



EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN JORDAN AND THE HOLY LAND



AUGUST NEWSLETTER

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Lutheran Churches rang bells in solidarity with Gaza.

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Students and teachers in the ELCJHL Schools marked the first day of the new semester on August 21st.

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New and returning judges for the Lutheran Ecclesiastical Court reconvened for the first time this year.





BISHOP'S CORNER



BELLS AND PRAYERS FOR GAZA

On August 7th churches in Palestine and around the world rang bells and offered prayers for the people of Gaza. "I hope that the bells ringing will reach God and ring in the ears of the people, remembering all those who are suffering in Gaza," Bishop Azar said. We continue to pray for an end to suffering and for justice to come, even as the current actions of the Israeli government threaten an even worse situation for Palestinians.

WELCOMING ETHIOPIAN ARCHBISHOP

Bishop Azar joined the other Jerusalem Heads of Churches in welcoming the new Archbishop of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Jerusalem Patriarchate, His Grace Abuna Nathanael.

FAREWELL TO JULIUS LILJESTRÖM

Bishop Dr. Sani Ibrahim Azar attended the farewell reception hosted by the Consulate General of Sweden in honor of Consul General Mr. Julius Liljeström.



MEETING WITH EKD BISHOP

Bishop Azar welcomed Bishop Frank Kopania from the EKD for a meeting in his office.

MEETING WITH FELM DIRECTORS

Bishop Azar and the ELCJHL hosted a farewell breakfast for former FELM Jerusalem Director Tarmo Heikkla. We are thankful for Tarmo's work in Jerusalem and we wish him well in his future plans. Bishop Azar also welcomed the new Director for the FELM Center, Maria Leppakari.





CONGREGATIONS



JERUSALEM

In Jerusalem, weekly Bible Studies were led by Pastors Rodney and Sally. On Fridays, members of the congregation meet to discuss scripture. The congregation is currently working through the whole Bible, starting in the Old Testament.

BETHLEHEM

In Bethlehem, weekly worship continued each Sunday. The congregation reconnected with a Summer Congregational Retreat, and celebrated a wedding and baptism in the church together.

BEIT SAHOUR

The Beit Sahour congregation held a summer camp for the children from the congregation before the start of the new school year.



RAMALLAH PRAYER FOR GAZA

The Church of Hope in Ramallah hosted an ecumenical service for all the churches in Ramallah to pray for Gaza. The prayer gathered leaders from the Ramallah community to pray for an end to the bloodshed and starvation in Gaza, and for a just peace to come.



AMMAN

Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd gathered for their annual family conference near the Dead Sea. The conference was a much-needed opportunity for fellowship and spiritual renewal for the congregation.



YOUTH NIGHT

Youth Leaders organized and held a special Youth Prayer Service and Game Night at the Church of the Reformation and Diaconal Center in Beit Jala.



BEIT JALA

The Beit Jala congregation and the Youth Ministry said goodbye to George Zeidan, who is off to the Near East School of Theology in Lebanon to study to become a Pastor.



EDUCATION



LUTHMUN

Under the patronage of Bishop Dr. Sani Ibrahim Azar, Students from the four Lutheran schools met at Talitha Kumi in August for the annual LuthMUN (Lutheran Model United nations) Conference. For two days, Lutheran students represented countries from around the world in mock debates, resolution drafts, and votes. We are so proud of our amazing students.



BACK TO SCHOOL

Students and teachers at the ELCJHL schools kicked off the 2025-2026 School Year this month. We are excited to have our students and staff back in the classroom for another year of learning and growing together. Prior to the first day of school, staff participated in development workshops organized by the Education Office, and 12th grade students attended special workshops on how to study and prepare for the Tawjihi exam. Our thoughts are still with the students and teachers of Gaza who have now spent almost two years away from their classrooms.



ELS BEIT SAHOUR

DAR AL KALIMA

SCHOOL OF HOPE



ENVIRONMENTAL



EEC LAUNCHES AUTUMN BIRD MIGRATION SEASON

The EEC officially launched the autumn bird migration season on August 15 at its permanent Talitha Kumi Bird Monitoring and Ringing Station. The season began with a special visit from a delegation representing American churches and universities.

As part of its ongoing commitment to conservation, the EEC continues its bird rehabilitation efforts in cooperation with the Environmental Quality Authority and the Palestinian Police. In August, a falcon that had treatment at the EEC was successfully released back into the wild, marking another step in protecting Palestine's rich biodiversity.

EEC JOINS WORKSHOP ON DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL LAW IN RAMALLAH

The Environmental Education Center, represented by Executive Director Mr. Simon Awad, participated in a workshop organized by the Environmental Quality Authority to discuss a draft environmental law. Mr. Awad had the opportunity to speak about the importance of the law and the need to prioritize environmental protection.

U.S. DELEGATION VISITS

A delegation from the United States, representing various American universities, visited the EEC where Mr. Simon Awad, Executive Director, presented an overview of the EEC's main programs and initiatives. During the visit, Mr. Awad also delivered a lecture on ecological justice in Palestine, shedding light on environmental challenges and the role of education in promoting sustainability.





GENDER JUSTICE



MUSIC THERAPY JERUSALEM

The Gender Justice Ministry held a psychosocial relief session for women from the Jerusalem congregation. The session centered on music therapy, and how music and singing can be a source of comfort and relief during difficult times.



GENDER JUSTICE WORKSHOP

Under the patronage of Bishop Dr. Ibrahim Azar, the ELCJHL Gender Justice Ministry held a workshop for women from the five ELCJHL congregations in Palestine titled, Renewed Strength, Unbroken Hope: The Role of Women in the Church and Society. During the workshop, women participated in interactive lectures, discussions, and activities facilitated by Gender Justice Ministry Director Ranan Issa. Speakers included Bishop Azar, Judge Scarlet Bishara, Pastor Sally Azar, and Dr. Renee Al-Ali. Women from the church have uplifted how important these workshops are for bonding and spiritual connection between congregations.

ECCLESIASTICAL COURT MEETING

In August the ELCJHL implemented a session for the ELCJHL Ecclesiastical Court judges hosted by the ELCJHL Gender Justice Ministry. This was part of a series of meetings bringing the pastors and the Ecclesiastical Court judges together to discuss key issues, share perspectives, and exchange experiences.





DIAKONIA



DEACON RANA VISITS FINLAND

Diaconal Ministry Director Deacon Rana Zeidan visited our partners in the Evangelical Lutheran Diocese of Kuopio, Finland, at the invitation of Bishop Jari Jolkkonen. While in Kuopio, Rana met with partners to discuss diaconal work in the ELCJHL and the Kuopio Diocese, ate and prayed together, and explored the role of diaconal work in the Bible and our churches today. Deacon Rana gave a presentation about the current work of the Diaconal Center and the situation on the ground in Palestine today. She also visited the FELM office in Helsinki and met with staff and supporters there who reaffirmed their commitment to partnership with the Palestinian church. Rana and Deacon Sari-Johanna met with Bishop Mari Parkkinen to discuss the work of the ELCJHL Diaconal Ministry and how FELM is supporting it. We appreciate our ongoing partnership with the Church of Finland and FELM as we serve our community through diaconal work, which is needed now more than ever.

