



FRIENDS OF THE HOLY LAND

November 2016

Monthly Update

Regional Gatherings

Peter Rand, FHL Vice Chairman, writes 'Thank you to everyone who attended the Regional Gatherings in London on 8 October and Leeds on 15 October. Special thanks to Marjory and James Agha at Our Lady of Victories, Kensington and Deacon David Arblaster in Leeds for all your support and mustering local parishioners to join us. My personal thanks to Vicki and Karen, plus all those volunteers and members of the Management Committee, who travelled to contribute to the day. We are still receiving responses to the electronic follow up survey from both events but the feedback is very encouraging. We will be reviewing the events at our next Management Committee meeting on 16 November and making plans for next year. So, if anyone who attended or did not, has any opinions, on the month, day of the week, duration, location or content of FHL Gatherings, whether National or Regional, we want to hear from you. Please contact me at peter.rand@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk

Anwar Jackaman

One of the projects we shared at the gathering was that of Anwar Jackaman. Anwar lives in the centre of Bethlehem and supports himself by repairing electrical items in a small shop. Anwar's home is a traditional two storey property with stone stairs leading to the bedroom and bathroom. Like many it is damp and needs upgrading. For Anwar his situation became more difficult when he became a wheel chair user. His only option to reach the bathroom was to go upstairs by shuffling up in a seated position. After seeing a full project proposal (shown at the gathering) and verifying the need, FHL funded an upgrade to the property adding an accessible shower room downstairs, creating a bedroom by dividing the living room, upgrading electrics, improving the kitchen, installing a ramp and damp proofing the property.



Before - one multi-functional room



New bathroom



More space for Anwar

Christmas Cards

It's not too late to purchase our very popular FHL Christmas cards. Whilst we have sold-out of card numbers 5 and 7 we still have supplies of the others (please see attached order form) and you are sure to find something you like. Cards are produced in the Holy Land providing employment and economic benefit to the Christian community. All profits are used to support projects in the Holy Land.

FHL DVD – The Suffering Church

Many of you have seen the excellent DVD produced by James Agha about the plight of Christians in the Holy Land and how FHL offers support. James will be returning to the Holy Land October 31st – November 6th to update the film to reflect the changes in the Holy Land and the support FHL is able to offer. This includes our work in Gaza, Nazareth and Jordan which began after the last recordings, as well as updating information on other projects. James kindly sponsors all of this work and there is no cost to FHL and therefore no impact on donations received.

As we approach Advent now would be a great time to arrange showings in your diocese. To facilitate that we have a new link that makes the process even easier <https://vimeo.com/117795365>

An Advent prayer for Christians in the Holy Land

Below is a prayer that you may wish to consider using personally, or to share in your parish or diocese to support Christians in the Holy Land as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

God, Our Father, as we prepare for the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour, we ask you to have mercy on all the Christians living in the Holy Land. May they be strengthened in their faith as they seek to follow your beloved Son, who Himself walked the same paths as they do. We pray especially for all those who are struggling with illness, poverty or despair that you will comfort, heal and strengthen them.

We pray that the light of Christ will shine brightly through your Church in the Middle East, bringing the light of hope, forgiveness and reconciliation to this troubled area. We pray for peace in the Holy Land, Syria and the neighbouring countries.

Lord, during this season of Advent help all Christians to reach out to their brothers and sisters in Christ who are struggling under persecution, deprivation and want. May we not close our eyes to their plight but respond with generosity, love and prayers.

We ask this in Jesus' name

Amen

Christmas present ideas

Are you looking for something different to give this year that will also benefit the neediest Christians in the Holy Land? FHL is able to supply vouchers in £5, £10, £20 denominations which can be given as gifts and the recipient is told what their gift is purchasing for needy families in the Holy Land. See the example below.

Please ring the office to order yours.







Friends of the Holy Land

To

From

Friends of the Holy Land is a charity established in the UK, supporting and helping Christian people and communities in the Holy Land to ensure the survival there of a Christian presence.

This Christmas I've made a donation in your name to help some of the most needy Christians in Palestine and Gaza. £10 will pay for a lunch for a needy widow at St. Martha's House, a Day Care Centre for elderly ladies in Bethlehem, for 2 days a week for 5 weeks. I know they will be very grateful for this gesture of love and friendship. I wish you, too, a very happy Christmas.

Currency exchange impacts Christians in the Holy Land!

No one can have failed to notice the downward trend, in recent weeks, of the pound against other currencies. At the Regional Gathering in London on 8th October Tony Stokes, the treasurer, explained that we now have to raise over 20% more funds just to maintain the current level of support. The impact in the Holy Land is that new projects are less likely to be funded which means that for families in crisis the wait will be even longer before they are able to receive help and support.

Exchange rate Comparisons £1000 October 2015 to October 2016

	2015	2016
Shekels	5957	4700
Dollars	1510	1224

The exchange rate continues to drop. In 2015 the 500shekels per month we paid to the neediest Christian families cost around £90 it is currently costing approximately £116. That equates to an additional cost of approximately £2,600 per month or £31,200 per year (100 families).

Pilgrimage

We are refining our liaison with pilgrimage organisers and pilgrims, before departure, during pilgrimage and when pilgrims return. Part of this improvement is a new pilgrimage flyer that has been produced for distribution to organisers and pilgrims before they leave. A copy is attached and hard copies are available from the office. So please keep telling us of pilgrimages however large or small that come to your attention. Returning pilgrims frequently become great supporters, through FHL, of our brothers and sisters in the Holy Land.

On 3rd November 2016, 55 pilgrims from the Anglican Diocese of Worcester and the Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham, depart for a 9 day ecumenical pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Pilgrims will be led on this rare event by Archbishop Bernard Longley (one of FHL's patrons) and Bishop John Inge. For many, this will be their first time in the land of Our Lord's birth and ministry and they look forward with eager anticipation to visiting the holy sites, living the Gospel and meeting local Christians. The pilgrimage will spend time mainly in Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Galilee.

The programme includes daily worship which will alternate joyfully between the two Christian traditions. The way in which pilgrims will share the Eucharist has been discussed fully and openly with all of them. Everybody appreciates that the pilgrimage will be a wonderful example of ecumenical practice.

A Fond Farewell

After a number of years as our volunteer Communications Advisor, we say good bye to John Bradshaw. In the last few years John has produced to a very high standard the newsletters and updates with which you are familiar. We thank John for all his hard work in the last few years.

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Friends of the Holy Land was founded in 2009 to help and support the Christian population of the Holy Land. We work to improve education, employment, health and housing, and to develop a resilient and enduring Christian community there.