

THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN JORDAN AND THE HOLY LAND

HAPPY EASTER FROM THE ELCJHL

ELCJHL Congregations marked Holy Week this month.

Plus, schools resume in person learning, ministries continue activities, Bishop Haddad shares a message, and more below.



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A MESSAGE FROM BISHOP IMAD HADDAD

The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.
Deuteronomy 31:8

A Letter to God: "Do not be afraid..."

Dear God,

Are you serious? I know you have a sense of humor. But "do not be afraid" is not something to say lightly. Not here, not now... Because I am afraid. I admit it.

I do not know how to make sense of the many tragedies that surround us. There is so much fear. Fear of the present, fear of what is to come, fear of decisions made far from us, fear of the other, and sometimes even fear of the neighbor who stands so close.

I trust you, God, but I cannot see clearly, and my spirit is not at peace. I am afraid, I am angry, and at times, I am furious. Will you act, Lord? Will you tear open the heavens and come down? It is time, Lord. Time to act. We cannot bear more injustice, more tragedy, more hatred. Do not delay Lord.

-Your son from Jerusalem.

A Letter to the Church

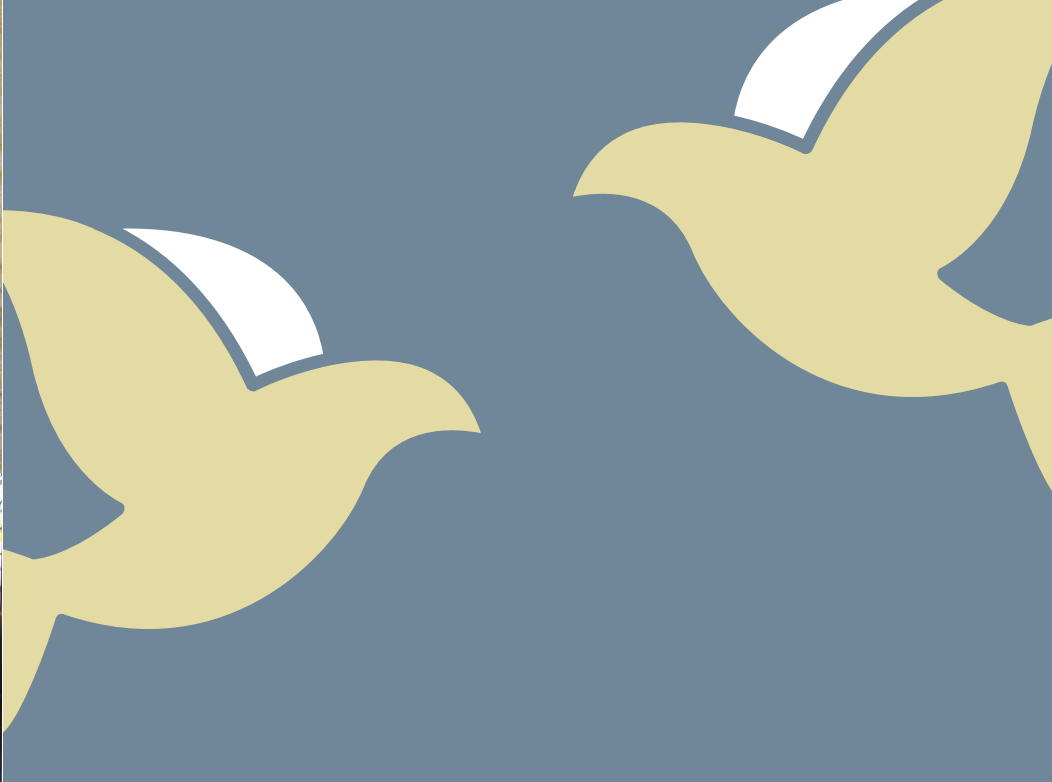
Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

The above may sound like a fictional letter, but it is not. In many ways, it is the prayer of many people. It is, perhaps, the prayer of many among us. It is, in truth, also my own prayer as a bishop. We continue as church. We hold fast to life. We choose hope again and again. But hope does not cancel fear. Faith does not erase anger. And trust does not always bring immediate peace. We are human, fragile, searching. And so we raise our voices to God. We pray, together and alone. We act, seeking the fullness of life even in the shadow of death. And still, we confess: we are afraid.

Yet the words remain, not as denial, but as promise: "Do not be afraid." Not because fear is absent, but because God is present. And perhaps that is where faith begins again: Not in the absence of fear, but in the courage to speak it before God, and to keep walking, even when the path is unclear.

-Your brother from Jerusalem



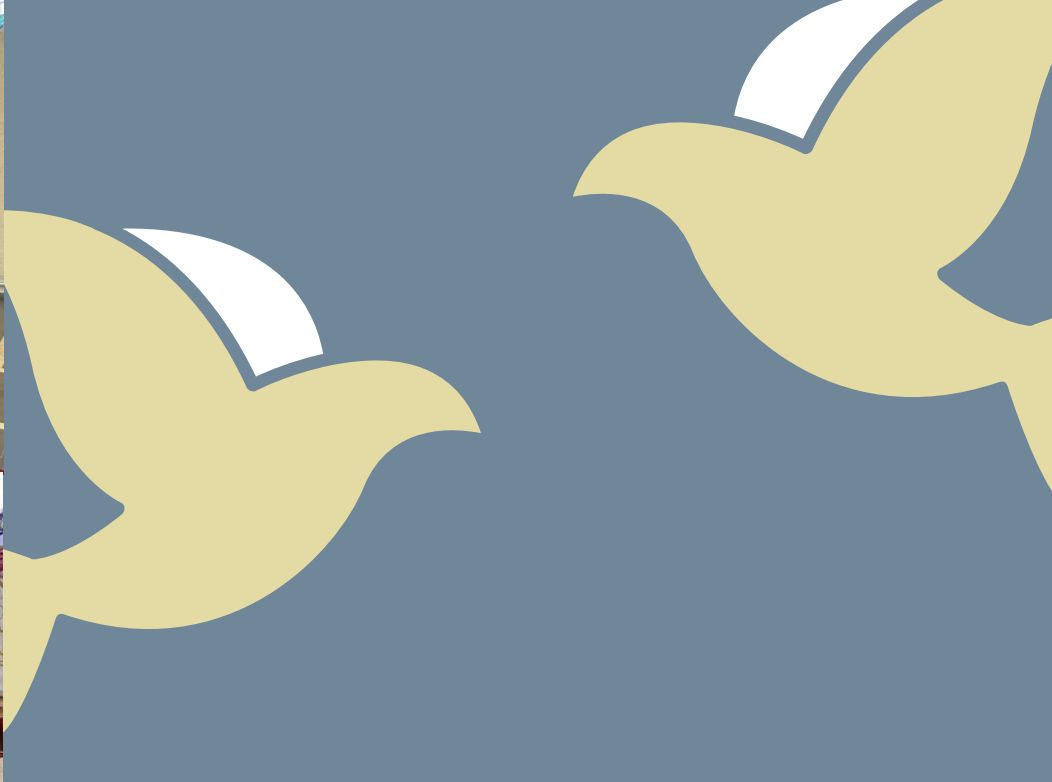


HOLY WEEK IN THE ELCJHL

Congregations met as they were able to celebrate the height of the church calendar.

All ELCJHL congregations met during April to mark Holy Week. Congregations in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Beit Jala, and Beit Sahour celebrate according to the “Western” (Gregorian) calendar, while our congregations in Amman and Ramallah join the other churches in their cities in celebrating by the “Eastern” (Julian) Calendar. In Jerusalem, wartime restrictions prevented the annual Maundy Thursday procession to Gethsemane and Good Friday pilgrimage along the Via Dolorosa, but our congregants were still able to meet together throughout the Holy Land to worship and pray on these Holy days.



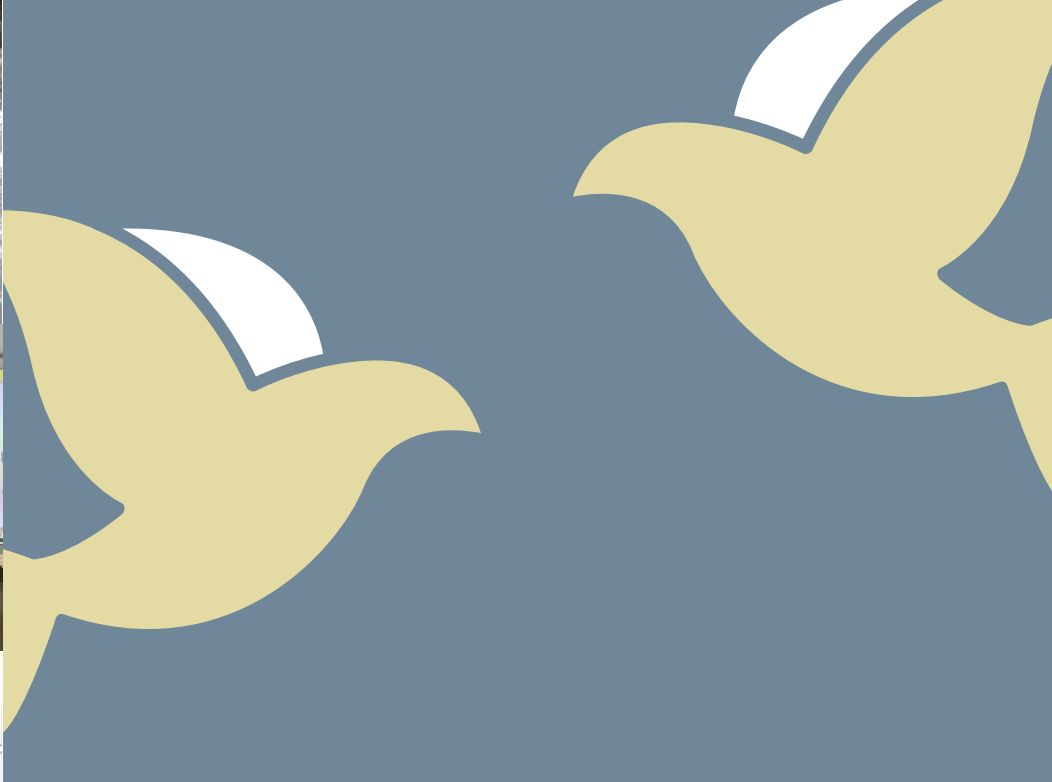


EASTER IN THE ELCJHL

Al Masih Qam! Haqan Qam!

We give all thanks and praise to the Risen Christ who has overcome death and the grave!





ELCJHL EDUCATION

Schools Return to in-person Learning

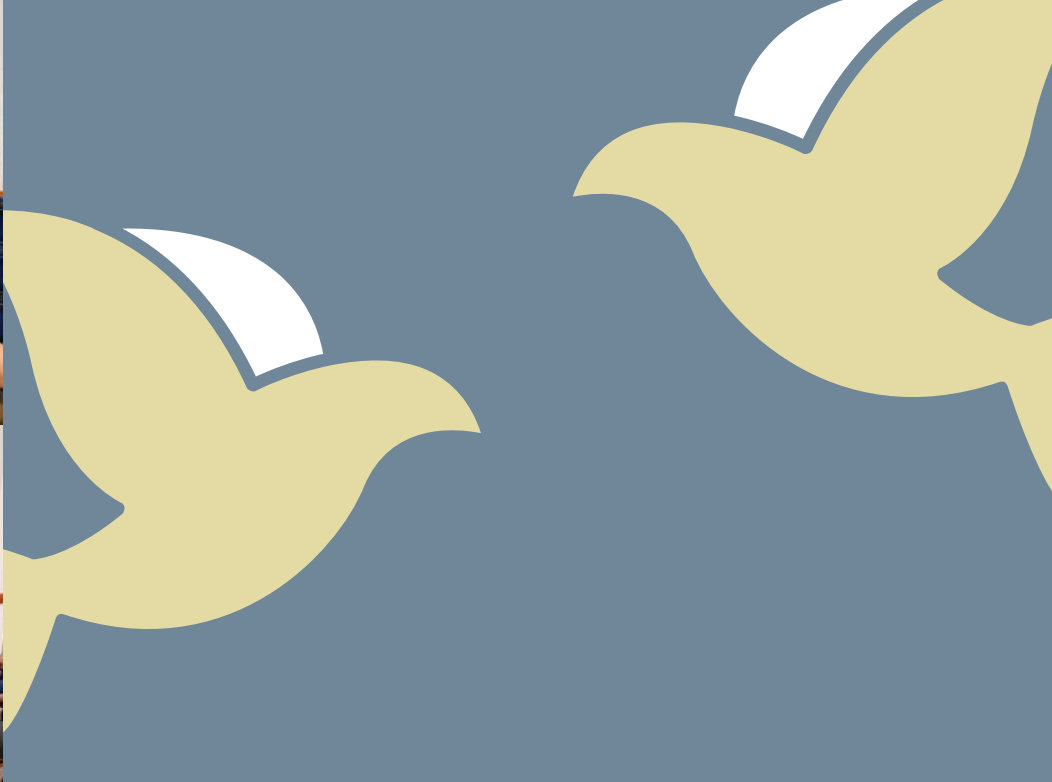
Students returned to school regularly following the ceasefire agreement. Despite the continuation of full-time online classes during that period, there was still a significant amount of material to catch up on when students returned to classrooms. Extracurricular activities also resumed in the ELCJHL schools this month.

Several extracurricular educational competitions originally planned for this scholastic year had to be canceled. Others were adapted into alternative formats, while those scheduled for weekends were maintained. The main goal of our educational ministry has been to ensure that all students complete their official curricula without any educational gaps and are well prepared for the upcoming academic year.

Winners of the Reformation Day Research competition that began in October were selected by each school committee this month, and they were awarded certificates and gifts in recognition of their achievements by the ELCJHL Director of Education, Mrs. Eva Azar.

Additionally, all students who submitted their drawings or paintings to friends and supporters of the ELCJHL through Mrs. Eva received special art sets as a gift from the ELCJHL Education Office. Students' artwork from the three ELCJHL schools were put into cards and shared with our schools' friends and supporters.





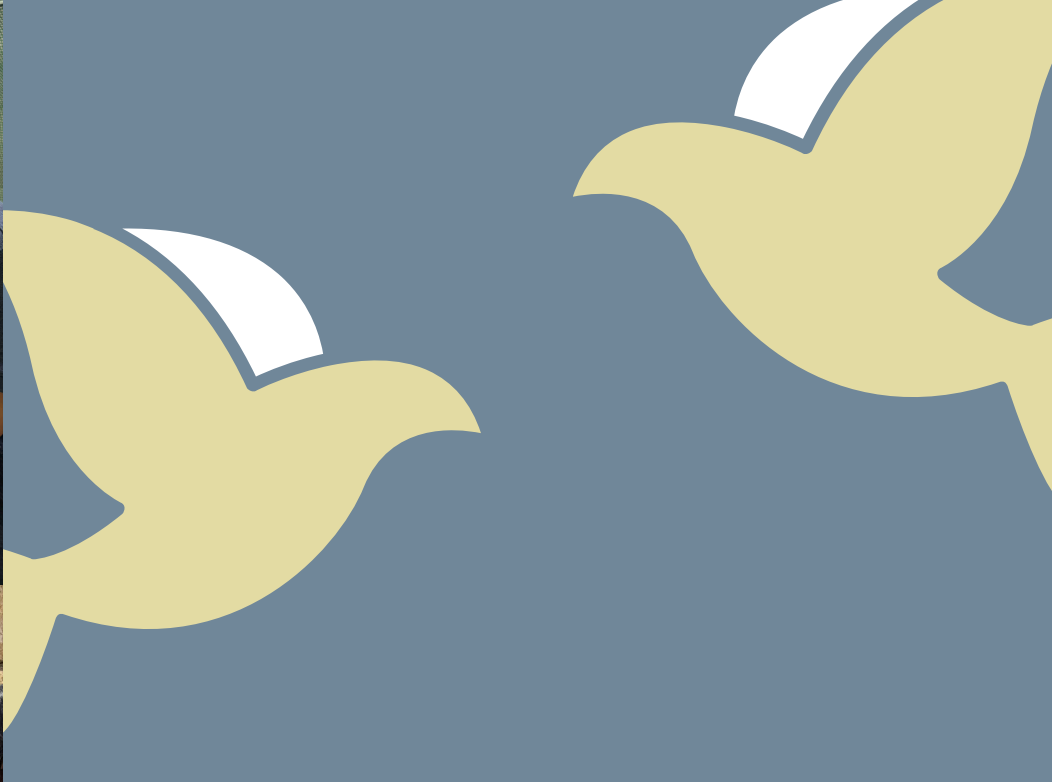
DIAKONIA

Uplifting our community through care

The Diaconal Ministry of the ELCJHL partnered with the Coordinator of the Palingual Center to implement a series of workshops for the ELCJHL Deaf Ministry, focused on preserving food. Food preservation is an essential skill, especially in the face of ongoing regional wars and instability that make having a stocked pantry of healthy food that doesn't require re Fridgeration more important than ever. During the season of fresh fruits and vegetables, our Deaf Ministry participants are learning new skills to keep themselves safe and healthy for the future. The series will continue with five sessions total.

Throughout April the Diaconal Ministry also continued emergency support for families in our area through food coupons, medical cost assistance, and the ongoing Hot Meals program. We provided special meal coupons for families in need during Easter as well. Many families are facing challenges as the economic situation continues to deteriorate, and prices, especially for food, medicine, and transportation continue to rise.





ENVIRONMENTAL

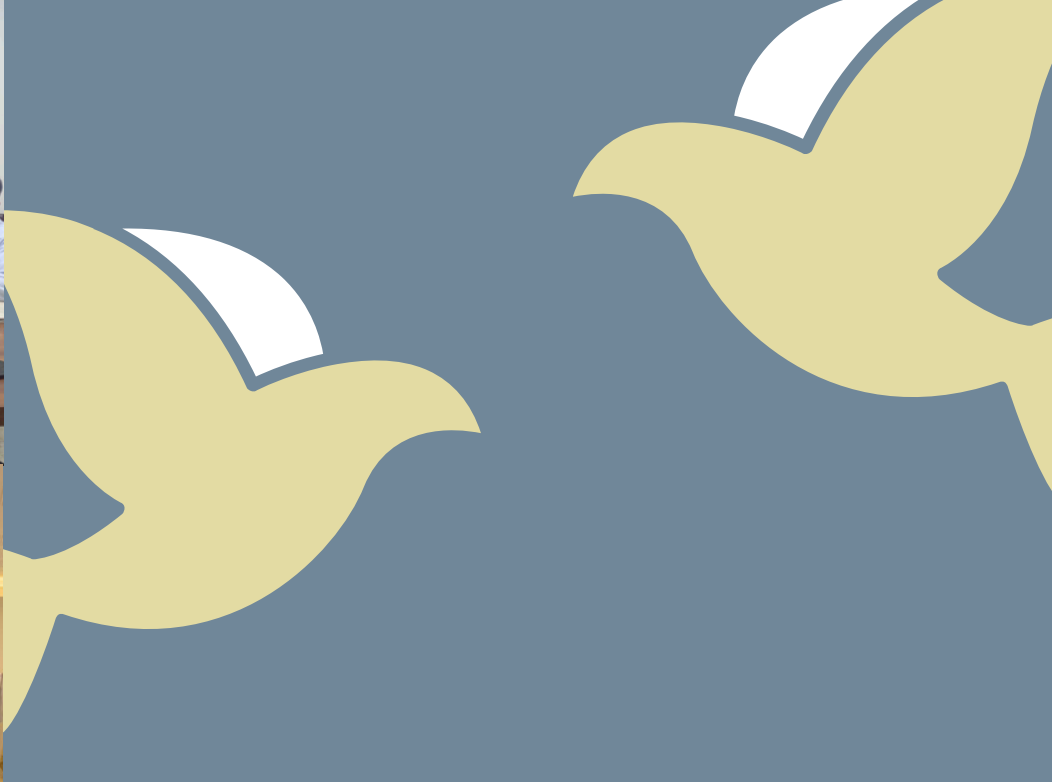
This month the ELCJHL Environmental Education Center held a “Greening” activity at the Evangelical Lutheran School of Hope in Ramallah with Environmental Club students. The students prepared greenhouses for hydroponic and traditional farming, planted tomato, mint, olive, and rose seedlings, and helped beautify the school. A composting machine was also introduced, demonstrating how organic waste can be transformed into nutrient-rich soil. The activity promoted environmental awareness, teamwork, and practical skills while enhancing green spaces at the school.

Environmental Club students from Dar Al-Kalima Lutheran School also met this month to plant olive trees alongside Principal Rev. Tony Nassar. Students learned about the environmental and cultural importance of olive trees and engaged in hands-on planting, including soil preparation, planting, and watering. The activity strengthened environmental awareness, teamwork, and responsibility while contributing to greener school grounds.

Also this month, the EEC in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, launched the “Colors of the Homeland” Photography Competition to mark Palestinian Environment Day (March 5) and the 40th anniversary of the EEC. The competition is open to students, professionals, and amateurs, and focuses on biodiversity, rare species, and national symbols. Submissions are open until May 15, 2026. Find more information on the EEC’s Facebook page!

During April a delegation visited the Environment Quality Authority and met with its head, Zaghloul Samhan. The EEC’s Executive Director, Simon Awad, discussed strengthening a 13-year partnership and ongoing cooperation. The delegation included partners from teacher, youth, and women’s forums.





GENDER JUSTICE AND ECCLESIASTICAL COURT

Court updates continue to ensure equal access to justice

In cooperation with the ELCJHL Ecclesiastical Court, the ELCJHL Gender Justice Ministry has continued to work on updates and improvements to the legal work of the church in order to ensure equal access to justice for women, children, and other vulnerable populations. Throughout the month, meetings with the Ecclesiastical Court have continued to discuss what improvements can be made to church infrastructure to improve privacy and accessibility.

Additionally, work continues on the intensive process of updating the ELCJHL's Family Status Law. The law was last updated in 2015, and the ELCJHL is currently working with policy experts to update the law to fill any gaps or loopholes discovered through the implementation of the law over the last decade. The new version of the law will help further the church's mission to preserve legal equality for all its members.

The Gender Justice Ministry is also in the process of organizing psychosocial events for women of the church, which will begin in May.

