



OCTOBER IN THE

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN JORDAN AND THE HOLY LAND



In this newsletter you will find:

Thanksgiving, Reformation Day, Fall Bird Week, and More

Reformation Day



October 31st is Reformation Day. This year, under the patronage of Bishop Dr. Sani Ibrahim Azar, the ELCJHL held the annual multi-lingual Reformation Day Service in the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in Jerusalem. We were joined by many Lutheran and ecumenical siblings in Christ to mark this important day in our Lutheran tradition.



Visit to Synod of the Nile FELM Director Reception

Bishop Azar met with our partners from the Synod of the Nile in Egypt, including Rev. Dr. Majed Karam Soliman, General Secretary of the Evangelical Schools.

Bishop Azar welcomed Rev. Dr. Maria Leppäkari in her new role as Director of the Finnish Evangelical Mission in the Holy Land and FELM Country Representative at a special reception this month.



Meeting with the New Custos

Bishop Azar and a delegation from the ELCJHL and other protestant partners visited the new Custos of the Holy Land, Father Francesco Ielpo to express hope for continued cooperation between all Christians in Jerusalem.

WCC Meeting Egypt

Bishop Azar attended the WCC 6th World Conference on Faith and Order in Cairo along with Pastor Sally Azar and ELCJHL Youth Natalie Nassar.



Travel to Baden

Bishop Azar traveled to Germany and met with our partners at the Evangelical Church in Baden, including Bishop Heike Springhart. While he was there, Bishop Azar spoke at an evening of "Israel-Palestine Dialogue." He shared the situation of Palestinian Christians with the assembly.

CONGREGATIONS

Thanksgiving in the ELCJHL

This month all the ELCJHL congregations celebrated Thanksgiving. Communities gathered in prayer to give thanks to God who is with us through all circumstances. As we worship and break bread together in gratitude for God's blessings, we pray for the coming season to bear the fruits of peace and justice.



JERUSALEM



BEIT JALA



RAMALLAH



AMMAN



BEIT SAHOUR



BETHLEHEM



YOUTH



The Youth Ministry held a special Thanksgiving evening of prayer, activities, and barbecue with youth from the Anglican church. The activities were planned and led by the youth and held in the Church of the Reformation in Beit Jala.

EDUCATION



Reformation Day Celebration

Three of the four Lutheran schools came together at Dar al Kalima Lutheran School this month to celebrate Reformation Day. Due to restrictions of movement, the School of Hope held their own activities in Ramallah. The opening ceremony included prayers, songs, and performances by students of poetry, dabke, and skits. Then, students rotated through four themed activities including art, sports, history, and hymns. The day also marked the start of the Reformation Research Paper competition. Over the next few weeks, students will conduct research and prepare projects about what they would seek to reform in their society.

We are grateful for the opportunity to bring our students together to celebrate our Lutheran traditions and to keep the spirit of Reformation alive in our schools, our church, and our society.



Leadership Graduation



At the beginning of each school year, we celebrate a special milestone for students from the three ELCJHL schools who have completed a year-long journey in mediation and conflict resolution, one of the key programs led by the ELCJHL Education Office to promote peace, emotional intelligence, and student leadership. Over the past year, these students have worked closely with their social counselors and teachers, learning how to become peacebuilders in their school communities.

These graduates are now ready to put their training into action by serving as student mediators during recess, helping their peers resolve conflicts peacefully and respectfully. We are incredibly proud of their commitment, leadership, and the positive example they will set for others. They are now officially Peer Mediators ready to build bridges, not walls. Congratulations to all!



Olive Harvest Activities



Children at Al Mahaba Kindergarten on the Mount of Olives celebrated the olive harvest with themed activities.

DIAKONIA

International Day of Older Persons Celebration

Under the patronage of Bishop Dr. Sani Ibrahim Azar, the Diaconal Ministry of the ELCJHL held a special event to celebrate the International Day of Older Persons at the Diaconal Center in Beit Jala. The day's activities included a presentation by professional nutritionist Sandra Amro, hymns, bingo, and lunch. The prayer for the day was led by Pastor Fursan Zu'mot.

The Diaconal Ministry also brought professional stylists to offer hair and nail care to those who attended. All who came received a gift of appreciation at the end of the afternoon.

We are so grateful for our elders, and we uplift and celebrate their experience, wisdom, and resilience. Sincere thanks and appreciation to the Diaconal Ministry team Rana Zeidan and Josleen Shahwan, and to all who supported and attended the event.



Amman Global Peer Learning Workshop

In October the Diaconal Ministry team traveled to Amman for the Global Diakonia Peer Learning workshop, organized by our partners at FELM together with colleagues from congregations in Syria and Lebanon. The group shared experiences both biblical and practical in the field of diakonia, exploring together how the gospel calls us to serve, how Scripture guides us, and how practical action meets spiritual commitment. Thanks to all the organizers and the Diaconal Ministry team for their hard work!



Deaf Ministry

The Deaf Ministry spent a day of swimming and relaxation at Beit Al Liqa in Beit Jala. We are grateful to have the opportunity for this small retreat to spend time in fellowship and renewal.

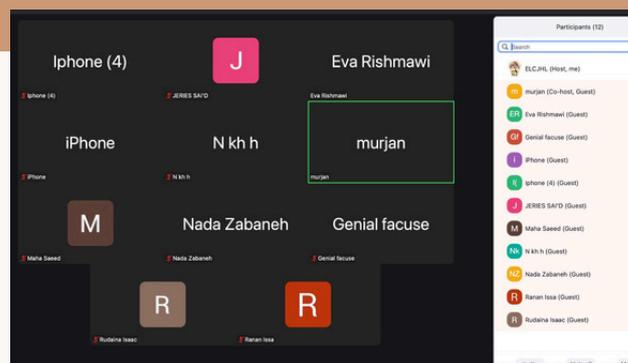
GENDER JUSTICE



Old City Tour with Youth Ministry

In collaboration with the ELCJHL Youth Ministry, the Gender Justice Ministry organized a tour of the Old City of Jerusalem for youth from the Jerusalem congregation with help from youth leaders. Despite living in Jerusalem, many of these youth have limited experience exploring their own holy sites due to safety concerns around accessing the Old City.

Israeli settler and police violence makes it difficult for Palestinian youth to easily and safely access parts of their own city. This tour gave youth the opportunity to learn more about their home and holy places. In a time when many Palestinian youth are leaving the Holy Land, the church hopes to deepen the connection youth have to their land through learning the history of the city and country. These activities also seek to build deeper ties between youth and get them more involved in the church. The tour was led by Jerusalem congregation member Salim Mussalam.



Breast Cancer Awareness Virtual Workshop

The Gender Justice Ministry held an interactive virtual workshop for women of the ELCJHL to raise awareness about breast cancer screening and preparedness in recognition of October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month. The workshop was led by Nurse Murjan Abed from Augusta Victoria Hospital and focused on the importance of early detection, screening methods, and correcting common misconceptions about mammograms. Nurse Murjan explained how modern screening is very safe and effective. We want to thank the women who shared their personal experiences stories around breast cancer.





Fall Bird Week

The EEC held the 26th Bird Week this month. The EEC hosts Bird Week every spring and fall to celebrate the bi-annual journey of migrating bird species through Palestine.



Bird ringing, tracking, and study is a crucial part of the EEC's work that contributes to research and conservation efforts in the region. Bird week's activities included birding tours, education about bird tracking, and environmental advocacy.



IUCN Meeting in Abu Dhabi



Environmental Education Center Director Simon Awad traveled to Abu Dhabi this month for the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) World Conservation Congress.

During this gathering of conservation experts, leaders and decision-makers from around the world, Mr. Awad was elected as the Regional Councilor for West Asia.



We are proud of the work of the EEC toward environmental protection and climate justice in Palestine and beyond. Congratulations to EEC Director Simon!