Peace to you in the name of the Lord

Greetings from Bishop Suheil Dawani

Dear Friends,

The theme for this year’s graduations is ‘Humanity’. The graduation season runs through May and June. It is the time in the life of the graduating students when the years of nurturing and growing in education and maturity have brought them to this point in their lives when they are ready to leave their schools and be sent out into the world. It is an exciting and special occasion as the students are now prepared to move on to the next stage of their education and lives. I have had the pleasure to attend all of the graduation ceremonies in the Diocese of Jerusalem. The institutions of our Diocese provide equal opportunity to all students to learn skills necessary to be self-supporting and contributing members of society. Our institutions serve the greater needs of our people by living and teaching mutual respect, cooperation, and peacemaking.

However, amidst the joy of celebrations, we continue to deal with the ever present situation here in the Land of the Holy One. Our hospital in Gaza is facing a major crisis as funding has been drastically cut. We pray that this situation will rectify itself and in the meantime, Al-Ahli Hospital continues to be the Light of Christ serving the community without regard to race, religion or financial means. Your prayers are greatly appreciated as we work together toward upholding our brothers and sisters in Christ, as they struggle through this time.

I attended the Christian - Muslim Peace Summit in Beirut, where many religious leaders from around the Middle East gathered. The Theme of the summit was – “Building Justice and Peace in a Violent, Changing World”. All our prayers continue for peace and reconciliation everywhere.

As always, St. George’s continues to greet visitors and welcome pilgrims from around the globe. Our doors are always open and we look forward to your visit.

Salaam,

+ Suheil Dawani
Evangelical School – Ramallah

Bishop Suheil attended the graduation ceremony of the nineteenth regiment of high school students from the Arab Evangelical Episcopal School in Ramallah. The graduation took place at The Ramallah Cultural Palace on May 26th.

Also in attendance were Iyad Rafidi, Director of the School, Giovanni Anbar, Director of the Technical School, Fuad Abu Al-Thabet, Deputy Technical Director of Education to Ramallah and Al Bireh, and also a number of public figures, including Dr. Naim Abu Hommos, Secretary General of the Council of Ministers; Mr. Ribhi Khankgy, the Governor of Qalqilya; Mr. Hamdan Al-Barghouti, Deputy Governor of Ramallah and Al Bireh, Ms. Janet Michael, Mayor of Ramallah, and Dr. Hanna Issa, the Secretary-General of the Islamic-Christian support of Jerusalem and holy sites.

Bishop Suheil addressed the students stressing "human brotherhood", human dignity and listening to the other which gives us insight and openness. The Bishop wished the students well and blessed them as they move forward into their future.

Theodore Schneller Schools (TSS) – Amman

Bishop Suheil and Fr. Khaled Freij from Savior Church in Zarka, attended the annual graduation of students from the Theodore Schneller School, Amman, which took place in the morning of May 29. The event was marked by speeches from various dignitaries present as well as the Headmaster of the School, Dr Ghazi Musharbash, and Dr. Salah Jarar, Minister of Education.

Bishop Suheil congratulated the students and staff on their achievements before presenting each graduating student with a certificate to mark the occasion.

For the third year in a row, the graduating students were given suits as a gift from Mrs. Shafeeqa Dawani and the Women of the Diocese of Jerusalem.

Bishop Suheil Dawani also attended the TSS 44th Vocational Graduation ceremony on May 29th. It was under the patronage of Dr. Jarar. Many officials from Russeifa district and parents of graduates attended the function. Eight students graduated from carpentry; five in blacksmithing; and eleven in car mechanics.

Speeches by Bishop Suheil; MP Ghazi Musharbash and one student expressed the mission of TSS very well. This 44th graduation would not have happened without the generosity of our partners. Many thanks to all and to the vocational training team and all TSS staff members. Last but not least, great thanks to the Board Members.
Saviour School – Zarka

The graduation ceremonies for the kindergarten and the senior class took place at the Saviour School, Zarka in the afternoon May 29. Bishop Suheil Dawani was in attendance at the ceremonies with the Headmistress of the school, Mrs Du’aa Bisharat and the Revd Dr. Khalid Freij, Priest of Saviour Church, Zarka. Assembled guests and parents were entertained with traditional singing and dancing from the kindergarten children. Staff and students were congratulated on their success and all were awarded certificates to mark their achievements.

Ahliyyah & Bishop Schools – Amman

Bishop Suheil attended the annual graduation ceremony for the Bishops School for Boys and Ahliyyah School for Girls which took place on May 30th. The Headmistress of both schools, Mrs Haifa Najjar, HRH Princess Basma Bint Talal, a former pupil of the school, The Revd Hanna Mansour, and Fr. Fadi Diab from Redeemer Church were also present. Speeches were given and Bishop Suheil addressed the students, wishing them well and blessing their future endeavors.

Arab Evangelical School – Irbid

Bishop Suheil attended the annual end of year celebrations at the Arab Episcopal School in Irbid, Jordan on May 31st. Headmistress, Mrs Sabah Zurikat, School Administrator, the Rev Canon Samir Esaid, the Governor of Irbid, Mr. Ghaleb, and the Canadian Ambassador Mark Gwozdecky were also in attendance.

Guests were entertained with superb dance and drama performances from the students
St. George’s (Bishop’s) School - Jerusalem

Bishop Suheil Dawani attended the Graduation Ceremony of St. George’s School on June 1st along with a number of dignitaries from Jerusalem, including Sheikh Ekrema Sabri, Chairman of the Supreme Islamic Council in Jerusalem, and Bishop Atallah Hanna, the Archbishop of Sebastia and School Board Bishop, and the Committee on the National Forces in Jerusalem, along with many parents.

The ceremony began with a procession of graduates, led by Bishop Suheil Dawani, and accompanied by the pipes and drums of the Orthodox Arab scouts club, after which prayers were offered by the Very Revd Hosam Naoum.

Bishop Suheil congratulated the graduates saying: “Blessed are you and your parents and the school.” St. George’s Alumni Association gave the good news that next year they will provide three scholarships grants for grade XII students excelling in their studies. Refreshments and desserts were served in an atmosphere of joy and happiness.

St. George’s (Bishop’s) School Kindergarten - Jerusalem

Bishop Suheil Dawani attended the colorful and distinctive celebration for the Kindergarten graduation ceremony of St. George’s School in Jerusalem, on the morning of Saturday, June 2. Also present were The Very Revd Hosam Naoum, Dean of St. George’s Cathedral, Mr. Eid Sader, Principal of St. George’s School, Mrs. Rula Mickel, the Director of the Kindergarten, faculty and parents.

Mrs. Rula Mickel welcomed everyone and confirmed the importance of the prominent role of parents in education and the need to support all children on their journeys, and at different developmental levels. The children performed a number of distinctive songs, dances and sketches that showed the importance of upholding our heritage and our nation, and the necessity of obedience to parents and to follow their advice.

Mrs. Mickel also thanked the kindergarten staff and the school administration for their great support of the kindergarten. She also congratulated the mothers and fathers of the children who graduated.
Princess Basma Centre – Jerusalem

Bishop Suheil attended the third graduation of Tawjili class students from the Princess Basma School on June 2nd. The Basma School honored the achievements of students and their supportive families.

The Princess Basma School is a place where, in a spirit of mutual respect, Christians and Muslims, boys and girls, study together, living the promise of a future in Jerusalem where all people are created equal.

Bishop Dawani gave the graduation speech and brought greetings from Princess Basma of Jordan who was not able to attend the ceremony in Jerusalem. Mrs. Shafeeqa Dawani and Dr. Hisham Nassar were also in attendance to celebrate the occasion.

Many thanks are extended to Mrs. Betty Majaj, visionary and director, Bishop Dawani, the Diocese of Jerusalem, the school staff, the students and their families, and international supporters who have helped to make these dreams come true.

Bishop Frank O. July from Germany visits St. George’s

Bishop Suheil invited Bishop Frank O. July from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg, Germany and his delegation to the St. George’s Guest House for dinner on Friday, June 1st. Bishop July and his wife, Edeltraud, have been visiting Jerusalem with Klaus Rieth (Executive Secretary for Missions, Ecumenical Relations and Church Development Services), Prof. Dr. Ulrich Heckel (Head of Department: Theology and the Worldwide Church), Marcus Mockler (journalist) and Oliver Hoesch (press officer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Wurttemberg).

Bishop July recently saw Bishop Suheil in Germany for the LAND Mission Festival in May this year.
Bishop Suffragan Gayle Harris visits St. George’s

Bishop Suffragan Gayle Harris, from the Diocese of Massachusetts, visited Bishop Suheil at the St. George’s Pilgrim Guest House for dinner on Monday, June 4th. Also present for the evening were The Very Revd Hosam Naoum, Dean of St. George’s Cathedral and the Revd Canon John Peterson, Director of the Center for Global Justice and Reconciliation, at Washington’s National Cathedral, USA. After dinner, Bishop Gayle presented Bishop Suheil with a generous gift for the Diocese of Jerusalem.

Bishop Gayle was here on pilgrimage in the Holy Land with 20 pilgrims from the United States. They began their visit in Jerusalem and then traveled north to the Galilee to continue their visitations to various holy sites.

Arab Congregation Celebrates their New Dean

The Arabic congregation of St. George’s Cathedral gathered on the afternoon of June 7th to congratulate The Very Revd Hosam Naoum on his installation as Dean to the cathedral. Mr. Hathem and Mrs. Faten Sai’adeh said a few kind words and presented a beautiful crystal set as a gift from the congregation. Everyone brought something to eat and the delicious food was enjoyed by all. Bishop Suheil and Shafeeqa Dawani and the Revd Canon John Peterson (past Dean of St. George’s College) attended. Bishop Suheil also gave his good wishes to the new Dean.

Pastorate Committee Workshop in Amman, Jordan

Bishop Suheil met with the Pastorate Committees and clergy at a workshop in Amman, Jordan on June 8th. The focus of the workshop was ‘The Role of the Pastorate Committee (Vestry) in Church Ministry’.

The three main speakers for the Workshop were Bishop Suheil Dawani, who spoke to the clergy about ministry to the laity and the ordained, and led a Bible Study to focus on this topic. Archdeacon Luay Haddad went over the Constitution and Regulations of the Diocese focusing on particularly on Pastorate Committees. And Mr. Haleem Bashlawi discussed the financial responsibilities of the Pastorate Committees and the proper accounting procedures.

The meeting was followed by lunch and fellowship.

Following the Pastorate Committee Workshop, Bishop Suheil spoke to the Standing Committee discussing the current crisis in Gaza.
Visitors to St. George's Cathedral

The Cathedral of St. George’s welcomed The Rt. Rev. Dr. Edward J. Konieczny from the Diocese of Oklahoma, USA and his group of pilgrims on Sunday morning, June 10th. Everyone enjoyed coffee in the Guest House garden after service and then joined with Bishop Suheil in the Bishop’s Reception Hall for a discussion on the institutions of the Diocese of Jerusalem.

We also welcomed Bishop Philip Huggins and his family, who were visiting the Holy Land. Bishop Huggins is from the Northern and Western Region, Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, Australia.

Bishop Suheil received a visit from Bishop Vedanayagam Devasahayam, Bishop in Madras in South India on June 11th. Bishop Suheil was presented with a beautiful shawl and prayer rope that is traditionally given, in India, to honour someone. The bishops met to discuss future pilgrimages from the Diocese of Madras.

Bishop Suheil visits Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza

Bishop Suheil Dawani, accompanied by the medical coordinator for the Diocese of Jerusalem, Dr. Hisham Nassar and the Chief Accountant for the Diocese; Mr. Haleem Bashlawi visited the Al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza on Wednesday, June 13th. The delegation met with Suhaila Tarazi, Director of the Hospital and other members of the Board of Directors and staff. They discussed the financial difficulties facing the hospital after the recent UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) decision to reduce emergency funding to Gaza and the withdrawal of funding from the hospital.
Al Ahli Hospital has been managed by the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and the Middle East since 1982. It provides primary and emergency care to the people in Gaza, and does so without proselytizing or discriminating on the basis of religion, ethnicity, politics, or social identification. It is the only facility of its sort in the Gaza Strip that is able to provide care without any outside interference or political calculation.

The Diocese of Jerusalem will continue to financially support Al-Ahli Hosp that serves the people of Gaza who live under very difficult circumstances.

Bishop Suheil and the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Jerusalem have set aside Sunday June 24th to be dedicated to the Al-Ahli Hospital. All collections and prayers from all the churches of the Diocese of Jerusalem will be given the Al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza.

**Pastorate Committee Meeting in Ramallah**

Bishop Suheil met with the Pastorate Committees and clergy from parishes in Palestine and Israel at St. Andrew’s in Ramallah on June 15th. The focus of the workshop was ‘The Role of the Pastorate Committee (Vestry) in Church Ministry’.

The three main speakers for the Workshop were Bishop Suheil Dawani, who spoke to the clergy about ministry to the laity and the ordained, and the Bishop also led a Bible Study to focus on this topic. The Very Revd Hosam Naoum discussed the Constitution and Regulations of the Diocese focusing on particularly on administration and Pastorate Committees, and Mr. Haleem Bashlawi discussed the financial responsibilities and proper accounting procedures of the Pastorate Committees.

The presentations and discussions were followed by lunch and fellowship.

**Sunday Visitors to St. George’s Cathedral**

St. George’s Cathedral was blessed to have a number of visitors this past Sunday, June 17th. At 9:30am Bishop Michael Lewis, from the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, con-celebrated with Bishop Suheil Dawani.

Also visiting St. George’s was a group from St. Francis Seminary, Brisbane, Australia, two groups from the United Kingdom, and the course members from St. George’s College.
Annual Summer Camp in Nablus

The annual summer camp in the Episcopal Church of St. Philip in the Old City of Nablus was Approximately 140 children and young people, and 20 leaders, participated, amid the joyous atmosphere. This was a very positive experience for all participants.

The camp, which lasts 6 days, holds various events and recreational, cultural, creative and artistic programs. Also included are spiritual and religious teachings, readings from the Bible, and hymns and prayers.

Camp ends on Saturday with a collective journey for all participants and their families, to spend a day in the embrace of the Palestinian countryside. Everyone will go by bus to Jeffna, a village near Ramallah, where they will enjoy swimming in the pool there.

Through the help and support of St. Philips Church in the Old City of Nablus, the summer camp at has been held annually for more than 50 years. Many thanks go to the Revd Ibrahim Nairouz and his helpers for making this summer camp available to the community.

Graduations continue - Episcopal Vocational Training Program Graduation - Ramallah

The Episcopal Vocational Training Program celebrated its second Episcopal Vocational Training graduation cycle of Nutritional Sciences II.

Bishop Suheil Dawani was represented by The Very Revd Hosam Naoum, Dean of St. George’s Cathedral, and also attending the graduation were a number of members of the Board of Directors, representatives from the Ministry of Interior, the security agencies and representatives from Foundation Dyn Corp International U.S. Also coming out in support for the graduates were a group of Palestinian security officers who had recently graduated themselves from a specialized course in the science of nutrition three months ago.

Director Giovanni Anbar, welcomed the attendees and gave a presentation on the course content. Also speaking to those in attendance were the representative of the Ministry of Interior Brigadier General Joseph Helou, Deputy Head of Training, Brigadier General Samih Akhlawi, and Vice Chairman of the Commission; the representative of the Dyn Corp International U.S., Mr. James Kuliran and Capt. Imad Issa.

Dean Hosam Naoum addressed the graduates and their families, giving them congratulations on a fine achievement and then helped to distributed the certificates to the graduates.
Update on St. Peter’s Home for the Elderly, Birzeit

Construction has begun again on St Peter’s Elderly Home in Birzeit. Since the re-issuing of the building license, earlier this year, everything is proceeding well.

The Diocesan Property Manager, Mr. Amin Abu Hanna, and Diocesan Chief Accountant, Mr. Haleem Bashlawi, visited the site on June 19th and reported that the bottom floor is nearly finished and the first floor is well underway.

Plans are proceeding to finish the first floor ceiling and add the second floor in due course.

Second Christian-Muslim Peace Summit in Beirut - June 18-21

Sheik Malek Al Shaar, Mufti of Tripoli and North Lebanon hosted the Second Christian-Muslim Peace Summit which was held in Beirut on June 18 – 20.

The theme of the 2012 Summit was “Building Justice and Peace in a Violent, Changing World,”

The Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem, a former Episcopal bishop of Washington and four Iranian Shi’ite Muslims, two holding the rank of ayatollah, are among the religious leaders who’ve traveled to Beirut, Lebanon, for the Second Christian-Muslim peace summit organized by the Washington National Cathedral.

The three-day conference, which opened June 18, took place against a regional backdrop that includes the conflict spilling into Lebanon from nearby Syria, the chaotic Egyptian elections, the threat of nuclear strikes between Israel and Iran, and following the 45th anniversary of the 1967 war that ended in the occupation of the Palestinian Territories.

The international peace summits – two more are planned – were organized at Washington National Cathedral by the Rt. Rev. John B. Chane, 8th bishop of Washington, D.C., and the Rev. Canon John L. Peterson, director of the cathedral’s Center for Global Justice and Reconciliation.
The Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem Suheil Dawani, leader of 30 parishes and more than 30 social service institutions throughout Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, the Palestinian Territories, and Israel reminded the group of the crucial importance of “strengthening the Christian presence in the Middle East and the Holy Land in particular.” Sounding the summit’s theme of interdependency, he noted that the presence of Christians in the Holy Land “will not be improved without widespread support of Christians worldwide and our Muslim and Jewish friends and neighbours.”

(Article taken in part from the Episcopal News Service by Eileen White Reed)

Pastorate Committee at All Saints in Beirut

Bishop Suheil was able to take timeout of his busy schedule at the Christian – Muslim Peace summit to meet with the Pastorate Committee at All Saints Church in Beirut, Lebanon on June 19th. Bishop Suheil discussed the role of the Pastorate Committee in Church Ministry. The Bishop also discussed various topics of importance to the church and to the Diocese of Jerusalem (which includes Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Israel and Palestine).

Bishop visits St. Luke’s Center for Special Needs in Beirut

Bishop Suheil, the Mufti of Lebanon, Sheikh Malek Al Shaar, and The Revd Canon John Peterson, went to visit one of the institutions of the Anglican Archbishop on June 21st. St. Luke’s Center for Special Needs is in Beit Mery, Beirut. The young people entertained the visitors with songs and skits. A lovely array of sweets and goodies were offered to all.
Youth Leaders Training Conference - Zababdeh

"By this my father glorified, that bears much fruit come, you shall my disciples (John - 15:8)"

(Spiritual slogan for the Youth Leaders Conference)

The Church of St. Matthew’s, Zababdeh hosted the Episcopal Training Conference for youth leaders June 22-23, in preparation for the Metropolitan Summer conferences which will be held 30 July to 17 August.

The purpose of this meeting was to train the leaders who will assist the clergy at the summer conferences. Youth from the following parishes participated in this session: Shefa’am, Nazareth, Reineh, Ramleh, Nablus and Zababdeh. This meeting was led by Revd Nael Abu Rahmoun, of the Church of St. Matthew, Zababdeh, Revd Fuad Dagher, of the Church of St. Paul in Shefa’am, and the Revd Canon Samuel Fanous, of Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Ramleh.

Events included spiritual fellowship and Bible study. The Group also broke into small teams to prepare the materials and questions for the panel discussions on lessons and leadership.

The presence of Jesus Christ was felt by all the participants as they prayed, praised, sang songs and worshipped together. They are looking forward with hope to meeting together again at the conference which will be held at the Anglican Guest House of St. Margaret’s in Nazareth.

St. George's hosts the EAPPI Handover Service

The Very Revd Hosam Naoum, Dean of St. George’s Cathedral, and Representatives from the Church of Scotland and the Lutheran Church, welcomed the EAPPI teams to the Cathedral for their Handover Ceremony on June 28th. The Ecumenical Accompaniment Program for Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) is a program belonging to the World Council of Churches. During their three month stay, participants observe various situations and stand as an international presence throughout Palestine and Israel.

Dean Hosam Naoum said prayers and gave blessings to the outgoing team as they return to their respective homelands to continue their work for peace, justice, and reconciliation.

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