’ The bishop’s commitment to peace and justice inspires his efforts to bring together leaders from diverse backgrounds who work for enhancing the common good. The many institutions of the Diocese of Jerusalem, which encompasses five countries, provide education and health care to thousands of people, regardless of race or religion.

Bishop Dawani’s address was followed by Shiek Azzam al-Khatib, the Director of the Islamic Waft. He thanked Bishop Suheil for gathering Muslim and Christian leaders together to share the Muslim Iftar. He stated that the ‘gathering serves as a reminder to the whole world that Christian and Muslim Palestinians live together as brothers.’

The Prime Minister of Palestine Salam Fayyad also thanked Bishop Suheil for bringing together leaders from the political, religious, economic and social sectors of Palestinian society, both Muslim and Christian, to share Iftar, and to celebrate and encourage the longstanding brotherhood and friendship between them. Prime Minister Fayyad said, ‘The experience of our people is one of friendly co-existence, love and mutual respect. Together we celebrate the religious diversity of Palestine, which is our historical legacy, and one which every Palestinian can be proud of.’

The Prime Minister stated that, ‘while our social-political context is not ideal, and there are many challenges before us, together, as Muslims and Christians, we serve the needs of our people, and work for the day when all Palestinians live freely and with dignity.’ The Prime Minister thanked Bishop Suheil and the Diocese of Jerusalem for their determination to preserve the Palestinian fabric of society, especially here in Jerusalem.
The Prime Minister went on to express his concern about the dwindling Christian presence in the Holy Land, which he sees as a dangerous trend. ‘Christianity,’ he said, ‘began here in Palestine, it is the birthplace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and here are to be found its most sacred sites.’ He encouraged Palestinian Christians, who are living in other parts of the world, to return to visit the holiest sites of their faith, located in their homeland of Palestine, and indeed to live here once again.

The Fifth Annual iftar was a major event not only for interfaith understanding and friendship, but also as a sign of religious diversity and peaceful cooperation between Muslim and Christian Palestinians.

**Bishop visited St. Luke’s Hospital in Nablus.**

Bishop Suheil visited St. Luke’s Hospital in Nablus on August 13th. The Bishop was greeted by Dr. Walid Kirri the Hospital’s General Manager, the Staff Committee and some employees.

While visiting the Hospital’s Departments Bishop urged the employees to maintain their leadership role in the area. The Bishop also greeted patients and wished them a full and fast recovery and a very Happy Eid Al Fitter.

On the Bishop’s way home he visited Mr. Gassan Al-Shaqaa to wish him health after his recovery.

**Rev. Dr. Stephen Sizer visits The Episcopal Church of the Redeemer in Jordan**

The Episcopal Church of the Redeemer in Amman hosted the Rev. Dr. Stephen Sizer, renowned author and International speaker on the subject of Zionism. Dr. Sizer has published a number of books and articles discussing Zionism and how it relates to Christianity especially to the International Evangelical community. Rev. Dr. Sizer has been invited to speak all around the world about the biblical understanding of God’s promises and the rise of the modern state of Israel and how that affects Middle Eastern Christians’ perception of the promises and the impact on their faith and everyday lives. He also explores the effects of the current conflict and reality on the local Palestinian population.

Dr. Sizer is the senior pastor at Christ Church in Virginia Waters, England. In addition, he is a member of numerous committees and organizations seeking to achieve peace and justice in the Holy Land.
Summer Camp in the Redeemer Church in Jordan- Amman

The Sunday School Summer Camps at the Redeemer Church ran from the 9th to the 11th of August under the Theme “Let us Pray!” The children ages ranged from 5 to 14 years, divided into 4 groups. 108 children attended the camp.

The program focused on prayer as our means of communicating with God and getting closer to Him. We explored the questions: “Why we pray,” “How we pray,” “What we can pray,” “How God answers prayers,” and “Praying in church together” among others.

The children made lots of theme-related crafts and learnt new hymns to go with the theme. In addition, they participated in games, contests and entertaining sketches and drama. They went home with gifts and prizes. Please pray with us that the seeds being sown will bear many fruits and that the children will grow to know the Lord in a real and personal way!!

Bishop attends Iftar held by the King of Jordan

Bishop Suheil attended the fast breaking meal of Ramadan (Iftar) at the invitation of His Majesty King Abdullah Eben El Hussien, the King of Jordan, for the Jerusalemite Christian and Muslim dignitaries.

King Abdullah Eben El Hussien assured his full support of the Palestinian people, and condemned all attempts in destroying all the Holy Sites and Historical places in the old City of Jerusalem.

The Jerusalemite Christian and Muslim dignitaries expressed their gratitude to His Majesty King Abdullah for the invitation and the ongoing efforts that His Majesty is making to support Palestine. Thanks were also given to the Al-Hashimite Kingdom for the reconstruction and renovation at Al-Aqsa Mosque in the Old City of Jerusalem.

Confirmations in Husun

On Friday, August 17, at the 10:30am service, Bishop Suheil was greeted by Canon Fa’eq Haddad and Deacon Eyad Aji at St. John the Baptist Church, in Husun, to celebrate the Service of Confirmation for 14 children. The church was filled with parents, grandparents and friends of those being confirmed. Bishop Suheil preached on the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, the gift of God which would be granted to the children through the laying on of hands. The Spirit would now dwell in the hearts of those confirmed, ensuring their nearness to God, and strengthening them to bear witness for Christ.
The gift of the Spirit would allow them to successfully live the Christian life and to have the capability to love their neighbour regardless of race, religion, or social status.

The Revd Canon Samir Esaid, and his wife, Sabah, from The Virgin Mary Episcopal Church, Irbid, were present as were The Revd Canon John Organ, Bishop’s Chaplain, and his wife, Irene.

Speaking with one of the children about the meaning of confirmation, he said, ‘Every Sunday from now on I can take Holy Communion.’

**Periodic Pastoral meeting at St. George’s Cathedral**

A periodic Pastoral meeting was held at St. George’s Cathedral on August 20th. Clergy from Israel and Palestine attended the meeting with Bishop Suheil. Theological and pastoral subjects were discussed during the meeting.

The clergy were briefed on the Bishop’s recent domestic and international visits, and the expectation of those recent meetings.

**Sunday School Conference in Husun**

On 21 August, St. John the Baptist, Husun, held a very successful Sunday School Conference. 43 young people, from primary through secondary school, attended. Much fun was had by all as they read bible stories, sang hymns and songs of praise, and participated in activities of sports and coloring.

The Motto for the conference was ‘Love Each Other’ and everyone who came that day was certainly living the love of God.

**Confirmations at St. Paul’s Ashrafieh**

Bishop Suheil held a confirmation service for 8 children at St. Paul’s Anglican Church, in Ashrafieh, Jordan on Friday August 24th at 6pm in the evening. Celebrating with Bishop Suheil was the Revd Canon Fa’eq Haddad and the Very Revd Hosam Naoum, Dean of St. George’s Cathedral, Jerusalem.

The church was filled with family and friends, as everyone came together to celebrate the laying on of hands and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the children. Bishop Suheil preached on the gift of the Holy Spirit and how through the Spirit we are can experience the closeness of God and gain strength to be a witness for Christ.
Church of the Redeemer, Jordan continues Lecture Series

The Episcopal Church of the Redeemer (ECR) lecture series works to raise awareness and answer questions on many basic and controversial issues concerning the life of the church and the Christians in our Middle Eastern context.

ECR initiated a program of monthly lectures in July of 2012. Our first guest was Rev. Dr. Stephen Sizer the Vicar of the Church of Christ in Virginia Water, UK. Rev. Sizer presented three discussions on different aspects of Zionism and how it affects the Christians of our area. He also preached during the Sunday service on the Samaritan and Jesus' perspective on "who our neighbor really is."

On Thursday, the 30th of August, Bishop Suheil Dawani graced us with a detailed talk entitled "The Future of the Church in the Middle East in the Light of Current Regional Developments." Bishop Suheil reviewed the state of the Christian church in the different countries in the Middle East in terms of numbers, demographics and activities.

He added that the Christian presence is manifested in the churches' institutions that provide service to the local people regardless of religious affiliation thus reflecting Christ's love for Humanity. He specifically shed light on the work of our Anglican institutions in the occupied territories.

He emphasized the need to unite the church, and explored ways to care for the youth of the church. He suggested that in order to counter their migration looking for a better and safer future, we need to provide work opportunities and reasonable housing. He also explored ways to strengthen interfaith and intra-church dialogue.

The audience responded by posing questions and offering suggestions on ways to reinforce the presence and the witness of the Church, and to strengthen the youth’s ties to the church, as they are her future.

Finally, Bishop Suheil and the audience rejoiced in our belief that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, is the church's protector and He will not forsake her under any circumstances. Christ Himself said in Mathew 16:18 "I will build my church and the powers of death shall not prevail against it."

The Monthly Lecture program at ECR continues, the last Thursday of each month. On the 27th of September, ECR hosts the Bishop of the Catholic Church in Jordan, Bishop Maroun Lahham, who will reflect on "The role of the Laity in the Ministry of the Church."
A Visit to the Home for Elderly People

On Thursday, August 30th, while in Amman, Bishop Suheil visited a local Home for the Elderly. Accompanied by Fr. Fadi Diab, Deacon Fursan Zumot, of the Redeemer Church in Amman, and the Very Revd Hosam Naoum, Dean of St. George’s Cathedral, Jerusalem, Bishop Suheil dropped by to give his greetings and blessings.

Bishop Suheil’s Team is now in place

With the arrival of his new Chaplain, The Revd Canon John Organ, Bishop Suheil is proud to introduce his complete Diocesan team. The Bishop’s team consists of The Very Revd Hosam Naoum, Dean of St. George’s Cathedral, installed this past May; The Very Revd Dr. Graham Smith, Dean of St. George’s College, who arrived this time last year from the United States; and the newly installed Canon John Organ, from Canada.

Bishop Suheil says that he is excited about the prospect of working with these fine clergymen and looks forward to the future as they work together in developing and growing the vision of the Diocese.

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.