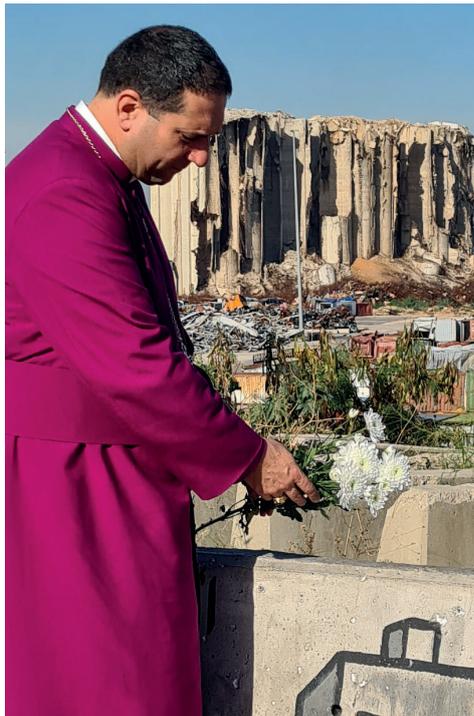


Week 5: Jerusalem

In January 2021, the Dioceses of Southwark and Jerusalem formalised their longstanding links with a Covenant between the two. For many years now there have been strong informal links which have resulted from Diocesan and parish pilgrimages and study times spent at St George's College in Jerusalem. The Dean of the College, the Very Revd Richard Sewell, is a priest who has served in the Diocese of Southwark and is an Honorary Canon of Southwark Cathedral.

The Diocese of Jerusalem is huge and supports 28 congregations extending across five countries or territories. These are in Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. This year, the Bishop of Southwark's Lent Call is being asked to help support a project in Beirut which is looked after by All Saints Church.



The Most Revd Dr Hosam Naoum, Archbishop in Jerusalem, lays flowers at the site of the deadly 2020 explosion in the Port of Beirut.

Crisis in Beirut

The situation in Beirut has been difficult for a very long time. Lebanon has been thrust into its worst economic crisis in decades, with its currency collapsing, businesses shutting down, prices for basic goods skyrocketing and the poorest living with the constant threat of hunger. Lebanon's economic crisis has led to power cuts, a lack of safe drinking water, limited public healthcare, high unemployment, and protests. Lebanon has the world's highest concentration of refugees – about 30% of the population – including 1.5 million Syrian refugees.

In addition, an explosion of ammonium nitrate took place in the Port of Beirut on 4 August 2020, causing at least 218 deaths, 7,000 injuries, and \$15 billion (£11.1 billion) in property damage, as well as leaving an estimated 300,000 people homeless. Families have been forced to seek temporary shelter with relatives and friends, or stay in schools or other public buildings. According to local assessments, as many as 500,000 people need assistance with immediate needs such as food, clothing, and shelter. Humanitarian organisations have responded as best they can; however, there is still a huge gap between what is needed and the relief being provided.

Before the Beirut Port explosion, 75% of Lebanese were in need of aid, 33% had lost their jobs, and one million people were living below



*The Bishop
of Southwark's*

LENT CALL 2022

*"My people will live
in peaceful dwelling
places, in secure
homes, in undisturbed
places of rest."*

— Isaiah 32:18



*Raising money for
the dispossessed*



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the poverty line. The situation is much worse now.

All Saints' mission is to provide assistance to all those who are in need, particularly the vulnerable who were directly affected by the explosion as well as the impact of lockdown. They are now unable to afford basic necessities such as housing and food; the project will focus on distributing food packages to vulnerable families. The team at All Saints in Beirut has the capacity and experience to manage this large-scale project as they have been involved in many similar projects before as a result of the chronic emergency situation in Lebanon.



Archbishop Hosam on a parish visit to All Saints, Beirut.

The story of All Saints

The church was founded in the 19th century, with American and British merchants and missionaries forming the core of the English-speaking congregation. The first Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem arrived from the United Kingdom via Beirut in 1841. The first baptism recorded in the church's archives was in 1847.

The present church building came into being through the efforts of members of that community and the Ernest Joly family who gave the land, fundraised, and constructed the church. The foundation stone was laid in 1912, but the project was delayed by the First World War. The building was finally completed and consecrated in 1929.

All Saints' International Congregation (ASIC) continues to serve an English-speaking community drawn from around 30 nationalities. Since 1948 there has also been an Arabic-speaking congregation, mainly of Palestinian origin. Worship services in Arabic are at 9.30am on Sundays, with refreshments afterwards in the church hall downstairs. This is a good time for the sister congregations to meet in fellowship before the 11.15am service for the International Congregation.

Now, All Saints, along with other churches in the area, is approaching donors for funds to respond immediately to the increasingly urgent humanitarian crisis. The project it is leading will enable the church to provide food packages to 100 needy families, who are either displaced or unable to afford food. The church team will work closely with the other churches' relief teams to coordinate the purchasing and distribution of food packages.

The church team will prepare a list of 100 vulnerable families in the community who need immediate food assistance, including those who have been displaced and lost their income. They will work out what groceries are available and where they can be purchased for the best price and prepare a list of food for each package. Food stamps or coupons will then be prepared and distributed so that the families can access the goods. The cost of this is estimated at £70 per family.

As Isaiah 32:18 makes clear, it is God's wish for all his people to "live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest". A gift to the Lent Call will help our Link Diocese in Jerusalem to live out that vision as they seek to ensure that displaced families in Beirut have enough to eat. Find out more at southwark.anglican.org/lentcall



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Walking
Welcoming
Growing