



FRIENDS OF THE HOLY LAND

LIGHTS OF THE HOLY STAR

FHL fund 'seed corn' investment to new candle making factory in Bethlehem District

The overall economic situation in the Holy Land is becoming more and more severe. Nevertheless tourism is booming and pilgrims are requiring increasing numbers of candles to be lit and purchased as souvenirs. That is leading to increased levels of imports from all over the world to provide a range of shapes, quality and scents. The local market is producing only one simple taper candle in volume, so research has shown there is a demand which will provide employment to local Christian families.

FHL Vice-Chairman, Peter Rand, has been working closely with one of our partners in the Holy Land to ensure that a robust business plan is developed that will optimise the benefits from the investment in this project initially \$40,000 with the probability of a further \$20,000 in the next few months. The markets have been established, detailed income and expenditure forecasts have been confirmed and the premises have been secured; melters, casting moulds, racks and raw materials are being purchased, mostly from Holland. Production is planned to start in November with the factory being fully operational from 1 January. Profits from the business will be reinvested by the FHL Partners to develop more businesses in the area. These are exciting times and all contributions from FHL Groups or individuals would be greatly appreciated.



NEW TRUSTEES

Welcome to recently appointed FHL Trustees; Jim Kelly KSG, Peter Rand, David Ryall and Tony Stokes. They join Chairman of the Trustees, Michael Whelan and Patrick Horsfield. David Ryall is the Assistant Secretary to the Catholic Bishops Conference of England & Wales with responsibility for International Affairs.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to our latest newsletter in which we can record many major achievements in the growth of the FHL. In particular I am delighted to record that Archbishop Rowan Williams at the Church of England Synod in York launched an Appeal Fund for the Christians in the Holy Land and has requested that the FHL becomes the guardian of the fund. In addition he and Archbishop Barry Morgan of Wales and Bishop Michael Langrish of Exeter have accepted an invitation to become patrons of the Charity. We very much look forward to working with the Anglican Community at all levels in continuing to support our fellow Christians.

We have also made good progress in developing our contacts in the Holy Land and look forward to the fruits of some major achievements. Thank you for all your continued creative activities. God bless you.

Michael Whelan

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PATRONS

The Most Reverend Rowan Williams
Archbishop of Canterbury

The Most Reverend Vincent Nichols
Archbishop of Westminster

The Most Reverend Barry Morgan
Archbishop of Wales

The Most Reverend Patrick Kelly
Archbishop of Liverpool

The Most Reverend Bernard Longley
Archbishop of Birmingham

The Right Reverend Michael Langrish
Bishop of Exeter

OFFICERS

Dr Michael F Whelan – Chairman

Peter Rand – Vice-Chairman

Tony Stokes – Hon. Treasurer

Sean Higgins – General Manager

OBJECTIVES

Our objectives on behalf of the Christians in the Holy Land are:

- **To raise awareness of the challenges they experience**
- **To encourage prayers to be offered for their intentions**
- **To generate and channel financial resources to provide a sustainable future**
- **To encourage visits to the Holy Land to meet with local Christians**

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY'S APPEAL FUND

At the General Synod of the Church of England in York during July, the Archbishop of Canterbury made a rare 2nd Presidential Address when he launched an Appeal Fund for the Christians in the Holy Land. He told members of the Synod, "I returned from a visit to the Holy Land last year with a very, very strong sense that we had to do more to express our solidarity with the Christian communities there... We know our brothers and sisters there are suffering and we don't always ask ourselves often enough what our response needs to be. I want to say to Christians in the Holy Land that we treasure enormously their presence and witness; a witness that has gone through Christian history, often in conditions of great trial and stress. We hope this Appeal Fund will become over time a substantial amount, generating income that will help sustain hope for a viable future for Christians in the Holy Land". He hoped that Anglicans would consider joining the Friends of the Holy Land, which had agreed to collect and hold in trust all funds donated to the Archbishop's Appeal Fund.



Peter Rand, Archbishop Rowan Williams & Michael Whelan at the General Synod in York

BROCHURE & CELEBRATION LEAFLET

Please contact the office if you want a supply of the latest FHL brochure, reprinted in the summer, celebration leaflets or a supply of hard copies of this Newsletter.



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE



Peter Rand and Michael Whelan at Lambeth Palace with Bishop Suheil Dawani, Archbishop Rowan Williams, His Beatitude Fouad Twal and Archbishop Vincent Nichols.

The General Synod was followed a week later by the International Conference on Christians in the Holy Land at Lambeth Palace, co-sponsored and chaired by the Archbishop of

Westminster and the Archbishop of Canterbury. Among the 70 invited delegates were Michael and Peter, representing the FHL. Participants and speakers included the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, and the Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem plus Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, President of the Vatican's Pontifical Commission for Interreligious Dialogue, Lord Howell, Minister of State at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and hierarchy from North America, Europe and South Africa.



The Press Conference following the Conference at Lambeth

Some of the most powerful messages came from the young people of Bethlehem who attended. They shared the challenges of everyday life in the West Bank.

Other voices that brought a wider perspective were from the Jewish and Muslim faiths. When speaking to the Press at the closing of the Conference, Archbishop Vincent Nichols said "For me the practical outcomes we have to ponder quite carefully, but one theme of the practical outcomes will be very clear. It will be centred around the phrase that we are here to participate in and develop dialogue – mutual understanding through dialogue in the parishes of this country. Some of that - much of that - will be focused on the 'Friends of the Holy Land'. It has become an ecumenical charity through which we hope that in lots of parishes there will be small groups of people who are committed to being 'friends' of the Holy Land."

FHL WEBSITE

Have you visited the new FHL website www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk? It was launched in July. Tell us what you think, how you believe it could be improved and what additional information you would like to see included.

PROJECTS UPDATE

Recent projects supported by the Friends of the Holy Land have included:

- 'Seed corn' funding for a new candle making factory



- Contributions towards the purchase of a mini-bus for St. Martha's House



A sing-along at St Martha's House

- Repair to houses
- Regular support to the School of Joy
- Distribution of food and clothes vouchers to the families of 490 children under 12 years old.



NATIONAL GATHERING OF FRIENDS

As we go to press, plans are being developed for the 1st National Gathering of Friends in the autumn. A one day meeting is planned, probably in Kenilworth for friends from established and developing FHL Parish Groups around the country to share experiences on a wide range of subjects. Initial reaction from representatives of Groups has been very encouraging and we look forward to a valuable day. Topics are expected to cover communication, raising the FHL profile, a potential FHL pilgrimage, clarifying the relationship between Parish Groups and the National Charity, fundraising and supporting specific projects. If you would like to attend, you need not be affiliated to a current FHL Parish Group. You would be very welcome. Please email the office FAO Peter Rand who is putting the programme together. The date will be announced by the end of August, following receipt of availability from Group representatives. There will be no cost other than travelling and home hosting will be available if required.

SCHOOL OF JOY

The Worcester FHL Group has been supporting the School of Joy from the start and continue to do so. This is a school for children and youths with special needs. Unfortunately the two year support from Caritas Sweden has finished and the Director, Fr. Mamdouh AbuSada has had to reduce the intake of students from 60 to 40 to try and keep the school financially viable. The school provides wonderful support for these young people, many of whom would otherwise be on the streets. It costs a minimum of £3,200 per year to provide for one student. The highest proportion of the cost is for the 6 full-time and 2 part-time teachers. There is a desperate need for additional funds to balance the budget in this academic year. Unlike the UK, there is no government funding available for those with special needs. They rely on our charity. Please contact either Michael or Peter through the office, if you would like further information



Some of the children at the School of Joy

TRAVEL BURSARY

A Travel Bursary of £2,000 has been received from the FHL Groups in Wirral and Wallasey to encourage travel to the Holy Land. The intention of the travel bursary is to attract young people especially with church, medical or humanitarian interests to visit and see for themselves the plight of the Christians. Applications should be sent to the office and students in the Shrewsbury Diocese are especially welcome.

CHRISTMAS APPEAL

We expect to be undertaking a distribution of food and clothes vouchers plus blankets and heaters at Christmas to the most needy in the Bethlehem District. This is dependent on sufficient funds being raised, so please be generous. £18 will provide a clothes voucher £9 a food voucher, £20 a 3 bar heater and £10 a pair of blankets.

AROUND THE FHL GROUPS

Since the last newsletter FHL Groups have been established up and down the country. Parish and Deanery Groups are the bed rock of the FHL. If you feel that you would like to start a small group in your parish, just call the office. Sean and the team will give you all the support that you need.

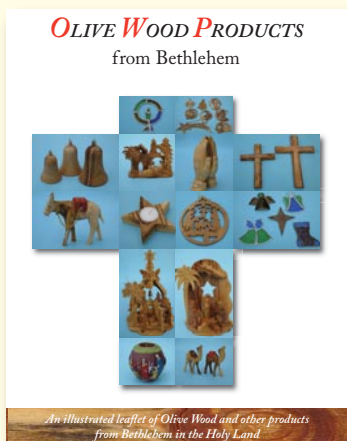
SPOTLIGHT ON STONEYCROFT

Congratulations to Liverpool Stoneycroft for achieving their first target of £6,000 fundraising for house repairs through a combination of sponsored events, cake sales, bingo afternoons, quizzes and raffles. Sean was very encouraged in the early days with the FHL in Liverpool when he attended a fund raising evening at which a community spirit was very much in evidence. The dedication of the Friends in the North West to the cause is appreciated with current support for the St. Martha's House mini-bus project.

CHRISTMAS CARDS AND OLIVE WOOD PRODUCTS

Christmas cards from Bethlehem are now available for distribution and sale plus fresh supplies of olive wood products. Please contact Pam Highton at the office or email

olivewoodproducts@btconnect.com



MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Donate to FHL and help our brothers and sisters in the Holy Land

Please be generous and consider:

- A one off donation. Send a cheque to the office payable to the FHL – General Fund or the FHL – Archbishop of Canterbury's Fund.
- A regular standing order. Request a form from the office or download from the website.
- Gift aiding your donation if you are a UK tax payer, then your donation is worth an additional 25% to the FHL. Complete a gift aid form and send your donation direct to the office.
- Requesting donations to the FHL in lieu of presents at your next celebration! Colour 'flyers' available from National Office.
- Providing a legacy to the FHL in your Will.
- Requesting a retiring collection in your parish. Please contact the office, who will send you a supply of gift aid envelopes.
- Donating on-line through the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) by visiting our website www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk

Help Us to Make a Difference

NATIONAL VOLUNTEERS

As the demands on the office increase, there has been a wonderful response from local parishioners around Kenilworth to give of their time on an entirely voluntary basis to the day to day running of the office under the direction of FHL General Manager, Sean Higgins. Pictured here are the team who will be answering your calls and enquiries when you contact the office for information



The FHL National Volunteers Team

CALLING ALL FHL 'AMBASSADORS'!!

The National Team are permanently seeking more ambassadors around the country to help them start new FHL Parish Groups. If you have a concern for the plight of the Christians in the Holy Land and believe you might be able to assist, please call the office

CRIB BOXES – PREPARE FOR ADVENT

Collect small change in your own olive wood crib box, available from your local FHL Group. They are collected once a year (or when full!) An ideal Christmas present and they are free! However we do expect to receive the contents-regularly!



FHL Olive Wood Crib Box

INFORMATION & SUPPORT

If you would like further information on the FHL or for a member of the national team to visit your parish, make a short pulpit presentation or address a group of parishioners, call the office now on 01926 512980 and speak to Sean Higgins or one of the volunteers.