

# BEIT JALA JOURNAL



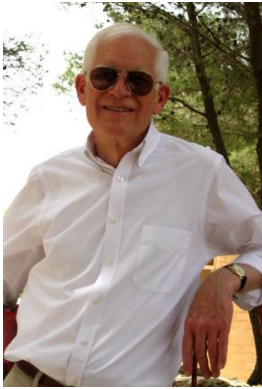
John Setterlund, missionary

August 15, 2007



## *Home Again*

Blessings from the Holy Land! After four wonderful weeks in the United States, I am back “at home” in Beit Jala. Before I know it, the children will return to school, and our Boys Home will come back to life. Meanwhile there are music lessons to resume teaching, as well as my Arabic lessons, guests’ visits to prepare for, and some exciting new projects to begin planning.



It is gratifying to have received many positive comments regarding my semi-monthly messages, and to know that several readers are forwarding this newsletter to others. And, as I traveled, I was happy to get additional names for the mailing list. I will continue to report on my activities and events of the coming season in future issues of this newsletter.

For right now, may I extend a big Thank You to everyone who greeted me so warmly, welcomed me into their homes, helped me along the way, and expressed real interest and concern for the church in Beit Jala, the people of Palestine, and the whole Middle East. ■

## The Situation

In a setting where politics change rapidly and have a direct effect on the lives of citizens, I was eager to see what changes may have taken place during the weeks I was away.

First, I was pleasantly surprised at the Tel Aviv airport, that we didn’t have to fill out any entry card and that the passport desk asked me no questions at all.

Second, I was disappointed that the check-point outside Beit Jala is bigger than before, and the road home is even longer. ■

## Bishop Speaks in Chicago

Bishop Munib Younan, leader of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, was a special guest of the ELCA churchwide assembly, recently held in Chicago. He addressed the 1000+ assembly on Aug. 9.

I was privileged to attend a reception in his honor, hosted by the two ELCA synods which are “companion” synods of the ELCJHL.

Bishop Munib, who also chairs the Middle East Conference of Churches, urged the American churches to work as partners in Israel, Palestine and the Middle East. He also urged strong support for the Lutheran Schools in Palestine. ■

## Baptismal Celebration

The son of one of our congregation’s families was baptized the first Sunday after my return. Our own pastor was on vacation, so our colleague from the Arab-speaking congregation from Jerusalem presided. Good thing, since it was the first baptism I had witnessed. As was expected, the extended family was present in large numbers. The many children were excited, and cameras were whirring.

I was invited to the family party afterwards. Held at a local restaurant, it was a happy and boisterous time for all. The traditional dinner was served: lamb and rice with yogurt, plus several salads, dips, pita bread, hard- and soft-drinks, and melon. The music was loud, but that only stimulated animated conversations. I was received warmly and made many new friends. ■

### CONTACT INFORMATION

We have no mail service in Beit Jala nor throughout Palestine. My only mailing address is:

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P. O. Box 14076

Jerusalem 91140, Israel

The telephone number at my Beit Jala home and church is:

(011-972-2) 274-2613

I give thanks daily for the internet! ■