



Friends of the Anglican Province of Alexandria
Supporting churches in Egypt, North Africa, Horn of Africa and Gambella
Registered Charity 1181201



FAPA NEWSLETTER – Advent 2023

Dear members and friends of FAPA,

Advent longing for the arrival of the Child of peace feels that much more acute this year: hearts in our mouths for al-Ahli Anglican hospital in Gaza; runners from military strife in Sudan flooding the refugee ministry at All Saints' Cathedral in Cairo; friends at Christ the King church Tripoli finding themselves rounded up and imprisoned ...

Part of a lament from the wave of prayer recently organised by *Sabeel, Jerusalem*:

Divine Creator, as we lament all loss of life, we plead for you to send manna to the hungry and multiply their food as Christ did to feed the 5000. Lord, quench the thirst of all who are searching for water and justice. May our prayers ascend to the heavens like incense. Have mercy and protection on all who are suffering, particularly those vulnerable in Gaza. How much longer shall this suffering continue, O Lord?

Prayer offering from *Churches Together in Britain and Ireland*:

O God of all,
of Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Isaac, and Ishmael:
our hearts are broken in pieces at the suffering and murder of your people.
Our voices cry for peace and for justice.

Comfort those who grieve,
console and heal the injured,
be close to those in fear,
restrain with your mighty hand those who perpetrate violence.

Send us your wisdom in all that we say and do,
that our voice may always seek justice, peace and security for all.
Amen.

I am delighted to report that our Annual Gathering on September 13th was much appreciated. About 15 members (mainly Trustees) attended in person and a similar number joined via a zoom link. The Gathering enjoyed an uplifting presentation from Archbishop Samy and a vivid report from Canon Huw, recently back from service at Holy Trinity Algiers. After a sandwich

lunch the fellowship participated in a service of Holy Communion – the blessing was given by our Patron Bishop Michael Igrave. I would take this opportunity to thank Bishop Anthony Ball, Rector of St Margaret’s Westminster for allowing us to use St Margaret’s for our gathering and most particularly for enabling the hybrid-zoom facility.

As many will know, Anthony is also Assistant Bishop to the Province of Alexandria and Chairman of JMECA - the Jerusalem and the Middle East Church Association; surely the busiest clergyman in the Anglican Communion! JMECA has been providing support to Anglican Churches throughout the Middle East and North Africa for over a century and I commend their website www.jmecca.org.uk as a source of news from the Holy Land and the Province of Alexandria. FAPA members are invited to subscribe to the JMECA magazine - ‘Biblelands’ – published twice a year and available on-line free of charge. (The Ven Dr John Holdsworth, Communications Consultant JMECA, attended our recent Gathering – his report of our gathering for the JMECA website is repeated below... thank you John) .

It was a privilege for Hilary and me to spend ten days during September in Tunis where I taught two courses to students at the AST campus in North Africa – known as the St Cyprian Theological College. The third year students whom I taught this time I had previously taught when they were first year students. It was very encouraging to see their growth in maturity and wisdom – all of them are involved in leadership roles in their local churches. We looked together at the Minor Prophets. The first year students studied Early Church History which included a visit to several significant archaeological sites in Carthage (in the northern suburbs of Tunis). A fellow bishop from Australia taught Pentateuch to the first year and Deuteronomy to the third year students. These young, North African men and women were busy! We are thankful for the ministry at St George’s, Tunis that Rev Frank is leading – in both Arabic and English.



Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you.
(2 Thessalonians 3:16)



Bishop Bill, FAPA Chair

Building with Biking Bishops: Prospects look good for Alexandria

By John Holdsworth JMECA

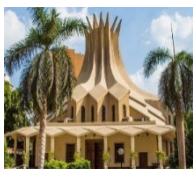
The latest of the Friends' groups from the JMECA region met on September 13th to pray for one of the Communion's newest Provinces. The members who met at St Margaret's Church, Westminster Abbey, for the meeting, chaired by Bishop Bill Musk, spent the morning session informing their prayers which then were given effect in the afternoon session with a celebration of the Eucharist. Archbishop Samy joined the meeting on Zoom and reported on evidence of growth in every direction. New school and hospital buildings in Menouf and Sadat, new growth in the innovative Deaf Digital Church in Egypt (which now has 2,500 members), new Church activity in Chad (which now has seven active congregations) and the expansions and first graduations from new outposts of the Alexandria School of Theology were among the things to give thanks for.

The archbishop described a church which is very much in prayer mode, making specific reference to prayers for Sudan, prayer days in Suez, and asking prayers for those affected by the Libyan flooding disaster. He referred to a new era in relations with The Protestant Churches of Egypt, and continuing engagement in Christian – Muslim conversations. In Egypt all PCC members from the Diocese had recently been engaged in a day of prayerful debate about how to put the Diocesan vision of being a Spirit-filled church working for a better society, into practical effect in parishes through a focus on growth and self-sufficiency.

Assistant Bishop of Egypt, Anthony Ball, has been tasked with preparing the structures which will be necessary to support three new Dioceses, of Gambella, Horn of Africa and North Africa and he gave a report on progress. Though the detail of creating new Constitutions may seem tedious to some, they are absolutely essential for the smooth running of the Church's mission after new Bishops are elected for each diocese in 2025. He gave some examples to illustrate how different the process is from a similar one that might be conducted in say the UK. Thinking about lay representation at Synod, the most basic question of 'what is a church?' cannot be answered just by reference to buildings or Electoral Rolls, for example. Instead, a definition along the lines of a specific number of weekly worshippers is a better guide. So in Gambella for instance, that number has been initially decided as 150 for two Synod reps and 80 for one. Bishops are obviously going to need to travel around their Dioceses, but cars are expensive, and the aim is for churches to be self-sufficient. Perhaps the solution is to buy them motor bikes (cue caption competition!).

Canon Huw Thomas (who began his ministry in All Saints Church Oystermouth, Swansea when Rowan Williams was a choirboy there) was congratulated on receiving the St Augustine Cross from the Archbishop of Canterbury for a lifetime service to the Anglican Communion. That service concluded with a five-year spell in Algiers, and Canon Huw spoke warmly of the country Algeria and its people. At present that post of Rector is vacant. The Anglican Church there, as in so many places in the JMECA region is seen by the authorities as a Church for foreigners only, and finding the right person to fill the post, who is able to get a visa, is not proving easy.

Bishop Michael Ipgrave, Bishop of Lichfield is the Friends' Patron, and he sent some very enthusiastic Friends away with God's blessing after a most inspiring and encouraging day.



Please visit our Prayer Room at www.fapa-egypt.org

EXTENDED STUDY OPPORTUNITIES - in Egypt, North Africa, Ethiopia & the Horn of Africa

Trustee Canon Christopher Andrews invites members to assist advertise **Extended Study Opportunities** in Cairo, Alexandria and at Anafora Retreat Centre – an opportunity for persons exploring the possibilities of study leave or a sabbatical in the Province to:

- Experience the living Christian faith and worship of Anglican Episcopal congregations and ecumenical links with the Coptic and other churches
- Explored 'Interfaith' through the Diocese's networks and contacts at Al-Azhar University, Cairo
- Discover the warm welcome and vibrant contemporary life, worship and ministry of the monasteries of the Egyptian desert.
- Encounter the social justice ministry of the Diocese of Egypt
- Pursue individual research or participate in a course of theological study at the Alexandria School of Theology

Egypt is one of those rare places where Christians and Muslims have lived side by side for centuries. Positive interfaith relationships have been established by faith leaders there and are strengthening all the time. The Anglican church, with the Presbyterian and Roman Catholic churches, takes a leading part in these growing relationships. The Anglican dioceses have their own network of churches, schools, hospitals and specialist ministries in response to God's call in these places, offering a warm welcome for those who visit.

There are many opportunities to experience the Christian presence, ministry and witness in North Africa today. It has so many rich opportunities to offer us, so much to teach us. We hope that more people will take these opportunities for themselves in the course of their training or later in their ministry.

FAPA members are invited to pass on a leaflet (click on the image below) to those they know who might be interested – Canon Christopher will be pleased to help them with further information and contacts to put together a programme that aims to fulfil their hopes and objectives. The Revd Canon Christopher Andrews candrews3007@gmail.com

Tunisia Pilgrimage - April 19-27 2024 There is still space available on the pilgrimage being organised by Trustee Richard Hibbert - Full details are at :

<https://www.andantetravels.co.uk/tours/fapa-tunisia-pilgrimage-tour/fapa-tunisia-pilgrimage-tour-19-apr-2024>

John Holdsworth has penned an article promoting the pilgrimage for the JMECA website:

<https://www.jmecca.org.uk/latest/news/new-diocese-new-pilgrimage-opportunity>