

Holy Land Committee Thanks You For Making Good Works Possible!

In this season of thanksgiving, St John's Holy Land Committee (HLC) is deeply grateful to all in our community for supporting us in addressing an ambitious agenda! Our mission statement calls for action in four areas: education, humanitarian relief, interfaith activity, and advocacy. We pursue these in multiple, often overlapping ways in a strategy that aims to build interfaith coalitions, educate our community and residents of the region, and provide relief to and advocate for the marginalized and oppressed in the Holy Land.

- Luke 4:18 “to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the prisoners, and recovery of sight to the blind, to liberate the oppressed...”

The HLC takes this injunction--to aid the poor, the oppressed and imprisoned, and those in urgent medical need--seriously. For instance, we provide annual financial support made possible by our St John's community to numerous NGOs:

- New Story Leadership (NSL; Nancy Adams is on the Board), which encourages youth leaders to create a new narrative on Israel-Palestine
- Iqraa (“Read;” Kirk is the Coordinator), which funds university scholarship for Palestinians
- Project Rozana (Rev. Anne Derse is on the Board), through which Muslims, Jews, and Christians cooperate to build peace in Israel-Palestine through cooperation on health care for Palestinians
- Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza and the full annual salary of a nurse at St Luke’s Hospital in Nablus (West Bank), the latter with generous fundraising support in addition to the budget. Both hospitals receive support through oversight by American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem (AFEDJ; Anne and Penny Winder are Board members)
- Membership with Churches for Middle East Peace, a national partner of the Episcopal Church



In addition, we host numerous events addressing one or more of our four missions, this year including:

- separate adult forums in May with Jewish and Palestinian leaders of human rights-focused NGOs
- in June, a presentation by and discussion with Palestinian and Israeli delegates of New Story Leadership
- a discussion in September with Rev. Don Wagner, author of *Glory to God in the Lowest: Journeys to an Unholy Land*, moderated by Rev. Sari Ateek
- a Sunday supper in September featuring Board members Anne and Penny who spoke about the good works of AFEDJ

- In November, a small and informal dinner meeting with the new AFEDJ Director, Eileen Spencer, who along with Penny and Anne discussed their recent AFEDJ-sponsored trip to the region

We're active in other ways too, selling Palestinian olive oil to support Tent of Nations, a multi-national commune hosted on a Palestinian farm, for instance, and publicizing monthly film salons by DC-based Voices from the Holy Land.

And the HLC has advocated with policymakers several times this year through letters to our Congressional representatives, Episcopal leaders, and Secretary of State Antony Blinken on the following topics, generally framed around human rights advocacy:

- Accountability for the killing by Israeli security forces of Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Aqleh in Jenin (West Bank)
- Accountability for Israeli security forces' breaking into St Andrew's Episcopal Church and neighboring Palestinian human rights NGO Al Haq (Truth) in Ramallah (West Bank)
- A call for the immediate release of Shadi Khoury, a 16-year old Christian boy detained in Ramallah without explanation by Israeli security forces, a detention similar to that of many Palestinians, including children as young as 12.
- We have a December meeting planned with Senator Chris Van Hollen to discuss our views.

We welcome anyone interested in the Holy Land to join us—and to keep an eye out for a planned March pilgrimage, led by Sari! After all, our HLC was founded by recent pilgrims to the region.

For any questions, please contact HLC co-conveners, Nancy Adams (njadams1@verizon.net) and Kirk Campbell (kirkcruachan@yahoo.com).