



# elcjhle-pistle

News from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land

Salaam and grace to you from Jerusalem, City of Peace

July-August-September 2009

## ELCJHL looks to future in training leaders Adult, youth programs begin

Are good leaders born or made? The ELCJHL is training its future leaders instead of debating this question. Leadership training was identified as a top concern by the ELCJHL church council last September. Two leadership training programs got under way this summer, one for adults and one for youth.

Starting June 8, 18 potential leaders gathered at the ELCJHL Lutheran School of Beit Sahour for a three-week workshop. The workshop is the first component of a three-year program that will include such face-to-face workshops as well as online distance learning and individual coaching.

Leading the program is Dr. Nadyne Guzmán, an education professional from Colorado, U.S.A. Funding for the program was provided by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs through Norwegian Church Aid. For more on the program, see the related article elsewhere in this newsletter.

Although program participants come from various professions, most are teachers. ELCJHL director of schools Dr. Charlie Haddad organized the program, with the help of Dr. Rod Schofield, who serves as education liaison from the ELCJHL's U.S. partner, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. ✕



**YOU'RE IT!** Youth from various ELCJHL congregations get acquainted with a game of tag at a recent leadership training retreat.

### Training program seeks to train youth for church, society

ELCJHL young people met July 30-Aug. 1 in Bethlehem to begin their own leadership training program. Leading the program, which is known as Sahiroun, or "Night Watchers," are two International Center of Bethlehem staff members, Susan Gharib and Mary Zreineh, as well as Ashraf Tannous, former vicar at the ELCJHL Lutheran Church of Hope in Ramallah. According to Zreineh, the participants, ages 14 to 16, will have monthly meetings as well as a one-week workshop each year of the three-year program. In addition to Bible studies, youngsters will learn about communication skills and serving others.

The program is apparently off to a good start, based on comments by Tannous when asked about the opening weekend.

"The spirit of the kids was very nice," he said. They were cooperative, very engaged in discussions and readily connected to one another, he said.

Program leaders chose youth to participate in the program based on their leadership potential. They must attend at least 85 percent of sessions in order to receive a certificate of participation, Tannous said. ✕

### Inside:

- ELCJHL schools spread hope
- Adult, youth leadership programs commence
- Churches finish busy summer
- Youth leaders denied permits
- Bishop visits Canada, Lebanon, more
- Women meet in Ramallah

### Calendar:

- Aug. 21-Sept. 19: Ramadan
- Sept. 4: East-West musical evening, Redeemer, 8 p.m.
- Sept. 12: Laudamus Te Choir concert, Redeemer, 8 p.m.
- Sept. 19: Eid-ul-Fitr
- Sept. 28: Yom Kippur
- Oct. 2-9: Sukkot
- Nov. 7: Organ recital, Redeemer, 8 p.m.
- Nov. 25-29: Hajj
- Nov. 30: Eid-ul-Adha
- Dec. 19: Gala Christmas concert, Redeemer, 7 p.m.
- Dec. 11-19: Chanukah

## World takes note of evictions in Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood

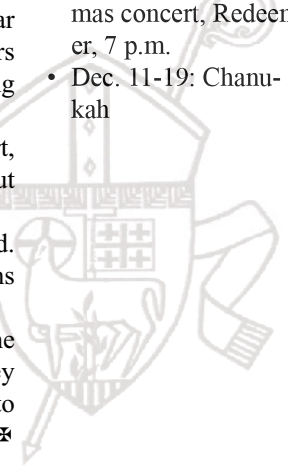
The Aug. 2 eviction of 53 people from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem has garnered world-wide attention.

ELCJHL Bishop Munib Younan said the eviction of the families will "create a chaotic situation in East Jerusalem." The eviction came after the Israeli Supreme Court favored Jewish claims to the land, capping the evicted Palestinian families' 37-year legal battle to retain ownership.

Such decisions make it difficult for Israelis and Palestinians to live together peacefully, the bishop said. "Coexistence can only happen by acceptance of the other and by giving others their rights," he said, calling the development "coercive coexistence, not just coexistence."

Three Israeli police cars guarded settlers inside the Hanoun house while he sat on the sidewalk with the Hanoun family the week after

**Sheikh Jarrah, Page 7**



## Investing in the future, fostering excellence

### Hope is part of the curriculum for ELCJHL schools

by Sister Sylvia Countess

The late Palestinian poet, Mahmoud Darwish, once said of his people, “We suffer from an incurable malady: hope.” The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land would call this condition a Christian imperative and a national survival skill. “All we can do is hope; we have nothing else,” a Lutheran school administrator once told a group of visitors. Living in the economic and political instability of the Israeli occupation requires steadfastness and determination.

“We suffer from an incurable malady: hope.”  
– Mahmoud Darwish,  
Palestinian poet

Planning for the future despite a troubled present is a commitment to hope. This past summer staff and students benefited from some new programs related to the strategic planning begun a few years ago by Dr. Charlie Haddad, ELCJHL Director of Education.

Here is a sample of some of the many ways the ELCJHL is investing in Palestine’s future:

- Eighteen teachers and others from around the ELCJHL began a leadership training program in June. The three-week workshop was the first component of a three-year program that will include on-line distance learning and individual coaching until next summer, when face-to-face contact and collaboration will resume.
- ELCJHL teachers of English as a Second Language participated in enrichment classes.
- Nine ELCJHL math and science teachers will participate in an educational initiative that will enable them to complete their master’s degree in pedagogy and teaching methods.
- Two administrators and five teachers from the Lutheran School of Hope in Ramallah will participate in a second year of training through the Model School Network project.

### ‘Do not leave us alone in this struggle,’ bishop tells CEC

ELCJHL Bishop Munib A. Younan’s words at the 13th assembly of the Conference of European Churches apparently have deeply resonated with people around the world. The Ecumenical News International article on his address has been posted widely around the internet.

At the July 15-21 event in Lyon, France, Younan was encouraged to set aside prepared remarks and speak extemporaneously to the audience of some 800 people. Younan appealed to European churches for their support for peace in the Middle East. “I ask you as our brothers and sisters in Christ, do not leave us alone, do not leave us alone in the struggle,” Younan is quoted as saying in the ENI article, which can be found at <http://www.eni.ch/featured/article.php?id=3186>.

For more on the conference, see the CEC website at <http://assembly.ceceurope.org/>. ✕

- Recognizing that skills in peace and democracy are essential in this troubled region. ELCJHL social studies teachers participated in a three-day workshop on democracy and voting practices to help them prepare young people to be responsible leaders in their communities and country.
- Several ELCJHL teachers attended a six-day special education workshop on topics such as dyslexia, pre-school skills diagnoses, teaching and reading methods, cognitive problems and speech-hearing-sight impairments.

These diverse programs share a commitment to developing leadership that will result in educational excellence and dispel the sense of hopelessness that results from dwindling human and financial resources.

“Giving hope in a hopeless situation” is a key motto of ELCJHL Bishop Munib Younan. Through the help of friends, sponsors and volunteers, ELCJHL schools and educational program staff and students strive to spread this concept throughout the area and invite you to participate in this venture through your prayers and support. ✕

*Sister Sylvia Countess served as the assistant to the ELCJHL director of education for four years, returning to the United States in April 2009 where she is now director of vocation and education for the ELCA/ELCIC deaconess community.*

### Sabbatical, from p. 4

\_\_\_\_\_ tion with other Christian denominations in the Holy Land, and promoting understanding, inter-faith studies and respect and peaceful co-existence between the three Abrahamic faiths. It was a great honor for me to be part of the anniversary celebration in May, commemorating 170 years of Lutheran witness in the Holy Land, 50 years of the ELCJHL and 30 years of the Arab bishopric.

Now that I have returned to the States, I feel compelled to tell the story of the occupation to as many people as possible. In my country, the reporting on the situation is overly biased in favor of the Israeli government, while the plight of Palestinians is often ignored. I believe also that my sabbatical will enhance the special relationship between the ELCJHL and the New England Synod of the ELCA. In the words of the sermon I preached at the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hope in Ramallah, “I hope that when I return to Palestine I will find her prosperous and free. In shallah.” ✕

*Bryan Leone is a pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, one of the international partners of the ELCJHL. His congregation belongs to the ELCA’s New England Synod, which is one of 65 ELCA synods, and is a close partner of the ELCJHL. He recently spent part of his sabbatical leave from his church to volunteer and study in Israel-Palestine.*

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## ELCJHL looks to future in training tomorrow's leaders

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## Future ELCJHL leaders apply their skills to life, to larger society

The smiles and laughter didn't mean they weren't working hard. The 18 adults gathered in the sun-filled, chair-strewn room at the Beit Sahour school in late June were thinking deeply and exchanging ideas as they completed an assignment for their leadership training workshop. Everyone applauded after someone from each small group read aloud the group's sample school goal statement.

Led by American educator Dr. Nadyne Guzmán, the session was one in a three-week workshop held at the ELCJHL school in June. The workshop is the first component of a three-year program that will include such face-to-face workshops as well as online distance learning and individual coaching. The program is part of the ELCJHL's commitment to train its future leaders.

"It's a very good program," said Jane Ishaq, who is a secretary at the school. She said it is a very special opportunity to participate in the program. Iman Omer agreed. It "makes you listen more and respect all the opinions," said Omer, a member of the ELCJHL Lutheran Church of the Reformation in Beit Jala and an Arabic teacher at the Latin Patriarchate school.

"I am proud to be here, to be chosen for this leadership course," Ahmad Midani said. "I think it's a good chance for me to improve my skills." Midani teaches chemistry and science at the ELCJHL School of Hope in Ramallah. He said the skills he learns in



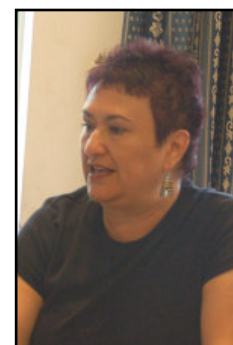
**FUTURE ELCJHL leaders created sample school mission statements as part of their participation in a three-week workshop in June, the first part of their three-year leadership training program. The lead trainer for the program is Dr. Nadyne Guzmán, below right, a long-time U.S. educator.**

the program will help him in the classroom.

While not limited to educators, most of the program participants are teachers, many in ELCJHL schools. ELCJHL Director of Education Dr. Charlie Haddad led planning efforts.

The goal of the program, according to Guzmán, is to develop participants' ability to lead others through building relationships and sharing vision. Toward this end, participants have been asked to examine themselves – a process that is foundational to leadership and, she said, strange in a culture that values family above all.

"It's been very intense," she said. Participants have been asked to question their vocations, their beliefs. "It's been really wonderful." Guzmán is currently a



*Please see Leadership, p. 7*

## A sabbatical in the Holy Land:

by Rev. Bryan A. Leone

When I arrived in Jerusalem on April 20 to meet with Bishop Younan and Dr. Charles Haddad, the superintendent of ELCJHL schools in the Holy Land, I had no idea what lay in store for me. I already knew



**Rev. Bryan Leone had to convince students at the ELCJHL School of Hope, Ramallah, that he was on their side. Once he gained the students' trust, his visits to the school became a favorite part of his stay in Palestine.**

that Bishop Younan wanted me to teach b o d y - building at the Martin Luther Community Development Center, and also assist in physical fitness classes at the Lutheran School of Hope in Ramallah. But I hadn't a clue about the experiences that would offer me a rare look into the complex religious, social and political situation that grips the Israel and the Palestinian territories.

Many of my "students" at the Community Development Center were shop owners in the Old City, who invited me to visit their shops for coffee and conversation. The conversation always centered on the occupation of the Palestinian territories by the Israeli government, as well as religion and politics. Through them I came to understand that the situation is much more complex than I ever dreamed. Some believe the occupation will continue for many years to come; others believe that only a major war will end it. Some believe that if there is a war, the Palestinians will be the ones to suffer. Some refuse to leave their homes, while others cannot wait to immigrate to other countries. Among the Palestinians there is no one clear policy – and that is one of the problems. But what unites all Palestinians is their hatred and distrust of the Israeli governments over the years. I was pleasantly surprised to learn that although Palestinians have trusted very few American administrations since 1948 (the Nixon and Carter administrations are the exceptions), they nevertheless have a love and respect for the American people, and are eager that their story be heard in the United States and given the same respect and audience as

the official Israeli side. This I feel is the duty of all of us who have had the privilege and opportunity to walk with the Palestinians.

I had visited Neve Shalom-Wahaat al Salaam the previous year and had been given a tour by a Palestinian, an Israeli Arab. I was able to see and document first-hand the apartheid system of the occupation which separates, encapsulates and harasses a people in hopes that they will leave their homes and emigrate elsewhere with no hope of ever returning.

One of my favorite parts of the sabbatical was working with the children at the Lutheran School of Hope in Ramallah. Once a week I would go there and play soccer with the children and assist the athletic director in conducting physical fitness classes. The student body is 70 percent Muslim and 30 percent Christian. It was a wonderful experience to see Muslim and Christian children learning and playing together in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

One week I decided that I would wear their school T-shirt, which I had purchased when their dance group, the Al Raja Dance Troupe, toured the U.S. many years ago. Of course, they were delighted to see it. But I forgot that on the front of the shirt was the slogan, "Peace Not Walls" with an olive branch. When I went through the Qalandia checkpoint on my way back to Jerusalem from the West Bank, I was put through the mill and harassed by the guards. For 45 minutes they detained me, asking ridiculous questions and setting off the metal detectors, which is par for the course. The reason I can say that they set off the metal detectors is because I was wearing the same belt, the same watch and the same cross around my neck that I had worn the previous Sunday. The only difference was that before I was wearing a clerical collar and I breezed right through security.

There were six Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) volunteers living with me at the LWF guest house. Through conversations with them, I learned many things about the injustices of the current occupation. It was through them that I was able to visit the "Tent of Nations" in the West Bank, near Beit Jala. This was the most impressive visit of the whole sabbatical. I was awestruck by the courage and determination of the Nasser family, a Palestinian Christian family who is non-violently resisting the pressures, harassment and violence perpetrated by Israeli settlers living all around them. The Nassers' refusal to see the settlers as their "enemy" is awe-inspiring and powerful, as is their determination to stay on the land their family has held for generations.

Equally inspiring is the witness and ministry of the ELCJHL. Headed by Bishop Munib Younan, with a loyal and dedicated staff, the ELCJHL is making positive inroads in working for peace, reconciliation and justice for Jews and Palestinians. The ELCJHL continues to be instrumental in ecumenical coopera-

**See sabbatical, p. 2**

## ELCJHL youth conference denied permission to visit Nazareth

Imagine a bus full of 14-to-16-year-olds ready to go on a three-day excursion. Now imagine the mood in that bus when a military decision makes it impossible for them to go.

The young people had begun to gather at the Bethlehem departure point on Sunday, Aug. 16, when word came that local Israeli officials had decided not to issue permits for the four adult chaperones to stay in Nazareth. (Youth 16 and under are exempt from this requirement.) The decision came minutes before the group was scheduled to depart.

“They were disappointed and many cried,” said Pastor Saliba Rishmawi, the ELCJHL pastor who had organized and was to lead the trip. The children asked him, “Why us and why now?” he said, himself asking why the official did not communicate his decision a week before. “So you see the situation, how we suffer,” he said. “We are feeling now that we are in prison,” he said. He spent the next few hours on the phone, cancelling the bus and the guest house and informing people of the change.

Fifty-four youth from ELCJHL churches were scheduled to attend the Aug. 16-18 conference. Their destination was the St. Margaret guest house in Nazareth. Plans included visiting Tiberius and Capernaum, as well as celebrating communion at the Church of the Beatitudes overlooking the Sea of Galilee. Planned lectures included Pastor Ibrahim Azar speaking on the need for Christ in this time and Rishmawi speaking on the two natures of Christ.

Rishmawi is currently seeking a new venue for the conference inside the West Bank.

ELCJHL Bishop Munib Younan said the incident is worrying.

“This is part of our freedom of religion, that our children go to these retreats and get revived in the Spirit in order that the occupation will not break their morale,” he said. Further, it hinders clergy from doing their jobs, which requires freedom of movement at all hours, he said. Younan said that, contrary to rationale given for the denial, organizers applied well in advance for the permits. ✕

## Women meet in Ramallah for encouragement, validation and fellowship

“I brought evil to the world!” said one woman attending the ELCJHL women’s workshop. While it’s impossible to know exactly what she meant by this, it’s no mystery that for millennia, women have struggled to overcome the legacy of Eve as the gateway of evil.

The ELCJHL is working to bring a counter message to Palestinian women. Seeing themselves as valuable in church and society was the theme of an Aug. 14 workshop in Ramallah. Bassima Jaraiseh, ELCJHL women’s desk facilitator, said the workshop was designed to invite women to look at how they are viewed in church and society. “The aim was, what do I see in myself,” she said.

Speaker Dr. Hanadi Younan opened the session by displaying an illustration of Eve and the serpent. After sharing their reactions to it, Jaraiseh said the women were encouraged to tell themselves, “I am not Eve that was seduced by the serpent. I am Eve who overcame troubles,” she said.

Younan asked participants to think about prominent women of the Bible – Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, Susanna and the like – and then think about their own God-given gifts and how they use them in their congregations, their homes and in society. She invited them to challenge society’s ideas about women, which often limit them to the roles of mother, teacher and housewife.

Participants agreed, “we should bring our daughters up to be strong and self confident” in ways that are sensitive to our context, Jaraiseh said. She said women married to foreigners reported better accep-



tance of outside work and sharing of household duties than women married to Arab husbands.

About 43 women and 20 children from the ELCJHL, as well as the Greek Catholic, Episcopal, Greek Orthodox and Latin churches, participated.

“They asked many challenging questions,” Jaraiseh said. They also voiced appreciation for being able to bring their children, she said. The women actively participated in the workshop, she said. “They all shared. No one just sat and looked.”

The next ELCJHL women’s conference, “Women as Peacebuilders,” is planned for late September during Eid al-Fitr, the Muslim festival that ends Ramadan. The three-day conference will be held in Nazareth. Jaraiseh said women from other Christian churches, as well as Muslim women, will be invited to participate. ✕

**PROMINENT WOMEN of the Bible provided the inspiration for ELCJHL women to see themselves as a valuable part of society. Here women take a break from lectures to enjoy a meal together. (Maha Saeed photo)**

## Pastor represents ELCJHL at conferences in Indonesia, Turkey



**Pastor Saliba Rishmawi recently traveled to Indonesia and Turkey for interfaith conferences.**

ELCJHL Pastor Saliba Rishmawi attended two conferences recently. The first, “Freedom & Responsibility: Joint Theological Explorations by Christians and Muslims,” was organized by the Lutheran World Federation in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, in cooperation with the Center for Religious and Cross-Cultural Studies and the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies at the University Gadjah Mada in Yogyakarta. The June 15-22 consultation brought together 23 Christian and Muslim scholars to discuss, according to the LWF website, “perspectives on the understanding of freedom and responsibility for theology, faith identity and mutual relations for common good in society.”

Rishmawi said he was impressed by female Islamic scholars such as Dr. Amina Wadud. She and the other female Muslims there “wanted to show another face of the Qur’an,” he said.

Another high point was the openness of the dis-

ussion. “We were able to argue, dialogue and speak everything we thought of and both sides were very open-minded,” he said. Even during breaks, Christians and Muslims intermingled and conversed, helping one another understand the other’s beliefs better, he said. Participants continued the discussion about freedom with Buddhists at a local temple. “We agreed that freedom isn’t our thought – it’s in the Holy Scriptures.” You can read more about the conference at <http://tiny.cc/LFZxB>

Rishmawi then traveled to Antalya, Turkey, for a conference organized by the Center for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation (also known as Wifaq) of Bethlehem. The July 12-16 meeting, held in conjunction with Rabbis for Human Rights, convened Muslims, Jews and Christians to discuss issues such as indigenous people and administration of the holy places.

*See Rishmawi, p. 8*

## Beit Sahour summer camp educates, entertains many children

“Summer” and “camp” go together like “humus” and “pita.” It’s hard to imagine one without the other.

In June, thanks to an army of volunteers, some 70 children enjoyed this hot-weather tradition on the campus of the ELCJHL Beit Sahour church and school. Heading up the volunteers was Rula Haddad, wife of the church’s pastor, Imad Haddad.

“We just tried to do something to have a secure place [for kids] to do something outside their house,” said Rula, who also leads the congregation’s ladies group. She and 10 or so other women began planning months ago for the four-week camp. Starting June 8, the team offered children ages 7 to 12 played sports, practiced dabka dance or listened to Bible stories. Other days they learned how to play chess, sang songs or played a game with cards decorated with Palestinian birds. The fun was also educational at times, like when the children made recycled paper and recycled glass objects.

On a few occasions, camp hours extended into the afternoon to allow for field trips to go swimming or see a play, such as “Haj Saman” (“old man” in

Arabic) presented by the Al-Hara Theater, which told a story about children’s right to play. One more academic activity was penmanship classes, which Rula said were not very popular but necessary given a general decline of penmanship among Palestinian youth.

Among volunteers were 10 Beit Sahour teen-agers

who led sports, dancing and chess activities. Rula said they were “really good teachers” and thought it was a positive experience for them.

Also volunteering were ELCA missionaries Martin and Suzanne Shoffner, as well as the six ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission volunteers they supervise.

Both Christian and Muslim children from the neighborhood attended the camp. “We accepted everybody,” Rula said. But organizers were forced to turn some children away after they reached maximum enrollment.

Each child paid 100 shekels to participate. Additional funding came from congregational and community donations, Rula said. She hopes there will be funding and personnel for a camp again next summer. ✖



**FACE PAINTING was just one of the many activities at a summer camp sponsored by the Lutheran Church of Beit Sahour.**

*“We just tried to do something to have a secure place [for kids] to do something outside their house.”*

Rula Haddad

## ELCJHL strengthens ties with Canadian Lutheran partners



### Bishop offers 'Signs of Hope'

Lutherans in Canada were moved to hear about hopeful developments in Israel-Palestine amid the dire political situation. The audience at the national convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada responded to Bishop Munib A. Younan's speech with a standing ovation.

Younan cited the ecclesiastical and educational work of the ELCJHL, as well as its work forging relationships with other Christian churches and other faith traditions. The church's ministry of reconciliation is "the very essence of the ministry ... Jesus gave us." (You can read Younan's address at [www.elcjh.org/XX](http://www.elcjh.org/XX))

More than 400 people attended "In Mission for Others – Signs of Hope," the June 25-28 ELCIC convention in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Read the ELCIC's story about his speech here. (<http://www.elcic.ca/In-Convention/2009-Vancouver/June26.cfm>)

You can read more about the convention here (<http://elcic.ca/In-Convention/2009-Vancouver/default.cfm>) ✕

### Bishop meets with friends, partners in Lebanon

ELCJHL Bishop Munib Younan traveled to Lebanon Aug. 21-24 to meet with partner organizations. Among those he met with were:

- leaders of the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon to discuss its relationship with the ELCJHL and common witness in the Middle East.
- members of Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East.
- Rev. Dr. Riad Jarjour, president of the Forum for Development, Culture and Dialogue and the Arab Group for Muslim Christian Dialogue.
- Dr. Tariq Mitri, the Minister of Information for Lebanon.
- Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches (FMEEC) General Secretary Rosangela Jarjour, in preparation for FMEEC's general assembly, scheduled for January 2010. Younan asks for prayer and support for the work of the fellowship. ✕

### Canadians resolve to advocate for peace in the Holy Land

Delegates attending the 2009 National Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) passed a multi-point resolution to support peace in the Holy Land. The resolution, which inspired much discussion on the convention floor, recognized the ongoing divisions between Muslims, Jews and Christians in Israel and the Palestinian Territories. It lamented violence and oppression in that area, and directed the ELCIC to support a secure Israeli state and a viable state for Palestinians. (Source: Lutheran World Information)

Read more at: <http://tiny.cc/LMqb8> and <http://www.elcic.ca/news.cfm?article=180>

You can read the resolution at [//tiny.cc/HqHjL](http://tiny.cc/HqHjL)

#### Leadership, from p. 3

leadership consultant through her business, Infinite Excellence, Inc., and was professor of leadership at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, U.S.A.

After the day's session was over, Guzmán shared her impressions of the program and her experience leading it.

"These are incredible people," she said. Despite living with the difficulties of the Israeli occupation, they are "some of the most hopeful people I've ever known."

Guzmán is an American of Mexican origin and so found she had much in common with Palestinians, such as sharing a home with extended family.

"I've just had a ball. I've had fun every day," she said. She enjoyed the hospitality of many people during her three weeks in the West Bank. "It's been lovely," she said.

But the seriousness of the work is not lost amid the pleasure of experiencing a new culture. As she worked with program participants, she saw them applying their new-found skills to the larger society. "I find that's very heartening," she said. ✕

#### Sheikh Jarrah, from p. 1

their eviction, Younan said, predicting more trouble for the neighborhood.

While the eviction of the Hanoun and Ghawi families has aroused international outrage, they are hardly the first in the neighborhood. Last November, Mohammad and Fawzi al-Kurd were evicted from their Sheikh Jarrah home. Two weeks later, the ailing Mohammad died. Mrs. Al-Kurd

has continued living near the property since then in a series of tents that supporters erect almost as quickly as Israeli authorities tear down.

Whether or not these evictions stand has enormous ramifications for other Palestinians living in East Jerusalem. A website by the Hanoun family explaining the situation in detail can be found at <http://standup-forjerusalem.org/>. ✕

## Church of the Good Shepherd enjoys busy, fruitful summer

It's been anything but a lazy summer at the ELCJHL Church of the Good Shepherd in Amman, Jordan.

Good Shepherd young people studied the Bible, sang, camped and splashed during their church's youth camp in June. Second Tim. 3:16-17 ("All Scripture is inspired by God ...") provided the camp theme, "The Bible and My Christian Faith." Leading the 23 youth, ages 12 to 18, were Good Shepherd Pastor Samer Azar and Mirvat Shatara.

In addition to daily lectures and devotions, the youth took a trip to the "Seilgarten" at the Schneller School, where they learned about cooperation, care for others and leadership skills. They spent a night at Schneller singing and barbecuing around a camp fire. They played games at Gilead Camp and went on a hike to the King Talal dam. They had an excursion to the Amman Waves water park.

The camp concluded with "Youth Sunday," during which the young participants provided readings, prayers, songs and reflections about the camp.

"Young people want to taste Christ in a different way," Pastor Azar said. "They would like to be addressed in their own language and their own imagination. They like to live the gospel message in the 21st century; an issue that requires a continuous dialogue with the young people in a bid to understand their needs and interests." Azar said the aim was to stress the "sola scriptura" of the Reformation to impress on the young people the authority of the Bible in the life of the believer.

Azar expressed gratitude to the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission for the financial support that made the camp possible.

## Environmental Education Center launches new, improved website

The ELCJHL Environmental Education Center has recently relaunched its website in a new, colorful, easy-to-navigate format. Be sure to watch the beautiful slide show on the home page! Their new web page can be found at [www.eecp.org](http://www.eecp.org). ✂



## Beit Jala march focuses attention on illegal separation wall

Scores of people marched through Beit Jala to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the International Court of Justice's opinion that construction of the wall is "contrary to international law." Organized and led by the ELCJHL Lutheran Church of the Reformation, the July 9 march capped a week of workshops, demonstrations and soccer matches to the hardships created by Israel's construction of the separation wall.

Some attendees reported that military police prevented participants from accessing Palestinian land. You can read an account of this at <http://tiny.cc/8nViw>. ✂

Among Good Shepherd's other projects this summer were:

- a "makeover" for the main hall of Al Khei-meh (The Tent), the ecumenical community center that is a ministry of the church. The hall got new flooring, among other improvements that were funded by NMZ. The 100-person hall is used for congregation gatherings, youth activities, cultural events and other social occasions.
- "We are so blessed to have such a space for our ministry," Pastor Azar said. "This center serves the society at large." The growing number of senior citizens has motivated the church to develop a ministry to this group two days a week.
- a visit by Pope Benedict XVI in May. Among the pontiff's many activities in Jordan, he visited Jesus's baptism site and blessed foundation stones for the Roman and Greek Catholic church centers that will be built there. King Abdullah of Jordan also gave a plot of land to the ELCJHL, which hopes to develop a retreat center there.
- celebrating the 22nd anniversary of its church center. The church, parsonage, parish hall and community center were dedicated Aug. 23, 1987.
- commemorating Jordan's Independence Day on May 25.
- celebrating the 10th anniversary of King Abdullah's coronation, as well as the Great Arab Revolt and Army Day.
- held a joint worship with its German-speaking congregation on June 7. Preaching was Propst Uwe Gräbe of Jerusalem. The liturgy was a mix of Arabic and German. A reception followed the service. ✂

*Rishmawi, from p. 6*

In one session, participants gathered in their faith groups and discussed "what is land." In presentations, Christians defined land as "Holy Land," Muslims as Palestine or "waqif" and Jews as "Promised Land." This provided a basis for discussing land issues, jurisprudence and treatment of the "other" in scripture.

The conference, held in cooperation with the German Development Service Palestine, a partner of the CCRR, is the first in a series in the next two years designed to help religious leaders promote peace and justice among citizens and government officials. ✂

## Conflict is political, not religious

The political – not religious – nature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was the central theme of ELCJHL Bishop Munib A. Younan's July 15 address in Pori, Finland. Younan delivered his speech, "Reconciliation in the Middle East," to a conference of the UN Association of Finland and the Finnish Red Cross, in cooperation with the Tampere Peace Research Institute.

The full text of Younan's address is available at [www.elcjhl.org/Finland\\_speech\\_July\\_2009\\_final.doc](http://www.elcjhl.org/Finland_speech_July_2009_final.doc). ✂