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Prayers for Our Region

As the war nears the one-year mark, we mourn the continuing violence in Gaza and the escalating situation in the West Bank and Lebanon. We pray for not only an immediate and permanent ceasefire but a just and lasting peace for all people of the region.

SCHOOL STAFF ATTEND MENTAL HEALTH SESSIONS: PAGE 2



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ELCJHL Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2024



Bishop Azar Visits Germany

Bishop Azar traveled to Germany this month for the 200th Anniversary Celebration of our Berlin Mission partners.

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Education

Staff Empowerment Days

A series of activities designed to enhance teachers' ability to deal with the daily challenges of an educational environment and the added burden of the current political situation began this month. Small groups of teachers will participate in activities focused on psychological relief and relationship building with the goal of reducing burnout and promoting a safe and stable school environment for all. Thank you to the experts at Wings of Hope Psychological Trauma Foundation for leading these workshops.

EDUCATION STAFF VISIT GERMANY



ELCJHL Director of Education Eva Azar and other representatives from the Lutheran Schools attended the 200th Anniversary celebration of Berlin Mission in Germany earlier this month. Director Azar participated in several workshops about education during the conference.

Our congregations gathered this month for worship, bible studies, and more. In Jerusalem, the Arabic speaking congregation's bible study is focusing on different women in the Bible.



At the Church of Hope in Ramallah, monthly Women's Meetings and Youth Meetings continued. The church elder council met at the end of September as well.

Congregations



JERUSALEM



AMMAN



RAMALLAH

Our siblings in Amman, Jordan at the Church of the Good Shepherd met for a fruitful family retreat titled "The Presense of the Church and the Responsibility of the Believer." The Amman congregation also began a new season of Bible Study that will last from now until December.

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Matthew 20:28



**Welcome Rev. Dr. Mark
and Dr. Jennifer!**



Our community in Amman welcomed two new members this month. ELCA missionaries Pastor Mark LaChonce and Dr. Jennifer LaChonce arrived to serve as Chaplain at Bethany Beyond the Jordan and start an international community at the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd.

Gender Justice

Al-Hakimat Council Meeting

Al-Hakimat Council including Gender Justice Ministry Director Ranan Issa, Judge Scarlet Bishara, and Judge Somoud Damiri met this month to discuss upcoming work including a short documentary film about women “faith champions” and how their testimonies impact the work of the church. Preparations also began for the 5th Annual Conference on Gender Justice from a National and Religious Perspective in December.



Appreciation was given at the meeting to former Gender Justice Program Coordinator Shadin Nassar for all her hard work over the last few years.



Diakonia

Diaconal Center Renovations Finalized

Renovations were completed earlier this month on our Diaconal Center. These updates to the bathrooms, hallway, and kitchen made the building more accessible to elderly and disabled community members. We are excited to be able to offer more community activities and make our services more accessible for all!



Social Worker Monthly Meeting

School social workers from the Bethlehem area met in September to discuss the importance of mindfulness in the difficult and demanding work environment social workers experience. After a year of war, students and staff in the Bethlehem area are experiencing severe psycho-social symptoms. It's more important than ever that school social workers have the tools they need to support the mental health of all those in our schools, including themselves.

“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.”

1 Peter 4:10



Welcome Josleen!
The Diaconal Ministry welcomed a new employee this month, Josleen Shawhan.



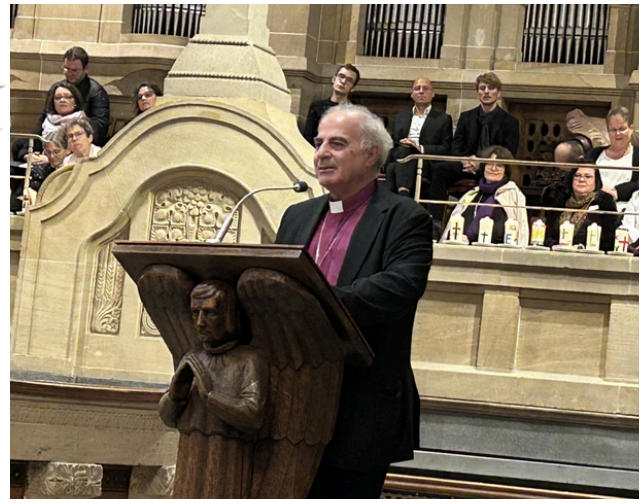
Josleen will work alongside Director Rana Zeidan, helping with Diaconal programming through opening and organizing case files for those receiving assistance, writing reports, co-organizing workshops, meeting with community members, and more! We are excited to see this critical ministry continue to grow, and we are thankful to Josleen for her hard work.

Environmental

Fall Begins at the EEC

It's been a busy month at the Environmental Education Center. Earlier this month, the EEC received an official honor from the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education for their participation in implementing a university cultural program. EEC staff also began visits to the Lutheran schools in September to plan activities for the upcoming academic year. We look forward to another great year of environmental programming in our schools! The EEC offices have been undergoing some changes this month. Staff returned to their offices after some renovations to the space. And we said goodbye to some members of the EEC team and welcomed some new ones as well!





Bishop's Corner

200th Anniversary of Berlin Mission

This month, Bishop Azar traveled to Germany for the 200th Anniversary of the Berlin Mission (Berliner Missionwerks). While in Germany, he attended the celebrations planned for the anniversary and participated in a panel about our partnership with Berlin Mission over the last several decades and where that partnership is heading in the future. Congratulations to Berlin Mission on 200 years of ministry.

School is in session!

Bishop Azar visited the Lutheran schools this month to kick off the new academic year. We pray for a fruitful year of education for our students and teachers.

