

BEIT JALA JOURNAL



John Setterlund, missionary

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Faith and Hope

Verses from Psalm 40 express the confidence and also the urgent prayer of today's Palestinian people:

May all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; may those who love your salvation say continually, "Great is the Lord!"

As for me, I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought for me. You are my help and my deliverer; do not delay, O my God. ■

Delay of the Van

No sooner had we ordered a new van for the boarding home, than we were notified that the Israeli government would no longer waive the import fees. This has doubled the cost of the car and prevented our purchase at this time. We hope to find some way around the impasse, so stay tuned. ■

CROSSFIRE

Last Monday night we heard gunfire from the Palestinian refugee camp next to Bethlehem. We learned that Israeli soldiers had stormed the home of a suspected terrorist, and hauled him off to prison. One teenager was killed and three wounded in the fray. ■

"The Lord Will Provide"

This quote from Genesis 22:14 has become the title for a new piece of art in the Lutheran guesthouse at Beit Jala. Sculptor Ron Felt has created a mural depicting Abraham's sacrifice of his son. Based on a sketch by me, this wood sculpture has been the focus of a major art project during the past two weeks. Many of the students living in the Boys Home were instrumental in the finishing of the mural and its installation in the lobby of our guesthouse.



Our new mural

The congregation attended the official presentation and dedication after morning worship on January 27. A brief explanation and prayer were offered by Vicar Saliba, and acknowledgements made to those who worked on the mural. Coffee was served by the boarding home boys.



Students learn the fine points of carving wood

A workshop offered the children some hands-on instruction of wood carving, and included a field trip to a factory in Beit Sahour, where tons of olivewood are machine-carved into souvenirs, a major industry of the Bethlehem area.

This project is one of many efforts to give the residents of the Boys Home some practical and aesthetic skills for artistic and musical expression. Our heartiest thanks to Ron Felt and all other volunteers for giving time and effort to enrich the lives of these young people.



Painting the mural background

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Thank You also to everyone who contributes money to make the continuation of these projects possible. ■

An Artistic Description of Our Mural

by Ron Felt

God tested Abraham's faith by directing him to sacrifice his only son, Isaac (Genesis 22:1-14). Abraham, carved in oak, is in the lower left corner bearing a knife (fashioned from a large nail). The tortured expression on his face reflects the agony of his situation. Isaac (in oak), also in agony, stands before the altar surrounded by stars as countless as his promised descendants (Genesis 15:5). God is pleased with Abraham's response and directs an angel (pine), to intervene by blocking the sword with an olive branch and providing a ram (oak) in his place.