

Chronicle II of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in Jerusalem

By Martin Hoegger

Jerusalem, Sunday 22 January 2023. Christ Church, Anglican worship

Walking along the walls from the Damascus Gate, we go again to Christ Church in Jaffa Square, but this time to participate in Anglican worship. A service that interestingly combines Anglican liturgy with the freedom of worship. It is also rooted in Hebrew with some songs and words in the language of the Old Testament.

The light of the Risen One

David Pileggi, rector of this church - also director of the CMJ mission to which Christ Church belongs - comments on today's Word of God. <https://www.cmj-israel.org>



From the Gospel of Matthew (4:12-24) he explains that the Gospel is not only the forgiveness of sins but the fulfilment of the promises of the history of Israel: Jesus is king and he calls us to surrender ourselves in him.

With the Risen One, the Kingdom of God is among us. He is the power of God to save us. Jesus restores, heals, delivers, is our Light,

etc... this is the Gospel, this is the Kingdom of God with which Jesus identifies himself!

The challenge then is: do I desire this light, to be healed spiritually as well as physically? In fact, healing always begins with repentance, whether it is personal or communal. Repentance is a lifestyle. The most beautiful thing is to follow Jesus and accept the life he offers us. His invitation to follow him has a dimension of urgency. Saying yes to Jesus also means being reconciled with everyone.

It is in the Eucharist that this invitation rings out particularly for me this morning. After the narrative of its institution in Hebrew and then in English, the congregation sings it in Hebrew, as yesterday during the messianic service: "Zè

Gufi...Zè Dami", "This (is) my body...This (is) my blood". Once again, emotion overwhelms me...

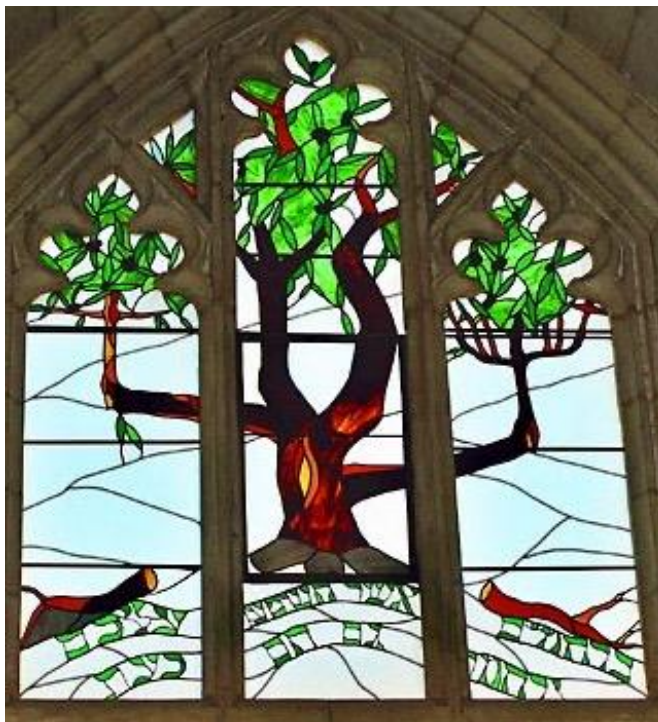
"The mystery of Jerusalem"

After the service, **Nadine Roumy**, one of our contacts in Jerusalem, joined us. Nadine is a gymnastics teacher and also a guide. Her father is Jewish and her mother is Christian. She made her *aliyah* about ten years ago. She will accompany us on the walk to Emmaus next April.

<https://www.jc2033.world/en/eventsen/emmaus-2023.html>

David Pileggi also joins us at our table in the "Emanuel Café" and we introduce him to the JC2033 initiative. His reaction is immediately positive because, for him, the resurrection of Christ is the center of Christian life and of the Church, not just an aspect of our faith.

He says: *"If Christ is not risen, your faith is in vain," says Paul. Pastors who no longer believe should become social workers or therapists. His resurrection gives hope after this life because people are afraid of death. To say that Christ is alive and welcomes them after death is the most relevant announcement"*.



Church

David also tells us about the 'Mystery of Jerusalem'. You cannot lay your hands on this unique city in the world. His reflection reminds me of the call given to the Jerusalem Ascents in 1983 not to make Jerusalem a human affair, because "to lay hands on Jerusalem is to lay hands on God". The only attitude that God accepts in Jerusalem is to be humble and simple in service. And to forgive and reconcile immediately if necessary!

Stained glass window in Christ

A memorable ordination!

This thought comes to me as I enter the packed Redeemer Lutheran Church to participate in the ordination of **Sally Azar** to pastoral ministry. She will be the first indigenous woman in the Holy Land to become a "minister of the Holy Gospel and the sacraments".

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding". This is the motto she chose, taken from the book of Proverbs (3:35), which seems to me to be in line with what we just shared at Christ Church!



Surrendering all to the Lord in order to minister: this is what Sally wants to live, she tells us after her talk.

It so happens that it was her father, **Sani Abraham Azar**, who is bishop of the Lutheran Church in Jerusalem and who ordained her. Commenting on this verse, he said to her: *"In your service with the congregation, you will have so many doors. Don't despair if you knock on those doors and they don't open. Don't despair if you pray and your prayer is not heard immediately... God's timing is different than our timing. We have an Arabic proverb that says, "People make plans but God is the one who makes things happen". Pray before you take any act and let God's will prevail, not your own"*

Sally and Sani Azar

After her ordination by the laying on of hands, the congregation applauded and some kind of "youtzes" were thrown by the women of the community! Then **Audeh Quawas**, from the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, read the message of **Jerry Pillay**, General Secretary of the Ecumenical Council, in which he assured the new pastor of his communion: *"In the conflicts of the Middle East you will bring a message of hope, especially to the young people"*.

The blessings given by some twenty Lutheran bishops and pastors from a dozen countries were impressive. It is beautiful to see how this small church lives in broad communion.

Before her first Eucharistic celebration Sally emotionally thanks the congregation for this unique moment, especially for the support of her family and her Church. She also recognizes that she is doubly blessed by the presence of the universal Church.

A strong friendship

Daniel Fatzer has a strong friendship with **Andraous Jashan**. Daniel knew him when he stayed with his parents - an Arab Orthodox family - in the Christian quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem during the first "Jerusalem Climb" in 1984.



He has kept in touch with over the years. This friendship deepened in recent years when Daniel was invited to his wedding with **Diana**.

He then supported the young couple when, for administrative reasons, Diana was refused entry to Israel and had to return for a year to

her native Colombia. Fortunately, this problem has since been resolved and the couple has been reunited.

Andraous tells of the harsh life in Jerusalem for a young man. "*If Christ had not risen in my life, what would I have become?*" He welcomes the JC2033 initiative with a great heart and is interested in the pilgrimage on the road to Emmaus. He collaborates with the *Sabeel* movement and has an excellent knowledge of the Palestinian ecclesial soil. He himself belongs to the Orthodox Church and gives us valuable advice for our relations with the various churches.