

Monthly Update **October 2018**

Welcome to FHL's October 2018 Update. This month we have articles on:

- [Update on our recent National Gathering](#)
- [Papal Nuncio fundraising lunch](#)
- [Archbishop of Canterbury confirms continued patronage for FHL](#)
- [FHL Lichfield Carol Service - remembering the 'Living Stones' at Christmas](#)
- [New cardboard collection boxes now available](#)
- [Update on FHL Christmas cards and Olive Wood sales](#)

Record numbers attend National Gathering

Record numbers attended our National Gathering held in Kenilworth last month. The keynote



speaker was Sami El-Yousef, who is descended from one of Jerusalem's oldest Christian families and CEO of Jerusalem's Latin Patriarchate. Sami gave a detailed account of the difficulties faced by the Christian community living in East Jerusalem, the West Bank, Gaza, and Jordan. Calmly and dispassionately, he explained the complexity of pressures facing Christians in the region, reflecting lives lived under occupation, discrimination and as refugees.

Dramatic decline in the Christian population of Bethlehem

Sami thanked those attending for their steadfast support. In nine years the charity has raised £3.7 million and supports 2,000 named Christians each year living in the West Bank, Gaza, Israel and Jordan.

Sami revealed the dramatic decline in the Christian population of Bethlehem over the past 70 years. In 1947 Christians in Bethlehem represented 85% of the community, but by 1998 that figure had shrunk to 40%. Now, in

2018, they account for just 18% of the total population. Sami went on to explain the importance of the Christian institutions in the Holy Land, and their impact on the wider community regardless of faith or religion. He explained that of the six hospitals in Jerusalem four are operated by Christian churches.

Over lunch attendees had the opportunity to buy items made from olive wood, imported from the workshops of Christian families in Bethlehem.

During the afternoon session a number of FHL supporters made short presentations. This included 11-year-old Robert Foskett, a student of The King's School in Worcester, who had raised a hugely impressive £830 for the School of Joy a special needs school in Beit Sahour near Bethlehem.

The National Gathering closed with attendees committing to work with FHL to raise awareness of the challenges faced by Christians in the Middle East through prayer, fundraising and pilgrimage. Donations of over £1000 were received on the day to support our work in the West Bank, Gaza, Israel, and Jordan.

Papal Nuncio Fundraising Lunch 2018

His Excellency, the Apostolic Nuncio to Great Britain, Archbishop Edward Joseph Adams, hosted a lunch on



Saturday 29th September to further the work of 'The Friends of The Holy Land'.

This event, held at the Papal Nunciature in Wimbledon, was organised by John Scanlon KCSG, KGCHS on behalf of The Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, which supports the Latin Patriarchate in the Holy Land, and FHL which focuses on grass roots support to Christians living in the West Bank,

Gaza, Israel and Jordan. This was the third, and largest such event, in six years. The lunch provided an opportunity for both charities to share information about their work with the 50 specially invited guests. Among those present were the Lieutenant of the Knights in England and Wales, HE Michael Byrne, and Jim Quinn, Chairman of FHL's Trustees.

Archbishop reconfirms patronage of FHL

The ecumenical nature of the day was underlined with the announcement by Jim that the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend and Right Honourable Justin Welby, had confirmed his continued patronage of FHL.

Remembering the Living Stones at Christmas

FHL Christmas Carol Service

Friday 7th December 7.30pm
Lichfield Cathedral, The Close, Staffs, WS13 7LD



FHL Diocesan Coordinator, The Very Revd. Adrian Dorber, Dean of Litchfield Cathedral, has once again invited FHL to hold a dedicated carol service at the Cathedral. Those who attended last year's service will recall what a wonderful occasion it was and will understand our delight at being invited back again this year. The carol service will take place on Friday 7th December at 7.30pm, with doors open from 7pm. Parking in Lichfield's city centre car parks will be free from 6.30pm.

Tickets for the carol service cost just £10 to include refreshments and a souvenir programme. Olive wood products, sourced directly from the workshops of Christian families in the West Bank, will be on sale after the service. All proceeds will go towards FHL's work supporting the beleaguered Christian communities of the West Bank. Gaza, Israel and Jordan.

Can you support us in maximising this opportunity? We are asking supporters to help by organising carloads (or even coach loads!) of parishioners to join us at this unique and seasonal occasion. Tickets cost £10 each, and all proceeds will go to FHL. We are hoping supporters will use our event poster for display on your noticeboards. We also have some text suitable for use in newsletters and notices. Please contact the office for copies.

To book your tickets please call the FHL office by calling 01926 512980.

Card Collection Boxes

In response to supporter requests we now have a number of lightweight, easy to assemble cardboard collection



boxes to share. The boxes are designed to encourage one off collections of loose change over a short period of time. The imagery selected has been chosen to work during Advent and at any other time of the year.

If you have an idea about how you could use these boxes, perhaps by giving out a number to a school, church or group please let us know.

The key thing with these boxes, much as we do with our olive wood crib boxes, is to ensure we have a central point of contact for each batch sent out – someone who can keep track of where the boxes go, be responsible for collecting them in again, and then getting the money to us.

To find out more, or to request some collection boxes please contact the office on 01926 512980.

Please be aware that numbers are limited so please contact us as soon as possible to express an interest.

Christmas cards are ready to order!



A quick reminder - we still have FHL branded Christmas cards available for order. Each pack purchased contributes to our work supporting Christians living in the West Bank Gaza, Israel and Jordan. Some designs have sold out so please order quickly to avoid disappointment. Order forms are attached or call the office on 01926 512980. Packs can be posted with a small additional charge to cover mailing costs. All payments should be made by cheque payable to 'FHL Olive Wood Products', sent to us at time of ordering,

and posted to: Olive Wood Products , Friends of the Holy Land, Farmer Ward Road, Kenilworth, Warwickshire, CV8 2DH.

Olive Wood Sales



Also available to order ready for Christmas is our full range of Olive Wood products - all manufactured in the workshops of Christina families in the West Bank. All purchases support our work in the Holy Land. To see the full range please contact the office for a brochure.

Our contact details:

Friends of the Holy Land

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