



The Episcopal (Anglican) Church in Jerusalem & The Middle East
The Diocese of Jerusalem
The Most Revd. Suheil Salman Dawani

6 August 2020

International Partners of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem

Dear Friends,

I know that by now you have all seen the horrific images coming out of Beirut, where just two days ago a massive explosion erupted from a port warehouse containing more than 2,000 tons of volatile ammonium nitrate. So far, first-responders have identified 135 persons killed from this blast and over 4,000 badly wounded. Beyond that, upwards of 300,000 people living in the vicinity of the blast zone have been rendered homeless by the destructive force of the explosion's powerful shockwave.

Since the explosion, we have been in constant communication with the Venerable Imad Zoorob, Archdeacon over Lebanon and Syria, who also serves as the Rector of All Saints Episcopal Church in Beirut, located about a mile from where the blast took place. In the aftermath of the explosion, he was able to assess the status of our two resident congregations there, as well as the damage to All Saints and to our complex at the Near Eastern School of Theology (NEST).

The good news is that no member of our congregations was killed or seriously hurt. However, All Saints' Parish Hall and Vestry were damaged, likely requiring tens of thousands of dollars of repairs. Miraculously, the stained glass in the church nave and sanctuary held firm so there is no damage there, though there is some in the sacristy. There is also no damage to St. Luke's School in the more distant mountains. On the other hand, many of our parishioners' apartments suffered damage, as did our Anglican Center at NEST.

In view of these losses to our church, as well as the potential role that the All Saints congregations will have in providing relief to those heavily afflicted by this catastrophe, **I am writing to ask that you issue an appeal for contributions in support of a relief effort.** Donations towards this appeal will not only allow the Diocese of Jerusalem to make the necessary repairs to All Saints and our Episcopal Center at NEST, but also to engage in a larger outreach effort to those members of the communities in Beirut most stricken by this tragedy.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, as well as for your prayers on behalf of the people of Lebanon, who must now bear this additional burden on top of all the other economic hardships they have endured during the pandemic. We appreciate your support and pray that God will bless you in your ministry in the weeks and months ahead as we work together as partners in the service of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace and Peace,

+ Suheil Dawani

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