

The Rt. Rev.
Bishop Dr. Munib Younan
The Evangelical Lutheran Church
in Jordan and the Holy Land
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**The United
Evangelical Lutheran Church
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The Presiding Bishop

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**“Living Witness – Creative Diakonia“ – ELCJHL Anniversary Celebrations in May 2009:
170 years evangelical witness in the Holy Land, 50 years Synod of the Evangelical
Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and 30 years of Arabic Lutheran
Bishopric**

Your Excellency Bishop Dr. Younan,
dear brother Munib,

as Presiding Bishop and as President of the General Synod of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (VELKD) it is an honour and a deep joy for us to congratulate the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land to its Anniversary Celebrations 2009 on behalf of the Church Council of VELKD. During the Church Council meeting on May 7-8, 2009, we have remembered the history of evangelical witness in the Holy Land and have thanked our good Lord that He has planted and preserved your church and provided a richly blessed leadership by the ELCJHL bishops and pastors, by the evangelists and women leaders for so many decades now.

As your sister church within the communion of the Lutheran World Federation we are grateful that God has called men and women in Palestine to be “living witnesses” of the gospel of Jesus Christ and to be part of God’s mission to the world in spreading the Lutheran understanding of the gospel as the good news of God’s justification of the sinner by grace alone. We are deeply convinced that the Palestinian Lutheran Christians through their witness contribute to the ecumenical communion of churches within the Holy Land as well as to the building of bridges between the religions which all call this land “holy”: Christians, Jews and Muslims.

We are also grateful that as Lutheran churches we accompany each other in our service to society. The “creative diakonia” of the ELCJHL in the Palestinian society, especially through its educational work in its schools, is a shining example for us in Germany, too, to build up a just and peaceful community by serving the needs of children and youth first.

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As sisters and brothers in Christ we will stand by your side supporting your witness in proclamation and diakonia in the Holy Land also in the years to come. We pray for all members of the ELCJHL that God may strengthen them and encourage them to be witnesses of His grace. We pray to God that He may let the ELCJHL grow and bring fruit to a society torn by suffering and injustice so that people may see and hear your witness and give thanks to God our Father in heaven. We pray to God that He gives comfort and joy to every heart longing for peace and a life in fullness as Jesus Christ has promised us.

As Presiding Bishop it will be my personal joy to be part of the celebrations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land during the weekend of May 16-17, 2009 in Beit Sahour, Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Let our celebrating together be a witness of our communion in Christ and of the present and future commitment of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany to accompany its sister church in Palestine in God's mission.

With sincere greetings in Christ –

(Dr. Johannes Friedrich)
Presiding Bishop

(Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Wilfried Hartmann)
President of the General Synod