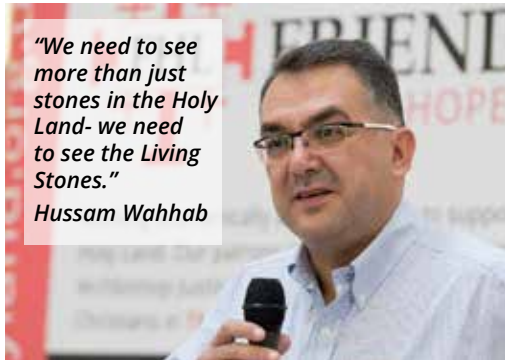




Remembering the “Living Stones”



“We need to see more than just stones in the Holy Land- we need to see the Living Stones.”
Hussam Wahhab

Over 90 supporters attended the most recent FHL National Gathering in Kenilworth. Hussam Wahhab, member of FHL’s Holy Land Committee, presented a vivid account of the isolation felt by his community. Speaking of the continued exodus of fellow Christians, he

highlighted that the birthplace of Christianity, including the cities of Bethlehem and Jerusalem, might soon have no Christian population at all. He described a life where water supply was never certain, travel restrictions meant a visa is needed for a 10-minute drive to Jerusalem, and stories from Iraq and Syria filled his community with fear.

In the last financial year FHL supporters have successfully channelled over £550,000 to support Christians living in the West Bank, Gaza, Israel and Jordan – up 22% year on year. However, Hussam’s testimony reveals that the situation is still critical.



The National Gathering finished with attendees committing to raise awareness of the situation faced by Christians in the Holy Land, through prayer, fundraising and pilgrimage.

FHL’s Objectives

- To raise awareness of the challenges faced by Christians living in the Holy Land
- To encourage prayer on their behalf
- To generate financial resources to give them a sustainable future
- To encourage visits to the Holy Land to meet local Christians

In this issue

- Welcome to FHL’s new chief executive
- FHL’s website : Inspiring Prayer
- Employment support in Nazareth
- The warmth of ecumenical pilgrimage
- University scholarships in Gaza
- Increasing need in Jordan

Please check our new website, content is updated regularly

FHL’s Focus - FHL is apolitical - FHL is proudly ecumenical
Education • Employment • Health • Housing • Family Support
West Bank • Gaza • Israel • Jordan

FHL IN THE UK

Welcome to FHL's first Chief Executive

On behalf of the Trustees, I warmly welcome Maria McCaffery OBE as the first Chief Executive of Friends of the Holy Land. This is an important step as part of our Strategic Plan to grow the Charity and give hope to an increased number of vulnerable Christians in the Holy Land. As CEO, Maria will play an integral part in our succession planning as we provide a robust structure of staff and volunteers at the Centre to support the hundreds of volunteers and generous donors around the country.

Maria will be immediately taking responsibility for all UK operations of FHL, whilst I will continue for the present time to be responsible for our activities in the Holy Land, with the support of our local Committee as well as the small team in Bethlehem and our partner organisations in the West Bank, Gaza, Israel and Jordan.

It is my intention to continue to offer my support to FHL activities in the UK and I shall be working closely with Maria as she strives to fulfil the tasks of Director of Development alongside her new role as CEO. Maria brings great experience as the leader of not for profit organisations and the Trustees wish her every success and thank her for taking on this new challenge.

Peter Rand – FHL Vice Chairman

Maria writes...



As I prepare to take on the mantle of FHL's first Chief Executive I'm thinking what a steep learning curve I've been following for the past 6 months and how kind and welcoming (to say nothing of patient!) everybody's been. I have yet to meet anyone linked to us who is not happy to be part of what we do: it's infectious and I've been infected. From 'dyed-in-the-wool' Ambassadors who have been with us since the very beginning, to pilgrims returning from their first visit to the Holy Land who are asking the same question that inspired Cardinal Vincent to get us started, "What can we do? What can we do?" I love that question. It's a precursor to a range of possibilities and an excellent opener for a dialogue centred upon exploring the wide spectrum of skills, contacts, experience and opportunities our supporters are willing to place at our disposal. I never cease to be amazed at the variety of things that motivate people to support us. I'm looking forward to seeing the Holy Land as a pilgrim myself when I join the Lichfield / Birmingham ecumenical pilgrimage next Spring and telling you about it in my next column.

Maria McCaffery – Chief Executive

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.

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 Rev Bernard Longley - *Archbishop of Birmingham*

The Most Rev Malcolm McMahon - *Archbishop of Liverpool*

The Rt Revd Christopher Chessun - *Bishop of Southwark*

The Rt Revd Dr Michael Langrish - *Retired Bishop of Exeter*

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*
Tony Stokes - *Director of Finance and Trustee*
Maria McCaffery - *Chief Executive*
Karen Baxter - *Office Manager*
Marion Homer - *Communications Manager*
John Rice - *Pilgrimage Liaison*

FHL IN THE HOLY LAND

Increasing need in Jordan to support Iraqi Christian Refugees

Since 2016, FHL have shown solidarity with Iraqi Christian refugees forced to flee their homes because of their faith. Through the direct help of Fr Mario Cornioli we support around one hundred Christian families living in a Latin Parish in Amman and it is hoped, funds allowing, this programme will continue.

In January Peter will visit Amman again to assess another project made known to us, this time by Fr. George Kopti, the Vicar of St. Paul's Anglican Church. This could result in the support of an additional 128 Christian refugee

families who have been displaced by ISIS from the City of Mosul and the Nineveh Valley in Iraq. These families prefer to stay close to the local Christian churches in Amman, where they are benefiting from social and spiritual support, rather than setting up home in a refugee camp. Under Jordanian law they are not allowed to work so they are in need of immediate financial assistance. We have received a detailed bid for funds for these 77 adults and 51 children, to include food coupons, medications, urgent house appliances and help with house rentals.



This application, in Jordan, along with many others we receive, uncovers the continuing severe difficulties faced by many Christian families across the region and leads us to once again ask for your support in helping them. As our charity grows, we hope to meet the needs of more Christians in the community. To make a donation now to support our work in the Holy Land please visit our website www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk and make an online donation, or complete and return the standing order and gift aid forms on the back page of this newsletter.

The School of Joy and St Martha's House

We continue to hear encouraging stories from the School of Joy relating to the increasing number of UK Christians visiting whilst on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. It looks likely that Fr Mamdouh, the school's principal, will be visiting the UK during Lent as the School has been selected as the beneficiary for two Lenten parish appeals within the Westminster Diocese.

Any supporter, situated in Central or West London, interested in arranging for Fr. Mamdouh to speak to a group or school assembly during Lent (Monday – Friday, daytime or evening) should contact the office.

Meanwhile, St Martha's House has been sharing stories of the women they care for:



Suhila Abu Hamameh: "I was born in Bethlehem in 1929. I gave birth to three sons and eight daughters. My life was very difficult as we did not have anything. My husband and I had to work hard to feed our children. After my husband's death, things got harder, but thanks to God, my children grew up and worked hard, and now everyone is married. I've lost two of my children. It's very hard for me, I live alone now. I joined St. Martha's House in 2010 when it was first established. I like to go there and spend some time with the other ladies. We sing, dance and do many activities. We also go on trips outside the house. I feel spiritually better and we are all like one big family."

FHL IN THE HOLY LAND

University Scholarships in Gaza



Mousa Ayyad from Gaza with his Scout Troop in Gaza's Orthodox Church compound during a training session.

Statistics used to describe life in Gaza are shocking; the majority of the population are reliant on international food aid and prospects for young people are bleak, with over 65% unemployed. Working in partnership with the Pontifical Mission FHL support a number of Christian Students at university and college in Gaza working hard to improve their own future and that of their small Christian community.

Joseph Hazboun of the Pontifical Mission recently sent us this report: "This semester we have seen the impact of the lack of electricity in Gaza. Many students are unable to complete assignments and papers (where a computer and the internet is needed). The quality of the tap water is rapidly deteriorating. People are relying more on tank or bottled water for daily use which is a high household expense. We are unsure what the coming semester will hold for these students as daily life in Gaza continues to deteriorate. Our constant message to them is that they must continue to work hard despite these setbacks. We encourage them and hope that this gives them the hope they need to strive for a better future."

Many of these students, as well as studying to improve their own situation do much to add to the lives of the wider community. FHL scholarship student Mousa Ayyad is a Scout Leader, his scout troop has both Muslim and Christian members. Another FHL scholarship student Raed Tarazi is also a scout leader, he serves Mass at the Orthodox Church in Gaza, and plays pipes in a marching band.



Above and below: Raed Tarazi is also an FHL supported student as well as being a scout leader, a pipe player and server of Mass at the Orthodox Church in Gaza.



Above right: Natalie Al Sayegh - an FHL scholarship student studying accountancy at University in Gaza.

Please hold these students in your prayers - and raise awareness of their challenges whenever you can. To help FHL support these young people and other Christians living in the Holy Land visit our website www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk and use the 'Donate' button to make an online contribution.

FHL IN THE HOLY LAND

The 'wonderful warmth' of Ecumenical Pilgrimage

Hot on the heels of the successful RC Birmingham and Cof E Worcester Dioceses ecumenical pilgrimage to the Holy Land last year, FHL learned of another similar pilgrimage, this time being organised out of Whitehaven in Cumbria by the Revd. Robert Jackson. Led by Rt Rev James Newcome, Bishop of Carlisle, Revd Richard Teale (Methodists) and Rev Andrew Mills (URC) 75 pilgrims came together from the Anglican, Catholic, Methodist, United Reform Church, Church Army, Salvation Army and other Free Church traditions for pilgrimage in March 2017. FHL provided advice at the planning stage of this pilgrimage suggesting projects pilgrims could visit to ensure they met with the 'Living Stones' of the Christian faith.

The pilgrimage was a great success with the post pilgrimage gathering in Keswick attended by almost 60 pilgrims, many of whom shared their pilgrimage experiences. Several were moved to go on to raise the profile of FHL by speaking to local groups and churches about the plight of the Christian community and in one case to open discussions on a school to school link. The Cumbrian pilgrims reported that the pilgrimage had a "wonderful warmth" and was evidence of many strands of Christian tradition working together to form part of "Christians over here helping Christians over there".

FHL are aware of two further ecumenical pilgrimages currently taking bookings, see above right.

Cumbrian Christians on Pilgrimage in the Holy Land March 2017.



March 7-18 2018 C of E Lichfield/RC Birmingham Dioceses.

For more information email Kate Durrant kate.durrant@lichfield-cathedral.org

November 2019 RC and C of E Portsmouth Dioceses Ecumenical Pilgrimage, (under the auspices of FHL) led by Bishop Philip Egan and Bishop Christopher Foster.

For more information email Rev. Iain MacFirbhisigh (RC Portsmouth Diocese) fhljersey@gmail.com or Revd. Giles Harris-Evans (C of E Portsmouth Diocese) wghevans@talktalk.net

If you are planning a pilgrimage please contact the office: office@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk **01926 512980.**

Meeting with Apostolic Administrator in Jerusalem



Jim Quinn, FHL's Chair of Trustees, has just arrived back from a five day visit to the Holy Land where he has been checking on the progress of FHL projects and investigating the many requests we receive locally for additional support.

Whilst in Jerusalem Jim met with Archbishop Pizzaballa, the Apostolic Administrator at the Latin Patriarchate, one of FHL's key partners in the Holy Land. Jim reported, "During the meeting I was able to update His Grace on our mission, our history in the Holy Land, our work with the Latin Patriarchate and how we can work more closely to encourage UK pilgrims to visit the Holy Land and support the Christian economy."

FHL IN THE HOLY LAND

Supporting the health of West Bank Christians

Each year FHL distributes around £96,000 of medical grants in the Holy Land. As well as supporting Christian patients visiting St. Luke's Hospital in Nablus and the Medical Centre at Ramallah, we receive many adhoc applications for emergency medical help. FHL's local Bethlehem committee regularly identifies upwards of 200 cases a year that need urgent medical attention. Since forming in 2009 FHL has enabled hundreds of Christians to have medications, small operations and investigations that otherwise would have been beyond their means. Often these beneficiaries face the additional burden of having little or no income to meet their essential daily needs. Where possible, FHL provide these individuals with a small monthly income of around 500 Shekels a month (approximately £100).

Typical of such cases is 72 year old Nemeh living alone in Bethlehem and suffering from a variety of health conditions. Whilst agencies like the UN help with her medication costs, FHL provides a small monthly income to assist with her living expenses. A similar case is that of Eline. Suffering from long term poor health Eline has taken care of her orphaned granddaughter, who studies at the Latin Patriarchate School in Beit Jala, since she was one year old. Without the monthly income provided by FHL life for this small Christian family would be very difficult. FHL are hugely grateful for the many donations we receive to help us in this work.

To make a donation:
Use the donate button on
www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk
or complete the forms on the back page of
this newsletter.



Providing employment in Nazareth, Israel – Peter Rand reports

The challenges for Christians are very different in the West Bank, Gaza, Israel and Jordan. For those living in Israel employment discrimination is a major challenge, with unemployment causing many young Christians to emigrate. During a visit a few months ago to Nazareth, I met up again with Fr. Amjad, the Parish Priest at St. Joseph's, and Habib Karam. Habib has been instrumental in setting up the Nazareth Circle of the Catenian Association, part of an international group of Catholics with their HQ in the UK. Catenian business leaders have offered to support a programme to mentor young Christians starting their own businesses through the help of a low or interest free loan. These loans would be administered by local Catenians and, as they are repaid, funds would be reinvested in similar businesses. Let us hope, through the incentive of starting and owning their own business, we can give more young people an opportunity to stay in the land of their birth, and that this idea will come to fruition during 2018.



Discussing youth employment for Christians in Nazareth: Nicholas Lebey FHL's Diocesan Coordinator for Southwark, Habib Karam and Peter Rand, FHL Vice Chairman.

FHL IN THE UK

Win ... Win ... Win ... the triple benefit of Diocesan Appeals

Lent, Harvest and Advent Appeals in Church of England Dioceses for Friends of the Holy Land are proving very beneficial to the most vulnerable Christians in the Holy Land, the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and spreading awareness of the work of FHL across this country.

The Mission at FHL is to give hope and practical support to individual named Christians in the Region who are in the greatest need. In partnership with Archbishop Suheil Dawani and his team at the Diocese of Jerusalem, we have identified those who are benefiting from education at the schools they manage and patients at the medical centres/hospitals they run in the West Bank, Gaza and Israel. By working with FHL as the channel for these funds, FHL is able to spread the word of our mission across every parish in the Diocese and provide the foundations for long-term support to our Christian brothers and sisters in the Holy Land.

If you have contacts and influence within your diocese, please consider making a direct approach suggesting the Diocese of Jerusalem as a worthy beneficiary for an appeal. Alternatively, share your contacts with us and we will do the rest.

Support FHL every time you shop

Shopping on line using EasyFundraising is a simple way to donate to FHL. So far we have received £812 from 51 supporters and with the increase in requests for help we are getting, every little really does help. If you shop on line please go to www.easyfundraising.org.uk and register. Each time you shop the retailer will give a donation to Friends of the Holy Land. You can even register your debit/credit card with them so that your high street shopping can also be used to raise funds. The website has a full list of the retailers signed up which includes names such as Amazon, eBay, John Lewis, M&S, Majestic Wines, Tesco, and Waitrose.

easyfundraising
.org.uk



Children at the Arab Evangelical School in Ramallah where the Diocese of Europe supports some pupils.

Inspiring Prayer

Praying for our Christian family in the Holy Land is central to our work. We have seen plenty of evidence to show that awareness raising, starting with prayer, results in donations of time and money. To inspire and engage our supporters to pray for Christians in the Holy Land we have created the following themed prayer calendar:



© Mazur/catholicnews.org.uk

January	The elderly and the sick living in the Holy Land
February	The work of FHL, the team in the UK and in the Holy Land
March	A continued Christian presence in the Holy Land
April	Children in the Holy Land
May	Christians in Gaza
June	Communications - raising awareness of the challenges faced

To see the suggested prayer for the current month and the next month please visit our website page www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk/who-are-fhl/prayer



FRIENDS OF THE HOLY LAND DONATION 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.**

I wish to make a gift aid/do not wish to gift aid (delete as appropriate) a donation to FHL
I enclose a Bank Standing order/cheque/cash (delete as appropriate) for a total of £
(Cheques should be made payable to 'Friends of the Holy Land')

GIFT AID DECLARATION

Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK tax payer. **I want to gift aid this donation 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 tax payer 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.

Please notify the charity if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name or home address, 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.

Title Initial(s) Surname
Full home address
..... Postcode Date
Email address
Please tick if you would like to be kept updated about FHL activities.

BANK STANDING ORDER FORM

Registered Charity No. 1130054

To: The Manager (your bank name)
Bank Address Postcode.....
Please pay the FHL £ Monthly Quarterly Annually
Amount in words From my Account No
Starting on (date) until further notice.
Name Address
..... Postcode
Signature Date

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

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

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

for office use only

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

Tel: 01926 512980 office@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk