

**The Church Mouse/Vashon Lutheran Church**  
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**MARCH 2023**



# The Church Mouse

## From the Bishop:

The 10-year-old girl at the school we were visiting was asked, “When was the last time you went to the beach?” She paused, thought, and finally said rather quietly, “I think when I was three.”

This might not seem like a huge deal. Many people choose to not visit bodies of water. But you see, this little girl is a Lutheran Palestinian attending one of our Lutheran Schools in the West Bank. She is fluent in English. She is warm and engaging. She has dreams and aspirations. Her family is dedicated to her education, and they are faithful Christians. And she cannot get to the water that historically was her people’s land because of checkpoints and government policies. She is literally a few miles from the water that she cannot swim in.



In January, seventeen ELCA Bishops traveled to the Holy Land on a “Living Stones” listening tour. Bishop Azur of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) invited us to come and see the Lutheran Church in the Holy Land and for us to witness firsthand how the Lutheran Church is positively impacting thousands of people.

On this tour we didn’t have time to visit many “holy sites.” Instead, this was a working trip that was designed to meet with those who are living in the Holy Land today – or as Palestinians say – to meet with the Living Stones of the Holy Land. During our time with our siblings in Christ, we learned and listened; prayed and contemplated; laughed and wept. These beautiful and courageous people welcomed us into their lives with grace and dignity. We were given an abundance of food, gifts, laughter, worship, and dancing.

And the stories. The stories were rich and beautiful ... and devastating. Like so many people throughout history whose lives have been ripped apart by oppressive powers, the Palestinian Christians have had their land, their identity, and their freedoms radically diminished. In some cases, completely erased.

Excerpts of stories I heard:

- The men whose family homes have been demolished because they cannot produce paperwork from the Ottoman Empire that their family has owned their land for over a century.
- The fourteen-year-old boy who was killed in a refugee camp. In his pocket was a piece of paper where he had written his last will and testament. Many young people are now carrying wills in their pockets as they fear they will be killed.
- Concern that the Holy Land will become a museum rather than a living expression of the rich diversity of people who call this land their home.
- A principal at one of the Lutheran schools stating proudly: “We are

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educating the next creative leaders in Palestine and in the Middle East.”

Truly a highlight of this trip was the ordination of Pastor Sally Azur. Pastor Sally is the first Palestinian woman pastor in the Holy Land. She is called to serve two Lutheran Churches in the Holy Land and we are excited to see her flourish.

We were able to visit with a Jewish human rights organization, the United States Ambassador for Palestinian Affairs, the Palestinian Authority Prime Minister, the General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, and many others who listened to our concerns and who also stated their deep dedication to working for peace and justice in this land.

I confess that what I have written here barely touches on the complexity of the situation in the Holy Land. Hundreds if not thousands of books have been written. I am no expert. But as I continue to reflect on this trip – and as I hope to plan a trip for this synod in the next year or so – I hold this verse in my heart from Isaiah, “Learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.” Isaiah 1:17

May we all learn, seek, rescue, defend and plead for all of God’s beloved children. For the little girl who longs to see water. For the little boy whose life was cut short. For the men who want their family homes. For those who daily work for justice. For those who daily pray for peace. Oh God, we pray, Kyrie eleison.

+ Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee

[bishop@lutheransnw.org](mailto:bishop@lutheransnw.org)



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Thank you, Rev. Susan Wanwig, for leading us in worship Sunday, March 5th!**

**No Sunday Bible study class on Mar. 5, 9:15 – 10:00 AM.**

**IFCH Dinner Program:** The fourth Thursday of each month VLC is to provide the ingredients for five hand out meals at Vashon Presbyterian Church at 5:00 PM. Contact Patte Wagner: [pattewags@aol.com](mailto:pattewags@aol.com) if you wish to help. IFCH will provide containers for packaging the food into meal-to-go bags.

**AARP Free Tax Preparation** – Thursdays, February 9 – April 7, 2023. Open between 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM. By appointment: [vashonaarp@gmail.com](mailto:vashonaarp@gmail.com).

**In September, 2023 we are having our annual rummage sale.** Please begin gathering items, but keep them home for now. In spring, June Langland will tell you when items can be brought to the church.

**Giving Your Offering** – If you would like to continue giving an offering to VLC, our mailing address is: Vashon Lutheran Church, P. O. Box 2930, Vashon, WA 98070.

**The Care Closet, Medical Equipment/Supplies** – 206-473-8715. Vashon Care Network – 206-604-3253. Email: [contact@vashoncarenetwork.org](mailto:contact@vashoncarenetwork.org); website: [www.vashoncarenetwork.org](http://www.vashoncarenetwork.org)

**Contact Gail Larson (206/567-4779) with your prayer requests.**

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”  
John 3

## OUR FAITH IN ACTION

### SUNDAY

1st, Food Bank Sunday

10:30 AM – 12:00 PM Worship and Coffee Hour

6:30 – 8:30 PM AA Group

### MONDAY

10:00 AM Intercessory Prayer Group

Mar. 13, 6:00 PM Mission Planning Committee ZOOM meeting

### TUESDAY

2nd, 9:00 – 1:00 PM Quilt Sewers Group

3rd, 10:00 – noon Vashon Quilting Group

### WEDNESDAY

1st, 9:00 – noon Lutheran Quilters Group

March 22, 7:00 PM Council ZOOM Meeting

### THURSDAY

Feb. 9 – Apr. 7, 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM AARP Free Tax Prep, by appointment

Mar. 23, 5:00 PM IFCH Dinner prepared by VLC, served at VPC

### FRIDAY

7:00 - 8:30 PM AA Group for Men



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