



كنيسة الإصلاح الإنجيلية اللوثرية - بيت جالا

The Evang. Luth. Church of Reformation – Beit Jala

Pastor's Note and Appeal

Dear sisters and brothers around the world,

Salaam and grace to you from the wounded Palestine. I hope this letter finds you all well, and that you are keeping us all in your thoughts and prayers. Since the 7th of October, the Holy Land has entered a period of grief, anger, anxiety, and fear. We as Christians never condone any violence. We pray for a just resolution in which human rights are granted to all of God's children.

To provide a small and honest update, since the 7th of October, myself and my congregation are living in what can only be described as ghettos. All Palestinian cities are separated from one another. All areas of the country have seen increased violence, and in Beit Jala we see the Israeli military enter every day.

Palestinians, even those holding permits, are not allowed to enter Israel for work or any other reason. Tourists and most international workers have fled the country. As the majority of Palestinians in Bethlehem require either entrance to Israel or the presence of tourists to make an income, our economy has all but flattened since October 7th. Though many see this new period as something with a concrete end once the violence stops, for us the lack of tourism and increased restrictions of movement will impact our local economy for years to come. Schools, in addition, have switched between online and in-person sessions, creating a very chaotic month of lessons for students. This will be a further destruction of an economy that was just starting to be rebuilt after the financial devastation we experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Church of Reformation in Beit Jala has done our best to provide emergency services to our community. We are using what little emergency funding we have to assist with crucial food, housing bills, and school fees for families directly impacted by loss of work.

Our Abraham's Tent program has remained open for students. We have prioritized making space for students to keep learning with support from the program even during times of strike or online learning. We saw the negative effect the COVID-19 pandemic had on our students' education and are doing everything we can to prevent this from happening again.

If you feel called to support us with donations, the Church of the Reformation would greatly appreciate any help. If this is in your capacity, please email me at ashraftannous@gmail.com. We are preparing for years of hardship following this war and can only pray we can assist our community during this time of need. If it is not in your ability to give, I humbly request you keep us in your prayers.

God bless you
Pastor Ashraf Tannous

