

*The Most Reverend Hosam E. Naoum  
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The Fifteenth Bishop of the Episcopal  
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المطران حسام الياس نعوم  
رئيس الأساقفة الأنجليكاني في القدس  
الأسقف الخامس عشر لمطراينة القدس الأسقفية العربية

## Pastoral Letter and an Advent Appeal

Advent 2023

**"For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders, and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."**

(Isaiah 9:6, NRSV)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Grace and peace to you all.

As we arrive at the Season of Advent, we begin a new liturgical year. During this time our primary focus shifts towards preparing to welcome our Savior Jesus Christ into each of our lives. We do this by praying and staying alert: **"Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come"** (Mark 13:33, NRSV). The liturgical readings that accompany us during this season consistently echo this call to vigilant expectation. They do so through the voices of witnesses such as the Virgin Mary, Simeon the Elder, the prophetess Anna, John the Baptist, and others.

Due to the current situation in our beloved Holy Land and the heartbreaking scenes that have shattered our hearts, we have decided this year to limit our celebrations to prayers, liturgies, and carols within our churches. In a spirit of solidarity within the Body of Christ, I invite you to join us in this discipline by reflecting on the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ more than two thousand years ago, as well as on the conditions prevailing in the land at that time.

In doing so, we will find that they were no better than the circumstances here today. During the first Christmas, the Holy Family had difficulty finding a place for their son's birth. There was the killing of children. There was military occupation. And there was the Holy Family becoming displaced as refugees. Outwardly, there was no reason for celebration and joy other than the birth of the Lord Jesus. In our day, let us likewise find our cause for celebration from fixing our eyes on the Child lying in the manger. Let Advent be for us a time of expectation through prayer, worship, and acts of kindness: **"Our soul waits for the Lord; he is our help and shield. For our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name. Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in you"** (Psalm 33:20-22, NRSV).

As our beloved partners in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, I invite you to join the 2023 Advent and Christmas Project as a means of living into the true meaning of Christmas by giving to those in need in the Holy Land. This Christmas season, we aim to bring smiles to the faces of as many children as possible, as well as support to struggling families. And so we would welcome and greatly appreciate your love, support, and generous contributions towards this fund for needy families at Christmas. Your assistance will have a significant impact on making Christmas joyful, allowing us to distribute gifts to less fortunate children, and to offer help to their families.

With the release of this appeal and pastoral letter, I also present to you the "2023 Advent Calendar." It is a booklet of daily reflections and prayers for the Advent Season written by the clergy of our Diocese. We offer it as a spiritual guide and source of encouragement for your daily prayers and



meditations. As I have said, Advent is a pilgrimage towards celebrating Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. Together as a Diocese—including our clergy, congregations, and institutions—and in unity with our sister churches and partners around the world, we pray and journey together in hope, peace, joy, and love. We focus our attention on encountering the person of Jesus Christ.

I therefore invite you to join us in meditating during this holy season on the virtues of the Gospel: "**Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.**" These four virtues are an integral part of Christian teaching. We highlight them in the booklet to assist and guide us all in the anticipation of the Lord's coming.

We are all concerned about the future and feel fear and uncertainty. But our faith is stronger than these anxieties and leads us to continue our ministries through our churches and institutions as a living witness. Indeed, every ministry we offer is nothing but a continuation of Jesus' ministry on earth. For he is the teacher, healer, and Savior. He continues to work through us as individuals and as a Church. Advent offers us a time for renewing these ministries, as well as for rededicating our individual and communal talents and spiritual devotions to God.

I wish each one of you abundant blessings and a spiritual life that is acceptable to the Lord. May the Lord bless you and grant you joy and peace.

With love and prayers,

++ Hosam E. Naoum  
Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem  
The Primate of the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East



How can I help in drawing a smile on the faces of children during the season of Christmas?

You can donate through our partners in ministry:

#### Australia

- Anglican Board of Mission  
[abmission.org/appeals/emergency-appeals/al-ahli-hospital-emergency-appeal](http://abmission.org/appeals/emergency-appeals/al-ahli-hospital-emergency-appeal)  
Anglican Overseas Aid: [anglicanoverseasaid.org.au/our-work/emergency-appeal-ahli-arab-hospital](http://anglicanoverseasaid.org.au/our-work/emergency-appeal-ahli-arab-hospital)

#### Canada

- Canadian Companions: [anglican.ca/gr/provinces/jerusalem/companions](http://anglican.ca/gr/provinces/jerusalem/companions)

#### Germany

- Evangelische Mission in Solidarität (EMS):  
[ems-online.org/en/get-informed/news/according-to-gods-will-war-shall-not-be](http://ems-online.org/en/get-informed/news/according-to-gods-will-war-shall-not-be)

#### New Zealand

- Anglican Missions: [anglicanmissions.org.nz/humanitarian-emergencies/al-ahli-hospital-appeal](http://anglicanmissions.org.nz/humanitarian-emergencies/al-ahli-hospital-appeal)

#### United Kingdom

- Jerusalem and Middle East Church Association (JMECA):  
<https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/24666#!/DonationDetails>
- Friends of the Holy Land (Joint Anglican-Roman Catholic charity):  
[friendsoftheholylan.org.uk/donate/christmas](http://friendsoftheholylan.org.uk/donate/christmas)

#### United States of America

- American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem: [afedj.org/give/give-online](http://afedj.org/give/give-online)

For more information contact the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem: [info@j-diocese.org](mailto:info@j-diocese.org).