

Monthly Update **Feb 2019**

Welcome to FHL's Feb 2019 Update. This month we have articles on:

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Welcome to our new Executive Director

FHL are delighted to announce the appointment of Brendan Metcalfe as FHL's new Executive Director.



Peter Rand writes,

"I am delighted to welcome Brendan to the FHL team. This is a crucial time in our development as we build on the foundations of our first 10 years and move forward to the next ten and beyond. I am sure you will join me in praying for Brendan and wishing him every success in his new role."

The Executive Director is a full time role, and Brendan will be based from his home in Milton Keynes. After an initial induction period, the intention is that Brendan will spend around one day a week in Kenilworth, with 1 to 1 ½ days working from home, the balance of time will be spent 'out and about', supporting and inspiring current supporters and engaging with new ones.

Brendan said,

"I am very pleased to take on the role of Executive Director of FHL. I am excited by the challenge to lead the organisation into its future, and to build on the strong foundation established over the past 10 years."

Mindful of my responsibility to safeguard and develop the legacy created by our founder, Michael Whelan, I am confident that with the support of the FHL team of volunteers, staff and trustees, we can together continue to be a positive difference in the daily lives of vulnerable Christians in the Holy Land, and support the maintenance of a Christian presence in the land of its birth.

Over my 30 years in business working across 4 continents, I am practised in picking up the reins in a new role fairly quickly, but I am grateful for your patience and prayers as I get to grips with our mission. I look forward to meeting you all in person as soon as possible so you can share your personal ideas with me. "

Karen Baxter- FHL's office Manager, Mick Boyle -Trust and Foundations Manager, and the new Communications Manager will all report to Brendan. Peter Rand, Trustee and Vice Chairman, will continue to take responsibility, on behalf of Brendan, for FHL's work in the Holy Land.

FHL Joins Bishops in the Holy Land

FHL was, once again, immensely privileged to be invited to take part in the 'Holy Land Coordination', a pilgrimage, organised by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. Attended by bishops from around the world the annual pilgrimage demonstrates active support to the Christian community in the land of Jesus' birth.



On this occasion it was our Chairman, Jim Quinn, who joined the group of visiting bishops which included FHL Patron Christopher Chessun Bishop of Southwark.

"It was immensely gratifying to be welcomed so warmly into this delegation of visiting bishops, there was a great appreciation of the work we do and the role we play to ensure the Christians of the Holy Land are not forgotten." by Jim Quinn FHL Trustee Chairman

The Holy Land Coordination is not a fund-raising or project-based body. However, considerable interest in pilgrimages has developed as a result of the Bishops' visits. This year, the Bishops were focusing on the theme: "Christians in Israel; challenges and opportunities."

During his homily, preached at the Zababdeh's Church of the Visitation, the Most Reverend Stephen Brislin, Archbishop of Cape Town, recognised the absence of a 'quick fix' to ease tensions in the Holy Land but affirmed the community with the clear message that the world's Christians stand with them:

We cannot solve the problems of the Holy Land, but what we can do is to say to you: you are not alone. We hold you in our prayers, but we also hold you in our hearts. May the God of creation and salvation bless and strengthen you, that you may continue to give faithful witness to him.

Christians in Israel

As a member of the 'Holy Land Coordination' FHL Chairman, Jim Quin, was able to see first-hand the lives of Christians in Israel and the particular challenges they face. The trip included stays in the Israeli city of Haifa and Jerusalem. Jim witnessed the Christian community playing a vital role in Israeli society through their schools and hospitals, and also the part they play in public life as they attempt to build bridges between different faiths.



However, it is clear that they, along with other Palestinian Arab Citizens, face profound difficulties finding themselves systematically marginalised. Those Israeli Christians he met with expressed particular concern about the Nation State Law that was passed in the last year. Christian leaders warn that this law has created a "constitutional and legal basis for discrimination" against minorities, undermining the ideals of equality, justice and democracy.

"It is clear that the Christian community of Israel face difficulties associated with discrimination. I am pleased to know that FHL are continuing to play an important role in raising awareness about these challenges, and are able to help needy Christian families in Israel through our targeted programme of family support."

Jim Quinn, FHL Trustee Chairman

Inspired to Raise £1,500

Congratulations to Janek Codlin, a year 11 student from St Mary's Independent School in Southampton, who successfully raised over £1500 for the School of Joy, in Beit Jala. Janek visited the School whilst on a parish pilgrimage to the Holy Land. When asked what inspired him to arrange the concert he said,



"The children, despite their personal challenges, welcomed us with joy, optimism and hope – something I will never forget. That day I promised to always remember them, and their teachers, and try where I could to support them – to remind them they are not forgotten!"

This is an extract from Janek's report on the concert:

"The concert was held on the 25th November 2018 at St Joseph's in Southampton followed by tea and cake! Janek secured six different musical acts that performed during the 90 minute concert; they were all incredible. The concert was well attended and the audience all enjoyed the variety of music and also the cakes afterwards. Janek has already been asked when is the next concert; there seems to be a number of other acts interested in participating."

A fond farewell

A message from our Communications Manager Marion Homer:



This month I have some news to share which is a little difficult for me personally. After two years and eight months working as FHL's Communications Manager I will be leaving on Wednesday Feb 6th.

As many of you will know, I work as FHL's Communications Manager three days a week; on Thursdays and Fridays I manage Stratford upon Avon's Foodbank. Unfortunately, the demand for Foodbank services continues to grow – and it is against this climate of increasing need that the Foodbank's trustees have asked me to work full time for them.

I'm very sad to be leaving FHL. I have valued the opportunity to serve our Christian family in the Holy Land and, as a Christian myself, working in a faith based role has been very important to me. My only regret is that I was never able to meet our founder Michael Whelan. However, I'm sure he would have been proud of the enormous impact we have made and would urge us to continue, in the next decade of our history, raising awareness of the challenges faced by Christians living in the Holy Land, and to do all that we can to let them know they are not forgotten.

I need hardly ask, as I know you always will, but please take care of this special and unique charity.

God Bless,

Marion

Peter Rand, FHL Trustee writes,



"We shall be very sorry to see Marion leave FHL. We fully respect her priority for one full-time role, which FHL were not in a position to offer, and are pleased to know that she intends to keep in touch!"

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Marion for her commitment and valuable contribution to the work of FHL, especially in the areas of marketing and communications over the last 2 ½ years. The website, case studies, our social media presence, display stand and many others areas have moved on a long way in that time and provide a solid foundation to move forward in the future.

I am sure you will join me in wishing her well in her extended role with the Stratford upon Avon Foodbank.

Meanwhile, Marion will be preparing the usual February Update, to be distributed in the first week of February, and Jen Hill, FHL's Office Administrator, will pick up some of Marion's website work, pending the appointment of a new Communications Manager in due course."

Online giving news



Supporters may be aware that for some years FHL has used 'BT My Donate' to facilitate online giving. Unfortunately, we have been advised that this service will end as of 30th June 2019. Please be reassured that we are looking at alternative platforms and will advise you of our new arrangements ASAP. If you have a standing order set up through BT My Donate we will be writing to you in good time to enable you to divert that standing order to the new platform.

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