



FRIENDS OF THE HOLY LAND

Strengthening our Anglican links

When Friends of the Holy Land was founded in November 2009, our roots were in the Catholic Church of England and Wales. Now we have Patrons and many loyal Friends in the Anglican Church, and an important new project with the Diocese of Jerusalem supported by the Diocese of Norwich.

At the Church of England's General Synod in 2011, Archbishop Rowan Williams, one of our Patrons, launched his Appeal for Christians in the Holy Land, and asked FHL to be custodians of the Fund. At Archbishop Rowan's request we gave this to the Anglican Diocese in Jerusalem, who used it for equipment at the new Arab Episcopal Medical Centre for Diabetes and Cardiovascular Diseases in Ramallah.



Our close relationship with Archbishop Suheil Dawani (above, with Peter Rand) and the Jerusalem Diocese has now grown closer still, with FHL offering to cover the fees for Christian patients who need medical care at the Ramallah Centre but can't afford the fees. We're very grateful that the Bishop of Norwich, Rt Revd Graham James, agreed to a Lenten Appeal in the Diocese to fund medical fees for up to 200 Christian patients a year for three years. The total cost will be about £35,000.

'As well as our main work with Christians in the Holy Land, FHL has found an important ecumenical role, working with Anglican and Catholic churches here and in the Holy Land' said Peter. 'I've always been proud of this aspect of our work, and I know it's greatly valued by our principle Patrons, Cardinal Vincent Nichols and Archbishop Justin Welby, and by many of our Friends.'

There's more in this issue about FHL's work with the Diocese of Jerusalem.

Our Friends have told us how well the new FHL film tells the story of the Christians of the Holy Land and the difficulties they face. It's an excellent way to introduce FHL to people new to us and inform our Friends on the situation. Make sure you have a copy of the free DVD. Email friendsoftheholylan@btconnect.com, or click on 'Resources' in the FHL website, www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk

FHL's Objectives

- to raise awareness of the challenges facing the Christians of the Holy Land
- to encourage prayers for their intentions
- to generate financial resources to give them a sustainable future
- to encourage visits to the Holy Land to meet local Christians

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**£20 a month
with Gift-Aid
you can sponsor a
child's education.**

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Chairman's message

Spring is the season of Easter and Pentecost, the focus of FHL's being as a charity, the life, death and resurrection of Our Lord and the founding of our Church by the coming of the Holy Spirit. It's also the time of annual rebirth for two of our groups of Friends.

The Catenian Association hold their Annual Conference in mid May, and the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem hold one of their Investitures of new members at or around Pentecost.

I mention them both as, with our respective wives, Peter Rand and I attended the Catenian Conference and provided a display of our works on Ascension Day. Anne and I put on the same display at the KHS Investiture at St Georges Cathedral, Southwark, on Pentecost.



That weekend the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Grand Prior of the Order (left), was present. We made a presentation to him, to explain our steady development since he launched FHL in November 2009 and to outline our plans for Friends of the Holy Land in the light of our continued growth.

The Knights of the Holy Sepulchre and the Catenian Association are of great importance to FHL, as it's from these two longstanding associations, the first going back to 1109 and the second to 1908, that we draw so much of our Catholic volunteer help.

Our founders and original trustees were all members of KHS, and Dr Michael Whelan, our lay Founder, was at the time Lieutenant of the Order in England and Wales. The mission of the Order worldwide is to provide for the needs of the Latin Patriarchate and to fund major projects of building and refurbishment of churches, schools and universities in the Holy Land. The mission of FHL is to provide for the social care needs of Christians and their families in the Holy Land. These two missions fit each other, hand in glove.

The Catenian Association is filled with men hoping for the gifts of the Holy Spirit and practising His fruits. They and their wives therefore make devoted helpers in our mission, and can be found in every part of our organisation.

At the Investiture it was wonderful to see the Patriarch concelebrating with Peter Smith, Archbishop of Southwark, in the presence of one of our Anglican Patrons, Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, Bishop of Southwark, an uplifting Mass of praise on Pentecost Sabbath.

Meeting such convivial and loving groups of like-minded Christians underlines the message of Easter and Pentecost and the importance of our mission. May we continue to work lovingly with our Christian partners in this work in the Holy Land to provide a sustainable future for our brothers and sisters living in the land of Our Lord.

What a year!

As we ended the last financial year we were overjoyed to see that FHL had met the highly ambitious target we'd set in our five-year plan, for our income to grow at the same 35% a year that we'd managed in our first five years. The total for the year is just short of £600,000.

That's all thanks to you, our loyal and devoted friends, for the hard work you do telling the story of the Christians of the Holy Land, persuading others to help them and raising money yourselves. We are eternally grateful to every one of you.

With the Middle East still a tense place, it won't surprise you to read that the needs of our Christian brothers and sister in the Holy Land have increased, too, so we've accepted a similar challenge for 2015/16. That's a further growth of 35%. It will be hard, of course, but as anyone knows who's been there, or even seen our outstanding DVD, our help is badly needed and greatly valued. That is enough to spur us on, and we know you'll join us in this essential work.

I wish you every blessing, and thank you again for all you've done and will do as a Friend of the Holy Land.

Church of England Synod

Once again we're very pleased to be going to Synod, on 10th - 14th July. We look forward to welcoming Synod members to our stand in the Exhibition Centre at York University and to our Fringe Meeting, chaired by FHL Patron Bishop Christopher Chessun, at 1pm on Saturday 11th July, in Room P/X001. Please come and meet us, and hear more about FHL's work with Christians in the Holy Land.

Jim Quinn

FHL in the UK

From the FHL office

FHL office volunteers have been keeping in touch with our Friends and supporting fund-raising efforts around the country. Well done, all of you! Here are just a few -

Elliot Wright, a Seminarian at the Venerable English College, Rome, raised over £1,700 completing the Rome Marathon in under 3 hours 30 minutes, and Janice Westmorland and Kate Wills, from the Chesterfield and Holmewood Group, raised over £580 by completing a sponsored walk around the Five Peaks Trail.

Rebecca Budd hiked an 800-mile route around the Japanese island of Shikoku. As Rebecca told us before her incredible journey, 'I hope my walk will help alleviate the plight of Christians living in the West Bank, for whom such travel is a luxury that can't be taken for granted.' Rebecca raised £728.

The parishes of Southwark and Arundel & Brighton Dioceses raised a tremendous £33,000 through their Christmas Crib collections. Croydon Catholic Deanery and individual parishioners, led by the enthusiasm of Rosita Thomas and Canon Joseph Collins, have so far raised a magnificent £16,605 towards the Beit Sahour Housing Project.

FHL Kensington had a Bollywood Night and raised over £3,000. Their annual Summer Garden Party will be on 19th June at Our Lady of Victories Church.

If you are going to the Arundel and Brighton 50th Anniversary Celebration at the Amex Stadium in Brighton on 5th July, look out for the Friends of the Holy Land stall. Learn more about the plight of the Christians in the Holy Land, and support them by buying olive wood items. Lindy, Mo, Michelle and Hasmik will be there to help you.

Pat Revans has been speaking at many parishes in the Shrewsbury Diocese, and John Scanlan and his team continue their work in the Westminster Diocese. Our warm thanks go to all the FHL Ambassadors and Diocesan Co-ordinators working so hard to tell FHL's story of the Christians in the Holy Land. We really appreciate their dedication and enthusiasm.

If you are planning a sponsored event we can send you a supply of FHL sponsorship forms. The BT MyDonate web-site can process all your on-line sponsorship payments - see www.bt.com/mydonate.

Let us know well in advance if we can help with your fund-raising efforts - we'll publicise it in FHL monthly updates and send you publicity material.

Regional Directors - refining our structure to support our growth

You will have read in our Chairman's Message of our plans for FHL to grow at a consistent 35% a year. Within a few years this projection will take our income from £600,000 to £2million, though that will only be possible if the optimum structure is in place.

Currently individual donors, charitable trusts and groups, including parishes, deaneries and dioceses, FHL Ambassadors and Diocesan Co-ordinators all engage with FHL centrally, through our two employees (one part-time) and volunteers on the Management Committee and in the office.

With the number of supporters growing so fast, and to create a more substantial structure to manage future growth, the Trustees and Management Committee have agreed to adopt a regional model, to ensure more frequent communication with our Friends in the UK.

An essential ingredient in the new structure must be a 'low cost' approach, one that ensures that the maximum amount of your donations continues to reach the beneficiaries, and isn't absorbed in overheads. Our focus, then, is on seeking enthusiastic, organised and committed volunteers to fill 12 lay Regional Director roles. They will each have responsibility for supporting FHL's Ambassadors, Diocesan Co-ordinators and our many Friends in, typically, two Catholic and four Anglican Dioceses across England, Wales and Scotland.

They will have the pleasure of working with others in a very worthwhile cause, taking responsibility for delivering FHL's ecumenical and non-political message and mission in a defined area of the country where they live. Advertisements in Church Times, Catholic Herald and Catena produced healthy interest, but there is never a limit to the number of volunteers.

Could you do this? Or do you know someone who can? If so, please contact our Office Manager, Karen Baxter. Email karen.baxter@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk

Fund Raising

If you have any fund-raising ideas you'd like to share with our supporters please email them to the office, www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk

FHL in the Holy Land

Vicki Urch visits FHL's families in the Holy Land

Soon after she started working with Friends of the Holy Land as Director of Development, Vicki Urch went to the Holy Land on a busy familiarisation visit. Back at home Vicki wrote this for the Newsletter.

'I'd been looking forward to meeting some of the families FHL supports, and I'd like to tell you about two of these. We began by meeting George, who receives support from FHL for treatment of a medical condition requiring regular dialysis. Because of his illness George is unable to work and the family are very poor, though his family was extremely welcoming and quick to offer drinks. Their house was extremely cold; Bethlehem was colder than the UK in January, and the family had one very small heater.

George told us he's doing ok but that he needs another operation. The medication he had been prescribed isn't always available, and he often has to buy an alternative that's less effective but more costly than his prescribed drug. His family also told us that sometimes they're unable to get to appointments because of travel restrictions. The family bear all their difficulties with enormous dignity; the support they receive through FHL, in this case from a specific parish group, is crucial.



We next met two children whose school fees are paid by FHL, supported by an individual sponsor in the UK. One of them has a commitment from her donor to support her throughout her education, a period of at least 5 years. Again the house was very cold, but the children's father welcomed us, offered drinks and showed us around their home. He told us he's extremely grateful for the support his children receive from FHL, as a good education means that they'll

have more opportunities to find work when they are older. With gift aid, school fees cost just £20 a month for each child, with the families still making a small contribution themselves.



Other families that we met receive family support from FHL, a monthly allowance of £90 a month that goes to the neediest families until they no longer need our support. Despite increasing the number of families we support year-on-year, there is still a waiting list of those that need our help.

I was very humbled by my visits. The Christian families we met bear the difficulties of their daily lives with stoicism. They were extremely generous, dignified and grateful for the help they get from FHL. They all thanked us for visiting, and said how important it was for people to come and show their support to Christians in the Holy Land. I certainly hope to visit again soon. In the meantime I'll do everything I can to increase the funds FHL receives so that we can help all those families, children and individuals in need who are still on our waiting lists.'

Peter Rand adds 'FHL's support process starts with the two FHL staff from our Bethlehem office, Reem and Nancy (far left and far right, above), who visit everyone referred to them, assessing their needs and making recommendations to the FHL Holy Land Committee. The Committee then refers selected family cases to the UK Management Committee for a decision. Because of our simple management structure FHL can make essential decisions and send emergency payments within 24 hours, though most referrals come before the Committee's regular meetings for discussion and a decision. It's all part of our mission to help and support the Christian people of the Holy Land, and to do this in the most effective, direct way possible.'

FHL in the Holy Land

Norwich Diocese supports essential health-care project

Peter Rand, FHL's Vice Chairman, has just returned from another of his short and frenetic weeks in the Holy Land, this time visiting several projects run by the Anglican Diocese of Jerusalem and a meeting with Archbishop Suheil Dawani.

'I'm very pleased that FHL's work to support the most needy Christians in the Holy Land now includes a three-year programme to help up to 200 Christian patients a year at the Arab Episcopal Medical Centre in Ramallah, a very good clinic managed by the Diocese of Jerusalem', said Peter Rand.



This programme has been adopted by the caring and generous parishioners of the Diocese of Norwich, who have taken on the project to fund essential medical care in Ramallah. Their 2015 Lent Appeal has already raised £20,000, a brilliant start to this vital work, and we're very grateful to them.

The Bishop of Norwich writes 'I am very pleased that the Norwich Diocesan Lent Appeal has raised £20,000 to help our brothers and sisters in the Holy Land. Some of the curates I took on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land earlier this year have been much involved with the appeal, and we see this as the start of a deeper partnership with FHL to increase awareness and provide practical support as well as prayer to Christians in the land of Christ's birth.'

Christians already suffer the pressures of living as a tiny minority, and with unemployment in the West Bank at 25-30% many people can't cover the cost of their medical care. Now the project is in place, more

needy Christian patients will receive a high level of medical care, their health will improve, and we envisage that the emigration of Christians will decline, as families are encouraged to stay in their home country. Although the direct beneficiaries of the three-year project will be the 600 Christian patients of the Centre whose costs will be met by the programme, staff of the Centre will benefit from the increased financial security of the project.

FHL's dental health project

With the encouragement of several knowledgeable Friends, FHL has long wanted to help with the dental health of Christian children in the Holy Land, and this important project is now off the ground.



Early in May Dr Shukri and Dr Christine, two local dental practitioners, went to the Latin Patriarchate School at Beit Jala to instruct the children in oral hygiene and to inspect the teeth of the children. FHL supplied a sterile oral examination kit for each child, and a pack of toothbrushes and toothpaste.

This project will continue for the rest of the year, reaching 720 children at Beit Jala, with those that need it receiving appropriate treatment. We hope to extend this project to other Christian schools as soon as funds are available.



FHL in the Holy Land

Fun in the Sun?

Vicki Urch, FHL's Director of Development, writes;

'As we move into the summer months we start to focus our plans on our holidays. Where will we go? Who will we go with? For those of us with children and grandchildren how we will keep them occupied during the summer break? It can be an expensive time, with holiday clubs, day trips and, if we are lucky, a holiday, and then school uniform, all to be paid for in those summer months.

Thinking about these for my own family made me wonder what happens to families in the Holy Land during this time. Like us, parents and grandparents there worry about keeping their children safely occupied during the summer months, and families that are already struggling find this a really difficult time of the year. So I wondered what FHL can do to help out.

The Aboud Parish will again run a children's Summer School in July this year. It will reach around 200 children, and will be run with 50 volunteers. Many of the volunteers are young people (below) who will themselves benefit from the experience they gain during the summer.



The Summer School works with children from 4 to 17, and as well as swimming, art, music and sport, they provide meals to all participants, volunteers and even family members on several occasions throughout the month, and each day begins and ends with prayers. As the largest single donor Friends of the Holy Land will fund the Summer Camp with a donation of £5,800, over a third of the total cost. With your support we hope that these children will continue to have some of the experiences our own children and grandchildren enjoy.'

Education, education

Our Friends will know that improving the education of Christian children in the West Bank and Gaza is prominent in FHL's objectives and a very important part of our work in the Holy Land. While in Palestine in May, Peter Rand discussed education with Archbishop Suheil Dawani and Iyad Rafidi, Director of the Arab Evangelical Episcopal School in Ramallah, run by the Jerusalem Diocese. FHL has agreed to support student fees at this excellent Christian school in the next academic year.



FHL continues to support the School of Joy, a very caring school for children with special educational needs, as we have since the charity was founded. We have also agreed to support the Hope School in Bethlehem, another school for children aged from 5 to 14 with special needs. We have recently funded the refurbishment of the kindergarden school-room.



Hope School has a vocational emphasis, and Peter was surprised and impressed to find a thriving egg-production business as part of the curriculum.

FHL in the Holy Land

FHL's vocational training and employment projects

Another of FHL's objectives is the improvement of employment opportunities for Christians in the Holy Land, essential if we are to reach our objective of securing a stable and secure future for them. This also complements our work to improve education in the region.



While in the Holy Land in May Peter Rand met Fr Daniel Basali, Director of the Don Bosco Salesian Institution in Bethlehem (above, with Holy Land Committee member Husam Wahhab) and saw their workshops and training areas for himself.

This is a well-equipped and successful Technical School and Vocational Training Centre offering twelve relevant technical courses, each running for nine months, starting in September. Courses are run on either morning or evening, to accommodate students who are already working. The Institution has a Job Training Office, and 70% of those who graduate successfully move on to a job or self-employment, a very impressive record given the persistently high unemployment on the West Bank.



Fr. Daniel will suggest deserving cases for our support to the local FHL Committee, though he strongly recommends that every student is asked to make some personal contribution to their fees. FHL's help this academic year will be made possible through the generosity of Friends in the FHL Group in East Grinstead, and we're very grateful to them.

Our plans for the future

In this issue you've read of FHL's growth in the last year and the careful and effective ways we've used your generous gifts to help the Christians of the Holy Land. You'll also have read of the exciting new projects that FHL wants to fund in the next year.

We can only do this with your help. Individual donations large or small, standing orders, parishes adopting FHL, diocesan Advent or Lent appeals, grants from Charitable Trusts, individual sponsored efforts, crib collections, legacies or one-off gifts - it all helps. And every penny given to FHL goes to help maintain a Christian presence in the land of Our Lord.

Please do what you can to support our Christian brothers and sisters there and spread the FHL message. That way we can reach our next target of £1million a year.

How you can help...

- **FHL's Family Support Fund gives regular help to those families most in need. £90 a month (that's £3 a day) makes a huge difference to feeding the family properly, or keeping them warm during the winter.**
- **We're finding more and more young people who can only attend Christian schools and continue their education with FHL's support. Just £20 a month by standing order (Gift-Aided) will let us help one extra child.**
- **St Martha's House. £15 for each day visit will fund a lady at this wonderful Day Care Centre for elderly ladies in Bethlehem.**
- **Don Bosco Vocational College. £10 a week will fund a young person on a nine-month vocational trades course, helping them get long-term employment.**

Contact FHL's office for details.

JUST A FEW POUNDS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Please donate to FHL and help our Christian brothers and sisters in the Holy Land. Please consider -

A one-off donation. Sent a cheque payable to Friends of the Holy Land to the office (address below).

A regular payment by standing order to FHL. Ask the office for a form, or download from the website by clicking the 'donate' button.

Gift-Aid your donation if you're a UK taxpayer. That way your donation is worth a further 25% to FHL. Complete a Gift Aid form and send your donation to the office.

Ask for donations to FHL instead of presents at your next celebration.

Leave a legacy to FHL in your will.

Ask for a retiring collection in your parish.

Contact the office, and we'll send you a supply of Gift Aid envelopes.

Donate to FHL on-line through BT MyDonate by visiting our website.

Don't forget our film!

FHL's excellent 20 minute film explains why the Christians of the Holy Land need our help, and why FHL's work there is so important. It's a perfect introduction to FHL for those who've never met us, a way to inform and inspire people to help. Every Parish Group should have a copy. Use it as the basis of a fundraising or recruiting event. It's available on a free DVD from the FHL office - or click on 'Resources' on our website,

www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk

To reduce our postage costs we'd like to send your Newsletter electronically, so please send your name and email address to

friendsoftheholylan@btconnect.com

If you'd like further information on FHL or for one of our team to visit your parish to make a short presentation or address a group of parishioners, call the FHL office on 01926 512980. Speak to Karen Baxter or one of our volunteers, or email vicki.urch@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk

FHL's Patrons

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The Most Revd and Rt Hon Justin Welby
Archbishop of Canterbury

The Rt Revd and Rt Hon Lord Williams of Oystermouth

The Most Rev Patrick Kelly
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Trustees

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Vicki Urch - *Director of Development*

Gift-aided donations

Please inform the FHL office of any change to your home address, any change in your personal tax circumstances, or if you wish to cancel your Gift Aid or change your standing order.

Friends of the Holy Land, 2 Station Road, Kenilworth CV8 1JJ

Telephone 01926 512980

email friendsoftheholylan@btconnect.com www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk

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