Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
Living Out God's Grace & Unconditional Love

"The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So, they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting, 'Hosanna!'" (John 12:12-13a).

Over the past week we have engaged in a solidarity visit with the people and ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and Holy Land (ELCJHL), concluding with Palm Sunday celebrations. We have experienced the strength of the Lutheran Christian community, which serves the people through worship, diakonia, education, health care, environmental stewardship and gender justice.

At the same time, we have experienced how the church's witness in this place, continuous since the time of Christ, is under existential threat. Though many of us have visited before, we have never seen the Holy Land at such a critical point. For Palestinians, movement is restricted, violence is increasing and hope is dimmed. Many feel they have no choice but to leave their land. The last standing hospital in Gaza, which has a partnership with the Lutheran World Federation's Augusta Victoria Hospital, was bombed by Israeli forces on the morning of Palm Sunday. We wonder if we can still shout, "Hosanna!"

This solidarity visit has been a reminder to the people of the ELCJHL that they are not alone. It has also been a reminder to the people of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada that our presence and accompaniment with the Palestinian Lutheran people is a vital expression of our shared faith and commitment to justice and peace. Together, we invite you to come and see – to witness the vibrant life and faithful witness of the ELCJHL, and sumud (steadfastness) of the Palestinian Lutheran people. We know that travel is not possible for everyone, but we affirm that showing up, in whatever form it takes, matters deeply. For, as long as the ELCJHL is here, we are all here.

We call upon the people of our three churches to remain steadfast in our solidarity, witness and advocacy for justice – for the sake of our life together and in support of the indigenous Christian presence in the Holy Land. By doing so, we greet the One whose arrival in Jerusalem continues to unite us in our "Hosannas."

Bishop Dr. Sani-Ibrahim Azar

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land



The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton

Presiding Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



The Rev. Susan C. Johnson

National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

