

## FHL Patron applauds our work



We were delighted to catch up with FHL patron the Most Reverend Malcolm McMahon, the Archbishop of Liverpool, at his home in the city recently. We discussed tensions in the Middle East and the pressures that prompt Christians to consider emigrating. His Grace applauded FHL's ability to avoid politics, which allows us to carry out essential work in very difficult circumstances.

He said, *"The complexities of the Middle East can tempt us to turn our back on fellow Christians in the Holy Land, in the belief it is too hard to help them effectively. It is a great relief therefore, to see how FHL navigates through these challenges, providing a route that allows UK Christians to support named Christians living in the West Bank, Gaza, Israel and Jordan."*

*"These Christians bear witness to the story of Salvation; that it happened in a real place and to real people. It is hugely important they know they are not forgotten. Working with FHL means supporting our Christian family and not allowing the Holy Land to become a museum to a Christian past."*



*FHL patron Archbishop of Liverpool, the Most Rev Malcolm McMahon, with Maria McCaffery and Marion Homer from FHL*

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

### 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

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[www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk](http://www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk)

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# FHL IN THE UK

## A Message from our Chief Executive



Except for a few years at the start of my career I have spent almost all my working life in the not-for-profit sector so I'm used to the perennial struggle to make ends meet and, modesty aside, I have quite a good track record. So, when I became Chief Executive of FHL at the beginning of

the year and assumed responsibility for all UK activities, I readily accepted the task of creating a framework for taking FHL into its second decade. I recalled vividly our Chairman's comment in the introduction to a previous newsletter, when we passed the £3m milestone of direct support (a tremendous achievement for such a young charity), that one of the consequences of success is that we cultivate expectations for the future. This was so apparent on my own pilgrimage to the Holy Land in March.

Now, as I notch up my first full year with FHL I've been thinking about the importance of a key but often overlooked objective: **Sustainability**. This is my renewed focus for the next phase of our development. As we turned the financial year at the end of March we noted with sadness that our income for the past year was, for the first time, lower than the previous year, so our strategic

objective of providing practical support through fundraising has moved up the agenda. With your continued support I'm hopeful that the next end of year will see us restored to growth. We'd be especially glad to hear from anyone who has links with any charitable trusts or foundations.

One more impassioned plea:

**PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE** let's stay in touch!!

In common with all organisations that hold personal information we're having to adapt our systems to comply with the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). The biggest single and most important difference to you, our supporter, is that we shall not be able to communicate with you in the future without your expressed consent, so **PLEASE** ensure that you give us your permission to continue to send you this newsletter and to let you know periodically about our events and initiatives. We cannot provide vital assistance to the most needy and vulnerable Christians in the Holy Land if we cannot communicate with you. The simplest and quickest way to consent is via our website, where a quick click on our 'Keep in Touch' tab will do the trick. Alternatively, you can complete and return the consent form enclosed with all posted copies of this newsletter, or you can telephone the office, or email us with a simple note to say that you're happy to hear from us and by which method(s). It really does take just seconds and, rest assured, we'll keep your personal information private and safe.

*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

## Thank you from our Bethlehem Office



Reem Aburdeneh who works in FHL's Bethlehem office

On his recent visit to the West Bank Peter spent time with Nancy Wahhab and Reem Aburdeneh who staff FHL's office in Beit Jala, close to Bethlehem. Nancy and Reem are responsible for gathering information on potential FHL

'Family Support' beneficiaries and reporting on the progress of cases to FHL's UK Management Committee. The casework they handle is extensive with needy Christians of all ages contacting them for help or being referred through church parishes.

Reem reports,

*"Once a new case is made known to us we hear their needs, complete an application form, gather information from trusted people, and call other social associations in the area. We also make home visits to check on living conditions and discuss the case with FHL's Chairman Fr. Jamal. Unfortunately not all applications get help immediately, and a few cases go to the waiting list.*

*"On behalf of the people and myself, I express heartfelt thanks for all you do. I want to thank you again and thank those who donate and think about others (especially those who are in need and appreciate anything) for their generous donations, and help us complete our mission and assist those in our community. Friends of the Holy Land in Bethlehem welcome you any time to visit us in Bethlehem."*

Grants made under 'Family Support' assist with many needs including medical costs, school fees or just to help ensure a Christian family can meet their monthly essentials of food and water. FHL currently supports 90 families in the Bethlehem area.

### West Bank Christians supported by FHL's Support Programme



# FHL IN THE HOLY LAND

## A Partnership of Hope



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Archbishop Suheil Dawani

A key FHL partner in the Holy Land is the Anglican Diocese of Jerusalem. Through our close working relationship with Archbishop Suheil, and his colleagues at St George's, we are able to identify and help many needy Christians as well as support essential services provided by the Diocese.

The Diocese of Jerusalem runs more than 30 institutions in the Holy Land, including 17 schools and 2 hospitals. With an Anglican population of only 7,000, they are unable to maintain these institutions without external help, help that FHL consistently provides. Your donations enable the Diocese to fund Christian staff working in their hospital in Gaza, a hospital that provides the majority of its services for free, in one of the most deprived corners of the world. FHL grants mean the Diocese can provide medical facilities for Christian families in Ramallah and Nablus, as well as educational grants to Christian families in Israel and the West Bank.

In a recent letter, sent to every Bishop in the Church of England, Archbishop Suheil said,

*"The work of FHL helps us witness to the love of Christ for all peoples that live in this region, bringing relief to many of those who feel ignored and forgotten. Our prayerful partnership brings the gift of hope to many Christians in this land, especially as they come under increasing pressure to leave the region. Through engaging with FHL, Christians in the UK can gain a real connection with the Christians that still live in the Holy Land."*

## The Joy of Pilgrimage

Sandra Brinkley, FHL's Ambassador in the Hallam Diocese, shares a wonderful pilgrimage report including the many benefits of connecting with the 'Living Stones' of the Holy Land.

*"Pilgrimage to me is about four things – personal and spiritual refreshment, visiting the holy sites, and supporting the small Christian community, now at just 1% in Palestine. This means using Christian guides and Christian owned hotels, restaurants and transport companies. But, most importantly, it is about meeting Christians face to face, to assure them they are not forgotten."*



Pilgrims visiting the School of Joy

*I travelled with the Catenian Association, an international group of Catholic 'Brothers' and their wives. We attended Mass with the local parishioners at St Joseph's Church, next door to the Basilica in Nazareth. To see the young children serving on the altar, and to hear their beautiful Arabic singing, will remain with me for a very long time. Their warm welcome and happy smiles made it clear our visit was greatly appreciated.*

*The following day in Bethlehem, we divided into two groups to visit flagship FHL projects St. Martha's House and the School of Joy - many considered this the highlight of their pilgrimage. I will not forget dancing with the St Martha's House women – much laughter and fun was had in our short visit. We heard a moving presentation by the Vice Chancellor of Bethlehem University, sharing the challenges for young people attending the university. Peter Rand, FHL's Vice Chairman, also spoke, focusing on the charity's work and how pilgrims could support the most vulnerable Christians when they returned to the UK.*

*We were also able to help in a very tangible way. Every pilgrim was encouraged to take non-prescription medications, toothbrushes and other toiletries, which we passed to FHL for distribution to poor families.*

*I would strongly encourage anyone to go on pilgrimage; you will never know what an amazing experience it is until you do."*

# FHL IN THE HOLY LAND

## A Gaza Testimony

Regular readers will know that FHL supports the tiny Christian population of Gaza through two projects – supporting Christian university students and funding a Christian youth employment programme. One of the beneficiaries of the youth employment programme recently sent us this message.



*"My name is Ramy Tarazi, I am 25 years old and I live in the Gaza Strip. I have a BA in accounting and I am employed by the Orthodox Culture Centre. I am so grateful to Friends of the Holy Land for supporting the youth of Gaza and giving me this opportunity to gain valuable work experience.*

*No one can deny that the Christian situation in Gaza is very serious – especially for young Christians. How can we, as a Christian society, convince young people to stay when we are unable to provide them a livelihood to allow them to live in dignity? We ask you, as our Christian family, to stand by us and support the Christian community in Gaza before it's too late and our community melts away."*

Ramy also shared the story of George Anton and the struggles he faces bringing up a young family in the Gaza:



*George and Nisreen Anton, with their three daughters.*

*"As a Christian family living in Gaza we have so many fears about the future. We have lived through three wars; our only hope for survival was through our faith that the Lord Jesus Christ would have mercy on this small piece of land.*

*To live in Gaza means to live in a continuous struggle between looking for safety and looking for proper opportunities for your family."*



*FHL Vice Chairman, Peter Rand, meets youth employment beneficiaries in Gaza with Fr. Mario and Bishop Christopher Chessun.*

## Prayer for Gaza



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*Fr. Mario, priest in the Holy Family Parish in Gaza City has recently said this of Gaza, "I never saw the situation as bad as it is now. I think we must pray and ask God to end the injustice and conflicts in this land."*

In response we share a prayer from the April meeting of the Roman Catholic bishops of England and Wales held in Leeds. Here they discussed the Middle East, the continuing conflict in Gaza and the ongoing blockade, which prevents adequate medical assistance and undermines hopes for peace.

The bishops' prayer:

*Almighty Father,*

*We pray for the peoples of the world caught up in conflict and strife. We remember with particular love the people of Syria and Gaza; we pray for those whose love of neighbour has been destroyed in the bitterness of enmity.*

*May their fear be submerged in compassion. May their distrust be diluted by hope, as a vision of peace and Easter joy illuminates all darkened minds and hate-filled hearts.*

*We ask this in the name of the Risen Christ.*

*Amen*

To support our work in Gaza you can make an online donation via our website at [www.friendsoftheholylord.org.uk](http://www.friendsoftheholylord.org.uk) or complete and return the standing order and gift aid forms on the back of this newsletter.

# FHL IN THE HOLY LAND

## Extending support in Jordan

Our last newsletter highlighted the increased demand for support in Jordan and our desire to help the Christian community in that region. The good news is that funds have been allocated to support two new projects in Jordan, whilst maintaining help to the one hundred Iraqi Christian refugees first identified in 2016.

## Cheese making in Amman



The FHL office has received worrying reports that resident Christians in Jordan are facing increased unemployment. Reflecting our mission to develop resilient and enduring Christian communities in the Holy Land we have been considering what direct support can be given to alleviate this situation.

With the help of Fr Mario Cornioli, a priest for the Latin Patriarchate and instrumental in identifying previous FHL projects in the area, a small cheese making business was created which will, with the right support, provide employment for local Christians. For two weeks in March an Italian expert visited Jordan to provide training in making cheese for local pizzerias. The project cost £10,500 to set up, and uses 30 litres of sheep milk each day to produce 3.5kg of cheese. Thanks to the generous donations of our supporters FHL has now fully funded this start up business, which provides a modest income for ten Jordanian Christians in Ader village, in the Karak Province outside Amman.



## Iraqi Christian Refugees

Following Peter's meeting with Fr. George Kopti of Ashrafieh Parish in January, FHL has committed to supporting an additional 128 Iraqi Christian refugees who have settled in Amman. A grant of £4,500 was made to the Anglican Alliance to cover the cost of food coupons, medications and home appliances. The group of 128 includes 51 children.

*"I would like to urge our sisters and brothers in our ministry among these Iraqi Christian families, who were ready to lose everything, but not their Christian faith, when ISIS invaded their villages and homes. St. Paul's is a small Anglican community and we feel Christ calling us to serve our sisters and brothers from Iraq until God finds them another way for a safe future."* Fr. George Kopti



*Iraqi Christian Refugees in Amman who are supported by FHL*

## Update on Jordan Dress making Project

Whilst in Amman, Peter visited Rafedin, the dress-making project that generates a small income for 20 Iraqi Christian refugees. Peter was delighted to see that Rafedin was thriving, with dresses, bags and ties being sold to the local community and internationally through its Facebook page. The skills acquired by the young Christian beneficiaries will help them find employment in the country to which they will eventually relocate. Working together has also positively affected the girls' morale.



*"Supporters should be proud of the impact their donations have made on the lives of these young Christians".*  
Peter Rand Vice Chair of FHL

Fr. Mario reports, *"As they work, you see them smiling. It helps them forget the violence and fear they have encountered."*

# FHL IN THE HOLY LAND

## Reaching out to Trusts and Foundations



Mick Boyle  
FHL's  
'Trusts and  
Foundations  
Manager'

FHL's new 'Trusts and Foundations' Manager, Mick Boyle, has been in post for almost 6 months, working two days a week from his home near Stockport. Mick has excellent credentials having secured funding in excess of £400,000 to support renovations to his local parish church and a further £326,000 of European funding to support two education projects.

To be a 'Trust Fundraiser' requires a significant amount of work identifying grant giving bodies whose aims match those of the charity looking for funding. Mick has made significant progress in this area and is now working on developing relationships to optimise our chances of successful applications. Happily, the first quarter of this year has seen some early success and decisions are expected shortly on several further applications. Mick says,

*"This is a hugely enjoyable process and I'm finding the staff at grant giving bodies extremely helpful – it's very rewarding to be an active part of FHL. I first became aware of FHL when my wife, Lynn, now the FHL diocesan co-ordinator for Chester, and I, were trying to find a way to support a Palestinian Christian Guide and his young family. Whatever we tried to do, or whomever we approached, we ended up down alleyways with doors well and truly bolted at the end of them. That was until we discovered FHL and witnessed first-hand how working with them meant it **was** possible to help a Christian family in Bethlehem. Ever since, I've been a passionate supporter of the organisation and the causes it champions."*

If any FHL supporter has personal contacts at a charitable trust please let us know by emailing the [office@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk](mailto:office@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk) or by telephone on **01926 512980**.

## We need your consent to stay in touch



As a supporter of FHL, we hope you want to continue hearing about the work we do and how you can help. New laws, which came into force in May, mean we need your active consent to do this. The good news

is consent can be given quickly and easily in one of two ways. Firstly, you can complete and return the consent form enclosed with all posted copies of this newsletter, or you can visit our website and click the 'Keep in Touch' tab. To provide complete reassurance on how we store and use your personal data all posted newsletters are accompanied by a copy of FHL's privacy policy, which can be seen on our website [www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk](http://www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk).

## Diary Dates

### 2018 FHL National Gathering

**Sat 22nd Sept 10.30am to 4.30pm, Kenilworth**

The date for this year's National Gathering has been set as Saturday 22nd September, 10.30am - 4.30pm. The venue will once again be the Parish Centre at St Francis of Assisi Church, 110 Warwick Rd, Kenilworth CV8 1HL. All supporters are welcome. More details will follow in due course but please mark this date in your diary.

### 2018 FHL Carol Service

**Fri 7th Dec 7.30pm, Lichfield Cathedral**

After the success of last year's event the Dean of Lichfield Cathedral, the Very Revd. Adrian Dorber, has once again kindly arranged for a dedicated Christmas Carol Service to be held at Lichfield Cathedral. This will be a ticketed event with all proceeds going to FHL. More information on this special occasion will follow soon.



# 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. 

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*for office use only*

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

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