



The Friends of St Andrew's Jerusalem & Tiberias

February 2026

A Message from our Convener

As I read the World Council of Churches' press release at the end of January about the handover ceremony from one group of Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAs) to the next in the historic St George's Cathedral in Jerusalem, it struck me that it is now 20 years since I participated in that same activity. Back then, we had hopes that the programme might soon be unnecessary.

Comments from Iskandar Majlaton, programme co-ordinator for the WCC Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI), show it is all the more needed now. Noting how the EAs stood alongside communities facing the harsh realities of occupation, he said: "You embodied the core value of solidarity with those whose fundamental rights are at risk. Your impact has been both tangible and profound." In three months, the EAs had documented close to 700 human rights violations. "These are not just numbers," noted Majlaton. "They represent lives, stories, and acts of courageous truth-telling." Inside you can read more from two returned Ecumenical Accompaniers.



In *The Washington Post* last month, the American book critic Ron Charles wrote about remembering Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and this pithy comment caught my attention. He wrote: "If, as King promised, the arc of the moral universe bends toward justice, we could use some more torque these days."

The followers of Jesus can be that torque. Some of us will have seen the brave efforts of the members of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Minneapolis to speak out for the oppressed and, literally, stand on the streets to protest against random and vile state sanctioned militias. I see parallels in these parishioners and the EAs with Dietrich Bonhoeffer in 1930s Germany when he stood against the State and State Church and, in so doing, offering torque to bend the moral arc of the universe.

Our two projects for 2026 also seek to put pressure on that moral arc – **HIRN's** work in supporting young people to stay in education and develop their own skills and capacity, and **Bees for Peace** bringing women from different communities together to break down barriers and build up empathy and understanding. One great supporter of that work was Joan Musgrave and we gave thanks for her wonderful life and witness at her memorial service in January. Any support that can be offered will be well used.

Finally, as the Very Rev Dr Shaw Paterson commended in his St Andrew's Day sermon: "May we, as a church, continue to support St Andrew's Jerusalem & Tiberias — a visible sign that hospitality is stronger than hostility, that light is stronger than darkness, and that Christ still walks the road with us." Amen to that.

Rev Dr Ian Alexander



Would you like to join 'The Friends'?

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From Hostility to Hospitality

We were delighted to have former Moderator, The Very Rev Dr Shaw Paterson, Minister at Strathaven Trinity Parish Church of Scotland as guest preacher at our annual St Andrew's Day Service at St Cuthbert's Church in Edinburgh. There follows a shortened version of his much appreciated sermon.



I am delighted to preach at this annual service and I was particularly pleased to read Muriel Pearson's reflection in the November Newsletter: *I have learned a lot about the value of sitting and just listening, the preciousness of shared hospitality and the importance of reflecting in the light of God on their current context and understanding.* Shared hospitality and the theme of this sermon (which was already written) is from hostility to hospitality.

There is something rather wonderful about gathering here in Edinburgh to remember and celebrate a church that sits halfway across the world, in the hills above Jerusalem. From the Old Town to the Holy City – two places steeped in faith, history, and, if we're honest, a fair bit of stonework! Both have seen their share of pilgrimage and prayer. Both have known conflict and longing for peace.

St Andrew's Scots Memorial Church in Jerusalem, built in the 1920s to honour Scottish soldiers who fell in the Palestine campaign, has become more than a memorial. It has become a ministry. A witness. A boundary-crossing act of faithfulness, meeting a world full of hostility with the gospel's call to hospitality. And as we gather here in Scotland, we are partners in that mission — a mission that says, "We will be present, even when the world is divided; we will offer peace, even where peace feels impossible."

Isaiah gives us a vision bold enough to break your heart and hopeful enough to mend it: "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." It is a vision of hospitality replacing hostility. Of swords becoming ploughshares, weapons becoming tools to feed and nurture. Isaiah doesn't pretend the world is peaceful. He begins: "In days to come..." And if ever there was a place where this promise is both needed and fragile, it is the land around St Andrew's. The longing for peace is deep. The wounds are old. The fear is real.

But perhaps Isaiah reminds us that peace begins with people who walk in God's light, who refuse the easy slide into hostility and dare instead to offer hospitality. St Andrew's embodies that daring choice. A place where pilgrims, students, and locals of various faiths and none are received not as threats but as guests. A place where welcome is an act of courage. Every greeting at that door, every cup of tea poured, every prayer whispered for peace.....that's another sword hammered into a ploughshare.

In Luke's Gospel, the disciples on the Emmaus road are walking away from Jerusalem burdened by confusion, grief, and dashed hopes. Jesus appears beside them — but they don't recognise him. Not until they reach Emmaus. Not until, exhausted and bewildered, they do something simple: they offer hospitality. "Stay with us," they say. And in the breaking of bread... their eyes are opened. Christ is revealed.

Hospitality turned despair into recognition. Hospitality transformed strangers into companions. Hospitality ignited hope: "Were not our hearts burning within us?" This is what our presence in Jerusalem and Tiberias is all about: walking beside people on difficult roads, offering Christlike hospitality, trusting that God is at work in the simple acts of welcome long before anyone notices. Where hostility blinds, hospitality reveals Christ.

St Andrew's stands on a hill overlooking the Old City - a crossroads of three great faiths, cultures, and histories. It could easily have been a fortress. Instead, it is a guesthouse. A home for the traveller. A table for the hungry. A quiet space for those of every background and none. A place that whispers, "There is another way to live." Its ministry is not loud - but faithful; not flashy - but steadfast; not naïve - but deeply hopeful. A ministry of hospitality in a region too accustomed to hostility. And as we gather here today, that is what we support: a witness that says God has not given up on this world, and neither should we.

Now, I admit that when I'm in a hurry any delay can be a bit frustrating. But in reality, there are times when we need to stop - quite literally - we need to stop and think and reflect not just about our Saviour's birth but of the land he travelled and ministered and shared the love of God. This annual service gives us that opportunity this afternoon because if we don't stop and reflect on what has happened - on the God who came as a vulnerable child, the Prince of Peace lying in straw - then we risk drifting back into the world's default setting of hostility. Stopping matters. Reflecting matters.

Hospitality begins with holy hesitation - that moment when we choose not to react in anger, not to judge too quickly, not to close the door too soon. The nativity tells us: God entered the world not with hostility but with hospitality - inviting shepherds, foreigners, the poor, and the puzzled.

So where is God calling each of us to choose hospitality this week? Maybe in a family disagreement. Maybe with someone who thinks very differently from you. Maybe in your street, workplace, or church. Maybe in praying, with stubborn hope, for peace in places that feel peace-less.

We might never walk the roads of Jerusalem, but we can live its calling. Those two on the Emmaus Road recognised Christ not through power, argument, or miracle — but in a simple act of hospitality: a meal shared with a stranger on a dusty road. Like them, may our hearts burn within us as well. May we recognise Christ in the stranger, in the weary traveller, in the person who irritates us, in the person we fear, in the person who needs our presence.

And may we, as a church, continue to support St Andrew's Jerusalem & Tiberias — a visible sign that hospitality is stronger than hostility, that light is stronger than darkness, and that Christ still walks the road with us. Amen.

A Prayer for These Times

We thank You, God of Life that Your love and justice and mercy are higher, and deeper and wider than we can ever know.

We pray for your church, in all its diversity. We pray for neighbours of all faiths and none. We pray for those needing a home, hungry, and anxious for tomorrow. We pray for those abused, excluded, denied opportunities for education, water, health, life itself. As we play our part in community, may we "Do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God."

We pray for our world, conscious of gross inequality that millions toil without justice and scarce pay for our comfort and convenience. We cry out against the mountain of debt which keeps countries from caring for their people. We pray for our planet itself groaning and damaged. As we pray for Your kingdom of justice and wholeness, as we seek to live Your way, may we "Do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God." Amen

The Privilege of Being an Ecumenical Accompanier



In the following articles we are much indebted to Jenny and Sandra for sharing their involvement with EAPPI and its vitally important role.

Earlier last year I was privileged to serve as an Ecumenical Accompanier ('EA') for the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI UK and Ireland), in the Bethlehem region.

Briefly, EAPPI was set up by the World Council of Churches in 2002 in response to a call by Palestinian churches for an international presence in Occupied Palestine. In the UK and Ireland EAPPI is managed by the Quakers in Britain. Since 2002 EAPPI has had international teams of EAs serving in the West Bank of Occupied Palestine, including East Jerusalem. The programme is neither pro-Israeli nor Pro-Palestinian, but it most definitely is pro-Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law and it believes states should be criticised where they do not comply with their obligations under international law. More information on the programme (including its objectives and how to apply to become an EA) can be found at <https://www.eyewitnessblogs.com/> and at <https://www.quaker.org.uk/action/palestine-and-israel/eappi>.

Formally, the role of an EA is to monitor human rights abuses, provide protection by presence, to stand in solidarity with Palestinian and Israeli peace activists and to advocate for an end to the unlawful military occupation. What did this mean in practice? It meant monitoring children accessing school, monitoring checkpoints and movement obstacles put up by the Israeli forces to control the movement of Palestinians throughout the West Bank, and visiting local communities impacted by the activities of the Israeli military or (sometimes very violent) Israeli settlers. We also spent time with Israeli and Palestinian peace activists - for example, *Rabbis for Human Rights*.

While we read and hear a lot in the media including social media about what is going on in Gaza, not so much is heard about the West Bank, where there is a lot of Israeli military activity and Israeli settlement expansion which is illegal under international law. Palestinians have asked that we share their experiences of the impact of the unlawful occupation on their daily lives and on their basic human rights. For example, I observed just how difficult it can be for Palestinians to access work, schools, medical treatment, shops, or to visit family, because of the movement obstacles the Israeli military have put around Palestinian villages, towns and cities in the West Bank. The West Bank is small – smaller than the size of the central region of Scotland. There are now around 850 movement obstacles (gates, roadblocks, checkpoints) in place. This makes movement between villages, towns and cities increasingly difficult, and makes travel - even for emergency services – almost impossible to plan or sometimes carry out at all.

I also witnessed the firing of tear gas and stun grenades in the direction of school children (some as young as 5 or 6) walking to or from school. School Principals spoke of the profound psychological (and possibly physical) impact this was having on some children.

However, I also became aware of the incredible resilience of Palestinians. For example, the Israeli military control access to water supplies for many Palestinians and will deliberately restrict it. In response, a young refugee camp resident I met by chance on my recent visit has set up a community vegetable garden on a roof in the camp using hydroponic techniques, which require much less water than normal gardens. This hydroponic project is just one of the many small scale initiatives individuals

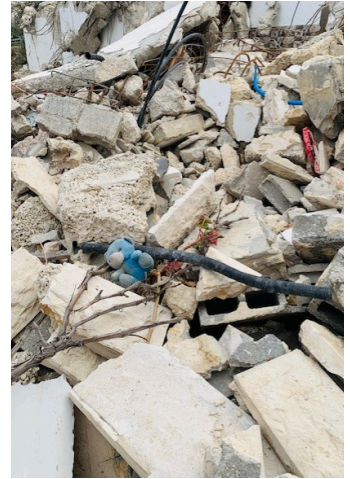
and communities are taking actions to demonstrate their steadfastness in the face of the unlawful occupation – the longest in modern history.

Perhaps most importantly the Palestinians I spoke to were also very clear about their desire for peace. But not a peace at any cost – it is for a just and sustainable peace, based on respect for the human rights of all people.

Jenny

Like my friend Jenny, I served as an Ecumenical Accompanier in occupied Palestine in 2015. During my time, I visited occupied East Jerusalem and Yanoun. Sadly, the villagers have now had to leave the tiny village of Yanoun: <https://www.palestinechronicle.com/a-village-erased-yanouns-families-forced-out-after-years-of-pressure/>

Back in 2015, when we witnessed Israeli authorities destroy Palestinian homes (right), monitored checkpoints, stood with Israelis working for peace on demonstrations against the occupation, and occasionally caught by tear gas, we often said, “Well, it can't get worse.” How wrong we were.



I have been fortunate to visit Jerusalem five times since 2015. Then, and each time since, my visits to St Andrew's Jerusalem have provided a touchstone to help me remember the history which led to the building of the Church, and the wish for peace, for all the faiths, expressed by General Allenby when he entered Jerusalem in December 1917.

I was privileged to attend the midnight service on Christmas Eve 2015 and to witness the peaceful departure, after a stern request by Reverend Loren, of two young Israeli men who sat down with machine guns over their shoulders. “This is a house of peace,” said Reverend Loren. “These guns must go.” And they did.

In November 2025, I attended the Remembrance Service, and sang along with the Revs Stewart and Dave as they played, *Where have all the flowers gone?* I hope to be back in the spring. If one can make requests, *A Scottish Soldier* would seem appropriate.

I still am asked to do occasional talks about my times in Palestine, and St Andrew's always gets an honourable mention. I am often surprised how few people seem to know about “our wars” in this part of the world. Lawrence of Arabia may get a bit of recognition, but when I mention the Church, Allenby, and the Commonwealth war graves, there is little recognition. So - I try to refer to the 8 cemeteries where British soldiers are buried - in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Limber Hill, Jericho, and Ramallah. <https://www.cwgc.org/visit-us/find-cemeteries-memorials/cemetery-details/71401/jerusalem-war-cemetery/>

The two CWG cemeteries in Gaza seem largely unknown. I have been lobbying the CWCG for information on them. It seems to me it is important we recognise our part in Gaza <https://www.cwgc.org/our-work/caring-for-our-sites/our-sites-in-challenging-locations/#gaza>

Being in Palestine has changed my life, and I try to take actions which might help lead to a just peace for Israelis and Palestinians, in accordance with international law. My memories of St Andrews help me with those small efforts.

Sandra

Four Photos and a Prayer

Just a glimpse of the variety of life at St Andrew's Jerusalem with Rev Dr Stewart Gillan. Below left singing *Where have all the flowers gone?* with Rev Dave Stewart at the Remembrance Service (photo thanks to Sandra on previous page). Centre - visiting St Andrew's member, Nadzyiah at Beit Safafa on the Green Line between Jerusalem and Bethlehem (photo taken by Wendy Wierda Cohen, elder at St Andrew's). Right - photo taken after worship in St Andrew's. In the foreground Andre Iwabi and his newborn daughter, Laila. Brothers Xavier and Elijah are in the background with mum Shannon holding Xavier. Finally, bottom left, Rev Gillan working hard harvesting olives in the Scots Grove.



Dear Lord,

We come to you shaken,

*Seeking a greater shaking in your Holy Spirit,
that we be doers of justice and makers of peace.*

*We pray for the peace of Jerusalem, this city over which you wept,
that we might see your justice and peace here,
your peace, not as the world gives.*

*We pray for the peace of this Holy Land,
that we might see your justice and peace in the place
where you called one and all, your people and their neighbours,
to repent and receive the good news of the coming of your kingdom
in your coming.*

Rev Dr Stewart Gillan

One day, when it's safe,
when there's no personal
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against this

Omar El Akkad

This is a remarkable book by Omar El Akkad. For a start, *One day, when it's safe, when there's no personal downside to calling a thing what it is, when it's too late to hold anyone accountable, everyone will have been against this* must be one of the longest ever titles. It began as a tweet viewed 10 million times and then became a poetic, poignant challenge, a book you will want to re-read as soon as you've finished - before passing it on to someone else.



‘A Long Life Lovingly Lived’

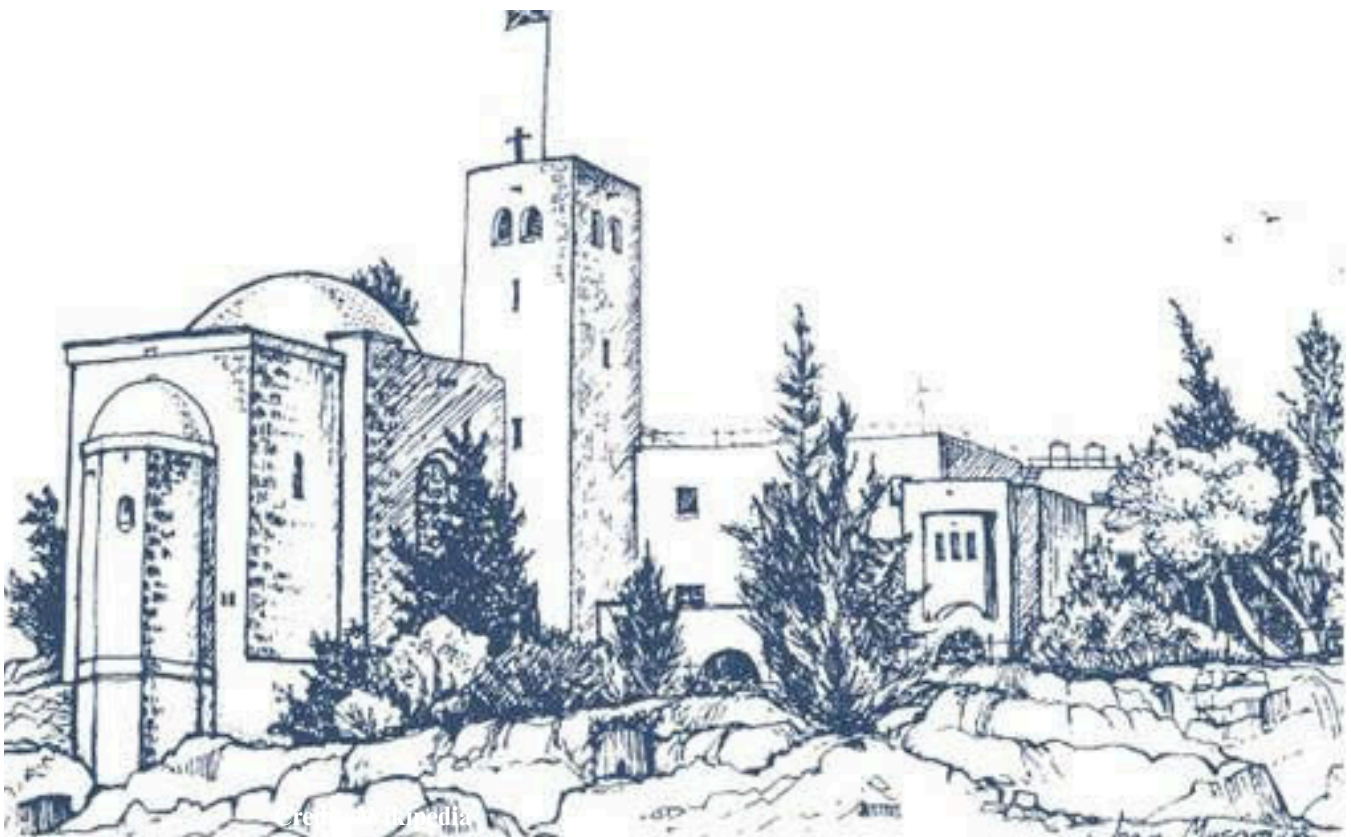
Many of The Friends would have been saddened to hear of the passing of Joan Musgrave, widow of Rev Clarence Musgrave, formerly minister at St Andrew's Jerusalem. Amongst many who mourned were Rizek Abusharr, formerly Session Clerk at St Andrew's, and his wife, Alice. They sent this heartfelt message: *We became instant friends with Joan and Clarence the moment they came to serve at*

St. Andrew's Church in Jerusalem 25 years ago! We loved both Joan and Clarence and stayed in close touch all these years. We so much valued their friendship and deep affection and grieved when Clarence passed and grieved when Joan passed too and joined the angels in heaven. Her memory will be remembered as long as we are still in the realm of life. Bless her memory. Alice and Rizek

At the funeral at Blackhall St Columba's Church, Edinburgh, the family – Diane, Peter and Vivienne – paid loving tributes via rich and varied memories of a mum who lived in seven countries and four continents, who was not only Rev Clarence's wife and constant support but also an artist, illustrator, lover of flowers, tennis player, golfer.....someone with a zest for life and a deep, unshakeable faith - a eulogy that finished movingly with the words: ‘We were blessed to be your children.’

In the final prayers the Rt Rev Christopher Morgan, a family member spoke movingly of Joan's selflessness, steadiness, warmth of hospitality, partnering Clarence in the colourful, conflicted environment of Jerusalem, creating networks of mutual support in a long life lovingly lived, finishing with, ‘We thank you for the rest of Christ that she now enjoys.’

As The Friends, we will always be forever grateful to Joan for her drawings of St Andrew's Jerusalem, a lasting and memorable tribute to a much loved colleague and Friend.



Project 26 - an Update and a Thank You!

A HUGE thank you to everyone who has contributed to Project 26 so far. We have already raised £2100 towards our £5000 target which will be split equally between HIRN and Bees for Peace. A reminder of how our donations will be spent.

Over the last couple of years the situation for Palestinians in the West Bank has become even more difficult than it was before: home demolitions, settler violence, movement restrictions, unemployment, poverty. Fortunately, **Hebron International Resource Network, HIRN**, has been there too. **HIRN** is a small organisation working mainly in the southern West Bank, supporting people in the most vulnerable communities. **HIRN** does much with little. Sometimes it helps individuals: a hearing aid for a man or an electric wheelchair and hospital bed for a young girl. Sometimes it's simply to make life more bearable.

Support for education, especially of girls and women, is a major focus for **HIRN**. And the project The Friends' Committee hope that we will all support this year is funding students through university. I've been moved by hearing young women students speaking about training to be a nurse, or a physiotherapist or a doctor, a teacher or development worker and serving their communities. Training these young people doesn't just help them as individuals. It's not just something that's nice to do. It's a crucial way to develop and build resilience in fragile communities.

The founder of **HIRN** wrote some years ago, 'We pray that God will show us a way to serve our community.' Day by day, God has shown **HIRN** ways. Funding university students is one way. And now God has shown us a way we can help. I pray that we will. Thank you.

Maureen Jack

Towards the end of last year I attended an extraordinary and sweet event at the **Sindyanna of the Galilee** Visitors' Centre. Twelve women who have learned beekeeping from legendary bee keeper and community activist Yossi Aud were meeting for the final session of their beekeeping course. The course was facilitated by **Sindyanna of the Galilee**, the second charity we are supporting this year. After a delicious lunch, the group were presented with their certificates. What a joyful occasion it was! And deep. The twelve women, half the group



Arab Israeli, the other half Jewish Israeli, obviously have such affection for one another - and trust. There was a lot of laughter too. In desperate times, when Israeli society is so polarised and trust is non-existent it felt healing to be with these women.

As he watched his latest group of graduate beekeepers mingle and chat and engage with one another, Yossi sat quietly smiling. He obviously gets great satisfaction from the project and so he should: such simple and yet complex engagement both with the bees and with the women give hope. Fears can be overcome. People can come together and collaborate. Peace with justice is possible.

Rev Muriel Pearson

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And, finally, if you wish to contact us on any matter, please email secretary@friendsofstandrews.com