



## Record numbers attend National Gathering

Record numbers attended FHL's National Gathering held in Kenilworth this year. More than 100 Friends were present, with almost half attending for the first time. The event demonstrated FHL's ability to gather UK Christians together in partnership and support for the 'Living Stones' of the Holy Land - Christians over here helping Christians over there.



*Robert Foskett speaker at the National Gathering*

Attendees listened intently to keynote speaker Sami El-Yousef, descended from one of Jerusalem's oldest Christian families and CEO of the Latin Patriarchate, as he explained the challenges faced by Christians living in the Holy Land. Sami explained the importance of the Christian institutions in the region, 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 the Christian church.

*"In this troubled land Christian values attract people into our institutions. We are not serving Christians exclusively - in our schools Christians and Muslims are growing up together."*



*Sami El-Yousef speaks at Kenilworth*

During the afternoon, a number of short presentations were made by FHL supporters, including 11 year old Robert Foskett, student at the King's School in Worcester. Robert explained how the sale of homemade candles raised £830 for the School of Joy in Beit Sahour.

### FHL's objectives

- To raise awareness of the challenges facing 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 (pilgrimage) to the Holy Land to meet local Christians

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

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

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# FHL IN THE UK

## My vision for FHL

With our 10th Birthday on the horizon in November 2019, I would like to share my vision for FHL. What a privilege and pleasure it has been to spend the last decade with so many wonderful volunteers (and a handful of stalwart staff) both in this country and the Holy Land. Everyone can be proud of what has been achieved to 'give hope to vulnerable Christians in the Holy Land'. We began in Bethlehem, spread across the West Bank, then into Israel and in the last few years into Gaza and supporting Iraqi Christian refugees in Jordan. Strong links have been established with the hierarchy over here and over there, especially in the Anglican and Catholic church. FHL have established an office in Bethlehem, supporting our local Holy Land Committee.



The record attendance at our National Gathering in Kenilworth demonstrated again the enthusiasm of our supporters, exemplified by an 11 year old speaker and fundraiser who inspired the audience!

However, much as I am impressed by other deserving causes, the needs of the Church in Jerusalem are as old as the Epistles, when Paul collected for the 'poor of Jerusalem'. Almost the first obligation undertaken by the Church was to support the Church in Jerusalem and this

remains as necessary today as it was two thousand years ago.

So, my vision for the future of FHL is that our simple objectives should reach every Christian of whatever denomination in the UK – increasing their awareness of the plight of our brothers and sisters, praying for them, offering them practical support and encouraging pilgrimage so they can put their hands on the shoulders of those who feel forgotten.

During 2019, God willing, I shall make my 25th visit to the Holy Land. Each time I go, I witness a greater need than the last. We have an obligation to provide sustainable and emergency help to the most needy. I encourage you to be as generous as you are able – with your time as well as your donations – to ensure FHL fulfils its mission as we approach our 10th birthday and move into our 2nd decade.

*Peter Rand, FHL Vice Chairman and Trustee*

## Archbishop remains as patron

FHL received a letter from Lambeth Palace recently confirming that the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend and Right Honourable Justin Welby, has confirmed his continued patronage of FHL. This is a huge honour for our Charity, as the Archbishop has many calls on his time.



**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

### Management Committee

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

# FHL IN THE HOLY LAND

## Supporting young Christians in Gaza

Supporting the tiny Christian population of Gaza is a vital consideration for FHL. The work that the Christian community undertakes, makes an impact well beyond its size, reaching everywhere across the Gaza Strip. FHL funds two projects, in partnership with the Pontifical Mission of Jerusalem, focusing on the younger members of the Christian community. The University Scholarships Scheme and the Youth Employment Programme hope to encourage and sustain young Christians in Gaza when every aspect of their normal life is challenged. The office has been delighted to receive news from some of the beneficiaries themselves. We learned that our donations and prayers are providing some small reassurance whilst appreciating their need for continued help is urgent.

Lana Imad Al Sayegh, is supported through the scholarships programme, and is expected to graduate in 2023. In her spare time Lana is a member of the basketball team at the YMCA.



Lana Imaad Al Sayegh

Lana reports,

*"I always wanted to be a doctor. I am going to do my best to finish my studying and become one of the best doctors I can. I am totally overwhelmed by your kind hearted prayers - I am sure they help us survive."*



Elia Salfiti

Elia Salfiti wrote to us saying,

*"Without patrons to support students like me many would be unable to pursue medical degrees and become the next generation of doctors in Gaza."*



Nataly Sayegh

Nataly Sayegh emailed us to say,

*"I feel that Christian families in the UK are very close to my community, feeling our suffering and standing by us with their prayers."*

Please keep these young people in your prayers as they continue their studies and start on their careers in the most challenging of situations.



Raed Tarazi and Moussa S Ayyad are studying degree courses through FHL's University Scholarship programme.



FHL are grateful to Ramy Tarazi, beneficiary of our Gaza Youth Employment Programme, who regularly updates us with news from his community.

You can donate online to support our work in Gaza at [www.friendsofthehollyland.org.uk](http://www.friendsofthehollyland.org.uk) or complete and return the standing order and gift aid forms at the back of this newsletter.



# FHL IN THE UK

## Welcome to our new Diocesan Coordinators

FHL are delighted to announce the appointment of two new Diocesan Coordinators, Fr. Colin Mason for Clifton and Revd. Michael Garland for Gloucester. Diocesan Coordinators are our 'eyes and ears' in the diocese helping identify opportunities, nurturing support, and working with volunteers at deanery and parish level. We have two thirds of RC and Anglican Dioceses covered. Anyone with a desire to promote FHL at diocesan level please contact the office at [office@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk](mailto:office@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk) or call 01926 512980



Fr. Colin Mason  
*"I was delighted to be asked by Bishop Declan, Bishop of Clifton, to be FHL's Diocesan Coordinator. This important organisation is doing crucial work - it is always important for Christians in the UK to remember their brothers and sisters in the Holy Land."*



Revd. Michael Garland  
*"I have visited the Holy Land on several occasions as a Pilgrimage Leader and been keen to observe and encourage the hard-pressed Christian community there, to ensure they are not forgotten. This is a principal aim of FHL and I will strive to do whatever I can to help to promote this cause."*

## New collection boxes



In the wake of US funding reductions the Palestinian National Authority needs significant increased resources to support refugees in the West Bank, Gaza and Jordan. Conscious of the implications for those without refugee status, and aware that every little really does help, FHL has been considering how donations could be encouraged.

We are hopeful that the availability of a lightweight, easy to assemble cardboard collection box will help. This box is designed to encourage one off collections of loose change for short periods at any time of year. Supporters have already made use of the boxes in schools and parish groups but we would welcome further suggestions. Each batch sent out needs someone to track where the boxes go, be responsible for collecting them in again, and to return the donations to our office at Kenilworth.

The initial print run is reducing fast so please make contact as soon as possible to express an interest. If you would like to create a parish or deanery launch event for the boxes and have a speaker talk about our work please let us know by contacting the FHL office, [office@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk](mailto:office@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk) or call 01926 512980.

# FHL IN THE HOLY LAND

## News from Ashrafieh in Jordan

Supporters will recall that FHL works with Fr. George Al Kopti of Ashrafieh parish in Amman, Jordan. This parish has a mission to support Iraqi and Syrian Christian refugee families currently living there. We have been able to make the Anglican Alliance a number of grants to cover the cost of food coupons, medications and home appliances to support 128 refugees, including 51 children.



Fr. Kopti with his wife Mary, who plays an important part in the parish's refugee work

Fr. George has sent reports describing how the parish has created a junior youth group and a women's group – the main participants of which are refugees. The pictures he shared show some happy occasions.

Parishioners of Ashrafieh are successfully

extending the hand of friendship to fellow Christians who have been through the most horrific experiences, forced to leave their homes because of their faith.



The pictures above show Christian refugees involved in parish life.

## Discrimination in Israel

Christians living in the Holy Land face a complexity of pressures, reflecting lives lived under occupation, discrimination and as refugees. It is the invisible wall of employment discrimination that poses the biggest challenge for Christians in



Israel. A letter by Haifa University MBA student, and resident of Nazareth, Susan Barhoum, clearly explains this.

*"Palestinian Arabs living in Israel are a minority within a minority. Their number is dwindling as more and more leave to find better lives. This Christian community has existed since Pentecost and is an extension of the Christian presence around the world. We do not want our Churches to become merely buildings without the presence of 'Living Stones'. At the same time, Christians are not icons, they have needs and aspirations that need to be addressed."*

## Supporting Christian refugees

Gillie Carrington, a parishioner of St Francis of Assisi in Kenilworth, held a sale of her personal artwork at FHL's National Gathering and raised over £1,000. Gillie asked that this money be used in our work supporting Iraqi Christian refugees in Jordan.

Thank you Gillie, we are so grateful for your support.

We love to hear your fundraising stories be they large or small – please send them, with photos where possible, to our Communications Manager [marion.homer@friendsoftheholylnd.org.uk](mailto:marion.homer@friendsoftheholylnd.org.uk)



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



# FHL IN THE HOLY LAND

## West Bank summer camps



FHL were pleased to support two Christian summer schools in the West Bank this year.

The first grant of

£2,000 was made to the Diocese of Jerusalem to support a summer school in Nablus, which is 40 miles north of Jerusalem. FHL was one of three organisations to assist this project, providing two weeks respite relief to Christian children and their families from Nablus and surrounding villages. The second grant of £800 was made to the Latin Parish in Beit Jala, a Palestinian town to the east of Bethlehem.

Grants covered the cost of food, trips, transportation, activities and evening events where families were also invited. The camps provided a welcome distraction from the challenges of everyday life growing up as a Christian in the West Bank, and gave the church an opportunity to engage with their young people outside of Sunday service routines. For most West Bank Christians the opportunity for a holiday, as we understand it, is well beyond their means. These camps provided a safe place where their children could relax and have fun.

Fr. Yousef, previously a parish priest in the West Bank, describes these camps as *"the only way we can offer peace, joy, fresh air and happiness to our stressed children"*.

FHL hopes to support Christian youth camps again next summer and encourages anyone wishing to fundraise for these projects to contact us [office@friendsoftheholyland.org.uk](mailto:office@friendsoftheholyland.org.uk) or call **01926 512980**.



*FHL West Bank beneficiary*

## A prayer for Christians in the Holy Land

*"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened."* (Matthew 7 7:8)

Please pray:

- For the parishes and congregations in the Holy Land that they can work together to sustain a vibrant Christian presence.
- For the priests, clergy and those who serve the church and maintain the holy places.
- For peace in the local communities between people of all faiths.
- For the work of the Christian institutions, schools and hospitals in the Holy Land.
- That people of all faiths be treated fairly and with dignity and respect.
- For those working to promote a lasting peace and understanding among those who live in the Holy Land.
- For the leaders of the nations that they will encourage dialogue and reconciliation in the Middle East.



*Children playing in the West Bank*

## The Christians of Bethlehem

At our recent National Gathering Sami El-Yousef, CEO of the Latin Patriarchate, revealed the dramatic decline of Christians living in Bethlehem over the past 70 years. In 1947 Christians in Bethlehem represented 85% of the community, by 1998 that figure had shrunk to 40%, and now they account for just 18% of the total population. Many Christians have chosen to emigrate rather than face a life of water shortages, travel restrictions, employment discrimination and little or no welfare care. For those who remain we pray that their faith will give them strength and bring them peace, hope and reconciliation.

# FHL IN THE UK

## Pilgrimage listing

One of our four objectives is to encourage pilgrimage to the Holy Land. We believe, for the Christian community in the Holy Land to flourish, more pilgrims must make time to visit indigenous Christians and support the local Christian economy.

However, if there is no pilgrimage organised locally, it can be difficult to know how to find one. The questions facing the 'would-be' pilgrim are daunting. Do I visit my local travel agent? How do I know they will understand my spiritual expectations? Is it safe? The task quickly becomes too difficult and the decision to go on pilgrimage put off for another time.

FHL are seeking to remedy this.

We have published a '**Pilgrimage Listing**' on our website with the hope it will become the 'go-to' resource for all those looking for a Holy Land pilgrimage. To find the listing go to the 'What we do' tab found on the top line of our website [www.friendsoftheholyland.org.uk](http://www.friendsoftheholyland.org.uk)

We are working closely with pilgrimage organisers to keep this list current. Rene Siva, Managing Director of Lightline Pilgrimages, said,

*"Lightline Pilgrimages are very pleased to support this FHL initiative. Pilgrimage to the Holy Land is so important, because it can make a real difference to the most vulnerable Christians. Only by visiting, and putting our hands on the shoulders of our Christian brothers and sisters, can we show them they are not forgotten."*



## Prayer in Wallasey parishes

Praying for our Christian family in the Holy Land is one of FHL's four key objectives, so we were delighted to hear of a prayer focused event in the Diocese of Shrewsbury. A weekend of prayer was held across three parishes in Wallasey, focusing on the plight of Christians living in the Holy Land, and the work of FHL in supporting and sustaining them. Led by FHL Diocesan Coordinator Patrick Revans, a small but dedicated team of four attended all seven weekend Masses making a short presentation at each.

Pat explained, *"This focused weekend on prayer was enthusiastically promoted by our clergy and we are so very grateful for their support. It was a prayer led event, exclusive of any fundraising - parishioners were not being asked to put their hands in their pockets. The weekend culminated in a showing of the FHL film 'The Suffering Church' followed by a 'holy half hour' praying in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament at St Albans Church in Liscard, Wallasey."* Pat reported that every parishioner attending the weekend services left with an FHL prayer card.

If any other supporter would like help and advice in creating a similar prayer focused event in their church or parish please let us know. We have a good supply of prayer cards that we can share with you. We have seen much evidence over the years that awareness raising, started through prayer, often leads to donations of time and money.



## Speaker appeal

Could you make a presentation about the work of FHL in your local church or parish? Experience shows us that pulpit presentations or short talks at church groups often leads to donations of time and money.

Please email [office@friendsoftheholyland.org.uk](mailto:office@friendsoftheholyland.org.uk) or call **01926 512980** to let us know of any opportunities.





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