

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
IN JORDAN AND THE HOLY LAND

NEWSLETTER

February 2025

This month in the ELCJHL...
Lutheran students led community projects,
congregations prepared for the start of Lent,
we welcomed visits from several
international partners, and psychosocial relief
activities continued.

[READ ON FOR MORE](#)



ELCJHL STUDENTS VISIT CANCER PATIENTS

Leadership Students from ELS Beit
Sahour visit Al Hussein Hospital

[READ MORE: PAGE 3](#)

BISHOP AZAR WELCOMES SOLIDARITY VISITS

[READ MORE: PAGE 6](#)



CONGREGATIONS

BETHLEHEM

The Bethlehem congregation held an activity for women led by Jihan Nassar focused on therapeutic exercises for stress relief. Sunday school teachers led a fun Valentine's activity for some of the younger students.



AMMAN

In Amman, weekly worship continues, including some joint services with the Arabic congregation and the new English-speaking congregation. The Church of the Good Shepherd also helped host the delegations from the ELCA and the Church of Finland.



JERUSALEM

The Jerusalem congregation hosted special worships on the Mount of Olives for several of our international visitors in February including the ELCA delegation. Pastor Gabi helped preside along with Bishop Azar, Pastor Ashraf, and Pastor Sally.



BEIT JALA RAMALLAH BEIT SAHOUR

Our congregations in Beit Jala, Beit Sahour, and Ramallah held weekly worship and regular bible study meetings as they prepare for the upcoming season of Lent.

EDUCATION

SCHOOL OF HOPE

Students at the School of Hope in Ramallah held sport tournaments including chess, football, and more. Also in February, 12th grade students led a special afternoon of activities for 1st grade students as a way of giving back to the school community.



TALITHA KUMI

10th grade students at Talitha Kumi attended a presentation by representatives from the Salsyan Industrial Institute in Bethlehem about the fields of industrial and technical education.



ELS BEIT SAHOUR

Leadership Students from ELS visited pediatric cancer patients at Al Hussein Hospital in Beit Jala. Student leaders led activities for the children there and donated supplies requested by the hospital. Leadership students played music and sang to the patients unable to leave their rooms. Those in the later stages of treatment were able to participate in special games and activities as a group. This visit is part of a monthly program of the ELCIHL Education Office for Leadership Students where they participate in special activities to serve their community. We are proud of these student leaders for giving back to their community and bringing joy to children battling cancer.



DAR AL KALIMA

This month DAK celebrated 2nd grade student Zain Abu Sharan's victory in the 25th Mental Calculation Championship for UCMAS. After winning the local Palestine competition, Zain won first place out of 6000 international students competing in India. Participating in the UCMAS program helps improve students' critical thinking skills and gives them amazing opportunities like this. Congratulations Zain!



GENDER JUSTICE

PSYCHOSOCIAL SERIES

The Gender Justice Ministry continued their series of psychosocial relief activities for each congregation this month with a program for women from the Jerusalem congregation. A group gathered for an afternoon of pottery at the Lutheran World Federation Vocational Training Center in Beit Hanina. The women were introduced to the art of pottery by a trainer who demonstrated different techniques, and then each woman painted a personalized tile to take home. This traditional activity was a chance for women to express their feelings through creativity. The activity also included an interactive lecture on the importance of self-care, which discussed strategies for taking care of oneself and dealing with daily stresses in a healthy and balanced way. We are thankful for all the connection and relief this series has brought to our congregants this year.



ENVIRONMENTAL

BIODIVERSITY TRAINING

The Environmental Education Center held workshops for the Lutheran Schools' Environmental Clubs focused on developing students' skills in research and native plant identification. Students learned scientific names and characteristics of native plants. They then explored the garden in groups to record the plants found there and present what they documented to their fellow students!



ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALISM

The Environmental Education Center partnered with Environmental Clubs in the Lutheran Schools and Radio Baladna (Our Homeland) to lead training sessions in environmental journalism for students. As students build skills in environmental media and public speaking, they can share environmental concepts and best practices with their fellow students during morning devotions and beyond.



DIAKONIA HOT MEALS PROGRAM

The Diaconal Center continued their Hot Meals program this month. Winter has been in full force this February, making access to warm, homemade food more important than ever in our communities. The ELCA delegation joined us for one of our Hot Meal distributions this month.



DEAF MINISTRY

Members of the ELCJHL Deaf Ministry gathered for lunch and a fun fitness class!



SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER GATHERING

Local school social workers held their monthly gathering at the Diaconal Center. This month, they participated in a self-care workshop on the benefits of artwork for stress relief and self-expression led by a psychologist from Wings of Hope.

BISHOP'S CORNER

ELCA SOLIDARITY VISIT

Bishop Azar and the ELCJHL hosted some of our ELCA partners for a solidarity visit this month! Rev. Gabi Aelabouni, ELCA Global Mission Desk Director for the Middle East and North Africa, Shadin Nassar, MENA Regional Associate, and Maren Olson, Director of Lutheran Disaster Response, spent five days in the Jerusalem area. They met with Bishop Azar and ELCJHL pastors and ministry directors, heard about the incredible work of Augusta Victoria Hospital, visited the Lutheran schools, saw the Diaconal Center's Hot Meals program in action, and worshipped with the Arabic-speaking congregation in Jerusalem.



ARCHBISHOP TAPIO LUOMA VISIT

In February Bishop Azar and the ELCJHL also met with Archbishop Tapio Luoma of the Church of Finland and an accompanying delegation from CoF and the local FELM Center. During their solidarity visit to the Holy Land, Archbishop Tapio, Bishop Bishop Dr. Mari Parkkinen, Bishop Dr. Jari Jolkkonen, and the rest of the group toured the Evangelical Lutheran School of Beit Sahour and the Diaconal Center in Beit Jala, met with Bishop Azar, and had dinner with the ELCJHL pastors, Church Council members, and Ministry Directors. We thank our Finnish siblings for their support and prayers.

