



FRIENDS OF THE HOLY LAND

FHL funds new jobs in Gaza

FHL have received the first update from its newest employment project in Gaza in partnership with the Pontifical Mission for Palestine (PMP). Below are some extracts from a very comprehensive report.

'The PMP has launched several programs in response to the economic crisis and high unemployment rate in Gaza. It has targeted the Christian population in Gaza which is facing increasing threat of decline. The Christian population now stands at 1,200. The Christian community there requires opportunities to improve their lives, through education, job opportunities and better standards of living.

The PMP has recognized this need and has provided scholarships for underprivileged Christian students in Gaza, as well as opportunities for unemployed workers in various fields. These opportunities have provided skills training and employment for graduates and skilled workers from all sectors as well as providing an income that supports their families.

Continued on page 4



Cardinal Vincent Nichols, FHL Patron, meets beneficiaries in Gaza during a recent visit

If everyone does a little...

FHL needs more people to spread the message of the plight of Christians in the Holy Land. There are many ways to do this including holding a small (or large!) fundraising event, speaking to your congregation in Church or perhaps including a piece in the parish newsletter. If you think you could help out once or maybe twice a year, please get in touch. We have lots of ideas and experience we can share, including ready-made talks. It doesn't have to be a big commitment, maybe just doing something you already enjoy on behalf of FHL.

Contact Vicki, FHL Director of Development; vicki.urch@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk 07539 851099, or ring Karen in the office on 01926 512980, if you would like to know more or to offer your help. Your Christian brothers and sisters in the Holy Land need you!

FHL's Objectives

- To raise awareness of the challenges facing the Christians of the Holy Land
- To encourage prayers for our Christian brothers and sisters
- To generate financial resources to give them a sustainable future
- To encourage visits to the Holy Land to meet local Christians

In this issue

- New jobs in Gaza
- Chairman's message
- Dental inspections
- Oliver Doyle reports
- Parish groups
- Ramallah and Nazareth schools
- Living in dignity
- School of Joy
- Jordan update
- Donation/gift aid forms

FHL's Focus

FHL is apolitical

FHL is proudly ecumenical

FHL needs your support to help the most needy Christians in the Holy Land

Making a difference to vulnerable families

Education • Employment • Health • Housing • Family Support

West Bank Gaza Israel Jordan

Chairman's message



Pilgrims visiting St. Martha's House

My message for this issue is quite personal and reflects on the pilgrimage that I joined in early November. It was unique. Half of the pilgrims were members of the Church of England and half members of the Catholic Church. We were led by Archbishop Bernard Longley of Birmingham and Bishop John Inge of Worcester. The two prelates are close friends. During the ten days of our pilgrimage together the other 53 of us became very close and, I am sure, true friendships will develop.

Arising from the Big Bible Study that the two bishops have been providing for the past five years at Worcester Cathedral, they felt that a joint Anglican/Catholic pilgrimage to the Holy Land would cement the dialogue begun in the Study. And so it has proved. Such problems as we anticipated were swept aside in a spiritual connection felt by everyone. The cross of separation at the Eucharist that we had steered ourselves to bear was transformed into a rewarding blessing. One priest confessed that he had never been blessed at the communion and only now appreciates what a powerful moment that is.

During our ten days, the whole party became closer. It was drawn into unity by the Vigil Mass in the church of the Latin Patriarchate and the Eucharist on Sunday in the Anglican Cathedral of St George in Jerusalem. Many of the pilgrims commented on the sense of complete integration that was felt during these two services.

Each alternate day we celebrated Mass in the format of each Communion. We shared our common services of renewal, baptism and marriage, in the Jordan and at Cana. We sang hymns and songs that were common to each of us. Indeed, we set up a small ecumenical 'a Capella' choir to sing Motets from pre and post reformation masters.

All who walked the route of Our Lord during that week expressed themselves fundamentally changed in their grasp of Unity of the Churches. We became one Body, worshipping in each other's church. Mass together in the open air on the shore of the Sea of Galilee will live with us all for ever.

Members of FHL Groups were at the forefront of the organising team. One of our patrons jointly led the Pilgrimage; all five organising committee were group members of FHL; and a total of 10 pilgrims were committee members of one of the three Worcestershire Groups. All of us are of one mind, that this ecumenical connection between Anglican and Catholic Dioceses is a powerful way to practice unity amongst the grassroots and an outstanding example. The spiritual benefits that we gained and felt cannot be underestimated. All had great confidence that the Holy Spirit was guiding our steps.

We will now look to draw to the attention of all movers and shakers in the Dioceses the wonderful potential of fostering pilgrimage between Dioceses. It fulfils our function as an ecumenical charity as well as allowing us to fulfil the fourth objective of our Charity.

If you would like more information please email John Rice or me – john.rice@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk; jim.quinn@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk.

*Jim Quinn
November 2016*

Exchange rate challenge

FHL like many charities has a new mountain to climb with the value of the pound against the dollar having collapsed from \$1.50 to \$1.22 in just 12 months. Most of our grants are in shekels, linked most closely to the US dollar. So £1 now buys only 4.82 shekels as opposed to 5.95 12 months ago.

The result is that, for example, the 498,000 shekels each year to support 83 families on FHL Family Support now requires FHL to raise £103,319 as opposed to £83,697, an additional £19,620 pa just to stand still. The same applies to school/university fees and indeed all our grants in the Holy Land. So we ask our generous donors to consider increasing standing orders or donations to ensure the Charity can continue to provide the same level of support to families in their local currency.

FHL IN THE HOLY LAND

After 12 months in the Holy Land, Oliver Doyle reports

Oliver Doyle is studying for a degree in Hebrew and Arabic at SOAS, University of London and recently spent 12 months in Bethlehem, Nablus and Jerusalem. In this article Oliver gives us his view on how a sustainable future for Christians in the Holy Land should be the focus of FHL.

During my time in the Holy Land I had the privilege of visiting Christian communities all over the area, as I was trying to better understand why so many of them are now asking FHL for help, what I learnt while meeting with them, surprised and inspired me. I was surprised because I went over there thinking that the reason FHL was becoming increasingly important to their communities was because they were unable to take care of themselves. I was inspired because I found out that FHL was actually becoming so important to them because FHL was helping a very capable group of people make the most of what is available, which they would not be able to do otherwise.

Many Christians over here believe those in the Holy Land are a slightly hopeless community with little education and no real prospect of decent work opportunities. Rather than helping their own communities, they would prefer to come to the West leaving the problems of home behind them. What I found was a proud group of people with a clear love for their home, many educated at university able to speak many different languages, who were always willing to help each other. They have only started looking for help from outside as the co-dependency that exists in their society is starting to break down. The co-dependency in the Holy Land, amongst the Christians and all of the other communities that I visited, is so great that I never saw a single person sleeping on the street the entire time I was there, because someone would always take them in. However this is starting to diminish, because, although the people have not changed their culture of caring for one another, they have not been able to react to the area's changing economic landscape quickly enough, and many have with great reluctance left the Holy Land to seek employment abroad.

After hundreds of hours spent talking to the young and the old, mainly in the West Bank, it became clear that to help people long term we need to make sure they have the skills needed to make the most of the available opportunities. Traditional areas like tourism are less viable so the key is to identify emerging economic opportunities and to ensure that Christian communities are ready and able to exploit those opportunities.

Whilst the legacy of European Christian support is a great education system in the faith schools, they teach European languages that prepare students for work outside the country. Including Hebrew in the curriculum could provide real benefit for students enabling them to access and develop future economic opportunities whilst remaining in the Holy Land.

The best opportunities are in exporting services via the phone line and the internet, because they are unrestricted. Furthermore, since their closest neighbour speaks Hebrew life without Hebrew is hard, so we should be facilitating teaching of Hebrew as a second language to put Christians in the Holy Land in the strongest position possible.

Whilst the support work of FHL remains hugely important, seeking ways to enable the development of economic opportunity particularly for young people, will also work towards the aim of maintaining a Christian presence in the Holy Land.

FHL Parish Groups

Friends of the Holy Land has grown over 7 years with the support of local FHL groups around the country, mostly but not exclusively based in Anglican and Catholic Parishes. This grassroots approach to fulfil the objectives of FHL over here mirrors the grassroots help to named Christian families in the Holy Land. In the last six months these groups have raised amounts ranging from £180 to £21,000 and every penny has made a difference to the most needy Christians in either the West Bank, Gaza, Israel or Jordan. If you would like to encourage those in your parish to get together to make a difference, please contact us for ideas and assistance. You might also wish to contact your local Churches Together Group. In recognition of our ecumenical contribution both here and in the Holy Land, FHL have recently been elected as a 'Body in Association' of Churches Together in England and CT Great Britain and Ireland.

Fundraising events bring 'fringe benefits'

Fundraising needs to be fun and fundraising for FHL brings many 'fringe benefits' over and above helping our Christian brothers and sisters in the Holy Land. It's an opportunity to bring parishioners or other groups together to socialise, to extend friendships beyond the hosts to other denominations or parish groups. Indeed events such as concerts and quizzes often appeal to those of any faith or no faith. Recent successes around the country have been an 'Applefest', a Casino Night, Pancake Races and BBQs. If you want ideas, please call the office.

FHL IN THE HOLY LAND

FHL funds new jobs in Gaza... continued...

In particular, PMP has implemented an on-the-job training program in collaboration with the Holy Family Church in Gaza and three other partner organisations. The purpose of this program is to provide job opportunities targeting Christian males and females who are unemployed with university degrees, who have been actively seeking employment, to boost job skills and earn an income for themselves and their families.



FHL funded employees sign their contracts

It is expected that this project will not only be a direct benefit to the recruit but will also serve to improve the infrastructure for the institutions opening pathways for succession planning. The project will report on a quarterly basis so there will be an update in the next FHL newsletter.

Holy Family Parish

Nisreen Antone	Project Manager
Dona Al-Far	Translator
Ramzi El-Amash	IT Technician
Ramzi Al-Qubrosi	Driver

Orthodox Cultural Centre

Ramy Tarazi	Accountant
Michael Al-Nasrawi	PR and Marketing
Fuad S. Ayyad Day	Guard
Fuad N. Ayyad	Cleaner

Al-Ahli Arab Hospital

Nahed Al-Dabbagh	Accountant
Ibrahim Tarazi	It Technician
Iman Saba	Secretary
Mousa Saba	Pharmacist

YMCA

Samar Ayyad	Accountant
Hiba Tarazi	IT Technician
Johny Michael	Playground Mentor
Siraj Azzam	Receptionist

The total cost of the program for one year is \$80,000 with FHL as the main funder providing \$62,000. In the first three months after an extensive interview and exam process 16 young people have been recruited. All recruits met the program manager, signed their contracts (see photo) and began their employment in the various institutions on the 1st October.'

Episcopal Schools in Ramallah and Nazareth

With the support of Advent and Lent Appeals in Anglican Dioceses, Friends of the Holy Land are supporting an increased number of Christian families who cannot afford to pay the full fees at schools run by the Anglican Diocese of Jerusalem.



Peter Rand of FHL at the Christ Church School in Nazareth

10 students at the Arab Evangelical Episcopal School in Ramallah have recently received funding for a second year and in this academic year students at the Christ Church Episcopal School in Nazareth will also benefit for the first time. Pictured visiting the schools is FHL Vice Chairman Peter Rand with Iyad Rafidi, the Director at the school in Ramallah and also with children in the kindergarten at the school in Nazareth.



Arab Evangelical School in Ramallah

FHL IN THE HOLY LAND

Living in dignity – home refurbishments

Peter Rand, FHL Vice Chairman reports, 'During each of my 4-5 visits a year to the Holy Land, I spend a couple of days visiting families, whether in the West Bank and more recently Nazareth in Israel and the homes of Iraqi Christian refugees in Jordan. As would be the case over here, however little disposable income might be available, some houses are very well organised with whatever possessions arranged tidily in every room you visit. In others it is chaotic and the poor state of the decoration has left them with no pride or dignity in their surroundings. It is important that people help themselves so we treat each case separately and study their circumstances very carefully before deciding to help to provide a long term solution.

Recently FHL refurbished the property in the corner of Manger Square, Bethlehem of Anwar Jackaman. He requires a wheel chair to get about the house but his only option for a wash was to go up a stone staircase by sitting and shuffling up backwards. Now he has an accessible shower room downstairs and a bedroom separate from his living area, created from part of the living area. The small kitchen has been improved, electrics upgraded and a ramp installed with a tiled floor for easy access to everywhere. Anwar earns an income by repairing small electrical items in a local shop.



Before - one multi-functional room



New bathroom



More space for Anwar

On a recent visit, I met a family in Beit Jala, with Fr. Johnny the Assistant Parish Priest – a very poor and sad family, a couple with three sons, one of whom had died, aged 25, a few days before I visited, in theatre where he was having open-heart surgery. The state of each room in this house is not untypical of many I visit. We have an estimate of 63,723 shekels (around £13,500) to seal the roof from water penetration, fully renovate the bathroom and kitchen, replace doors/windows, fix the electrics, retile and repaint throughout. As I write this, we are seeking a partner to share this major project.

I have recently been back to Taybeh, an all Christian village of 1,200 persons just outside Ramallah to meet the Parish Priest, Fr. Johnny. He always has lots of projects which are priorities for our local FHL Holy Land Committee to consider!

In the 18 months since he moved to Taybeh from Nablus in the north, he has visited a number of families whose houses need repair which the owners cannot afford to undertake themselves. Shortly, one of our Committee will be visiting him to view the homes, which will be selected by Fr. Johnny and the FHL in consultation with the local Parish Council'.



Shower room and kitchen needing refurbishment

Home refurbishments can cost from £1,000 per property. If any individuals or groups are interested in making a real difference to the life of one family and wish to sponsor a specific project we have 'before and after' pictures to help with fundraising.

FHL IN THE HOLY LAND

School of Joy – a school edging towards crisis

Pilgrims who visit the School of Joy in Beit Sahour, and meet the young people with 'special needs', return home committed to do what they can to ensure the School continues to service their needs. Unless more funds are forthcoming in the next six months, it is likely that the School will have to reduce the number of students significantly from next financial year. This is due to a three year funding stream from a specific donor coming to an end, leaving a reduced level of funding from the Charity. The Director and owner, Fr. Mamdouh Abu Sada has visited the UK to raise funds and is very happy to receive invitations from dioceses and parishes to speak at local congregations and in schools about life for 'slow learners' in and around Bethlehem.



Working on the lathe

This year, the school has taken a record number of 65 students, made possible by the move from the school to another building close by of the Olive Wood Training facility. Peter Rand writes 'I visited this recently and was very impressed with the output from the trainers and students. Not only is this providing a source of income to the school but it is providing skills to some students who then go on to use it to earn a living. One such case is Peter who had been at the School for 12 years until he left last summer. He now earns around £14/day in a local olive wood factory, enough to make him independent and to become re-integrated into society. Fr. Mamdouh visits all the young people who graduate and enter other schools. What struck me was that the parents require guidance from the school as to how to look after their children. All too frequently, the experience is that parents do not want to bother to spend time with those with 'special needs'. They are not worth it. The School aims to change this attitude by inviting parents with students in different grades to visit the School once a month to assess the progress that is being made.

All too often the young people arrive and following hearing and sight tests, it is discovered for the first time that they need hearing aids or spectacles, something that Fr. Mamdouh arranges for each student.

So the School is edging towards a financial crisis, a situation that is being carefully monitored by FHL who receive monthly audited accounts and who advise Fr. Mamdouh as to how costs have to be managed to meet anticipated income. This term the time when heating is turned on has been reduced and the food costs have been halved by no longer serving hot food at lunchtime. The teachers have had no increase in salaries. If you are moved to help the School of Joy or know someone who might be able to provide some long-term funding, please contact the FHL office.



Fr. Mamdouh Abu Sada with George, a student at SOJ

Jordan Update

FHL continues to support around 100 Christian Iraqi Refugee families in Amman. This is with the support of Fr. Mario who is a priest with the Latin Patriarchate. The dressmaking project providing skills for around 19 young Iraqi girls continues and FHL are seeking some long-term funding for this project as it is proving very valuable to those able to leave Jordan to find employment in the country to which they relocate, whether in Canada, North America, Australia or Europe. Please keep these people and those caring for them in your prayers.

FHL IN THE HOLY LAND

Prayers

We should remember the first two objectives of FHL. These are to raise awareness of the challenges facing the

Christians in the Holy Land and to encourage prayers for our Christian brothers and sisters. Many parishes with a strong FHL presence remember them in prayers at Sunday services every week, with particular focus at Christmas and Easter. FHL can offer a range of prayers and we have a limitless supply of prayer cards which can be obtained from the FHL office.



Dental inspections continue apace

Gail Brown, FHL supporter from the Wyre Forest Group and a retired Dental Surgeon, has been one of the drivers behind FHL supporting families to ensure children receive dental inspections to alleviate problems as they grow older. Gail recently met with Dr. Shoukri Jiries and Dr. Christine Shomali the two dentists at the Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem who have completed the school inspection programme at five Christian schools with nine more to follow when funds are available. Gail writes 'I was delighted to find the methods used were, as I expected, very professional and up to date.

Approximately one third of the students between the ages of 6 and 12 years required treatment and one half of the older students needed active intervention. Dental health education was given to all those inspected and treatment offered to those who needed it and were unable to afford it. Restorations, extractions and preventive fissure sealants were carried out on all those seen and advice given for the future. This programme is benefiting the children and proving to be very positive and cost effective for the Christian and Muslim families and for Friends of the Holy Land'.



Pictured left to right, Dr Shoukri Jiries, Gail Brown and Dr. Christine Shomali



DONATION FORM

I would like to make a donation to FHL. I enclose a cheque/cash for a total of £ (Cheques payable to 'Friends of the Holy Land')

Please tick if you **DO NOT** want to be kept updated of FHL activities.

GIFT AID DECLARATION FORM

Boost your donation by 25p of gift aid for every £1 you donate. Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK Tax payer. **I want to Gift Aid my donation of £ and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to Friends of the Holy Land. Reg.Charity No.1130054.**

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount claimed on all my donations in the tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Title: Initial(s)

Surname

Full Home Address

.

Postcode Date

Email address:

Please notify the charity if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name or home address or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or Capital Gains Tax. If you pay income tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

Please return to: Friends of the Holy Land, Farmer Ward Road, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 2DH



BANK STANDING ORDER FORM
Registered Charity No. 1130054

TO: The Manager (your Bank) Name
.....

Bank Address:
.....

Postcode

Please pay FHL: £.....

Monthly Quarterly Annually

Amount in words
.....

From my Account No

Please credit FRIENDS OF THE HOLY LAND
a/c No.

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

For office use only

Sort Code: 60-05-41 Cirencester Branch Nat West
Bank plc, 32 Market Place, Cirencester, Glos GL7 2NU

Starting on (date) until further notice.

Name

Address
.....

Postcode

Signature

Date

**Please return to: Friends of the Holy Land, Farmer
Ward Road, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 2DH**

Our Mission

Friends of the Holy Land, an apolitical and ecumenical charity, exists to help and support the Christian population of the Holy Land and to develop a resilient and enduring Christian community there.

Trustees

Jim Quinn - Patrick Horsfield - Jim Kelly
Peter Rand - Charles Reed - David Ryall
Tony Stokes - Norah Whelan

Management Committee

Jim Quinn - *Chairman*
Peter Rand - *Vice Chairman & Executive Trustee*
Tony Stokes - *Director of Finance and Trustee*
Vicki Urch - *Director of Development*
Karen Baxter - *Office Manager*
Marion Homer - *Communications Manager*
John Rice - *Pilgrimage Liaison*

FHL's Patrons

His Eminence Cardinal Vincent Nichols
Archbishop of Westminster

The Most Revd and Rt Hon Justin Welby
Archbishop of Canterbury

The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Lord Williams
of Oystermouth

The Most Rev Patrick Kelly
Archbishop Emeritus of Liverpool

The Most Revd Barry Morgan
Archbishop of Wales

The Most Rev Bernard Longley
Archbishop of Birmingham

The Most Rev Malcolm McMahon
Archbishop of Liverpool

The Rt Rev Christopher Chessun
Bishop of Southwark

The Rt Revd Dr Michael Langrish
Retired Bishop of Exeter

Friends of the Holy Land
Farmer Ward Road, Kenilworth,
Warwickshire CV8 2DH

Tel: 01926 512980

Web: www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 1130054