

# Dear friends in Bukoba, Jordan and the Holy Land, Tampere, Truro and Tunsberg

Greetings from Sweden and the diocese of Strängnäs! Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!

We hope this finds you in good health!

We are so grateful to have you as our friends in the Worldwide church! We want to share with you some of the things that are happening in our diocese. We will therefore, throughout the year, send you an email like this, and we invite you to share your thoughts, ideas, and events with us.

## A Year of Visits

2024 has been a year with several visits from friends around the world. In June, bishop Sani Ibrahim Azar and his wife Nahla Azar, from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, visited Sweden and the diocese of Lund and the diocese of Strängnäs. They were given the opportunity to relax and to get away from the difficult situation in Jerusalem and Palestine, and to meet with old friends and to make new friends. In Strängnäs, the bishop participated in the service in the Cathedral of Strängnäs, when two priests and two deacons were ordained to the service of the church.



*From the left: Julia Diurlin Insulander (Torshälla parish), Jonny Stigesjö (Hölö-Mörkö parish), The Rt. Revd. Dr. Sani Ibrahim Azar, The Rt. Revd. Dr. Johan Dalman, Pernilla Ljungberg (Almby parish) and Frida Thunberg (Kiladalen parish) Photo: Marlene W. Antonson*

Later in June, we had visitors from the North-Western Diocese (Bukoba) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. Rev. Jonathan Ntwale and Rev. Dr. Elmereck Kigembe stayed in Strängnäs and in several other parishes and congregations all over the diocese, to meet with old friends and make new friends. They also took the opportunity to get to know Madelene Stavehaug, the diocesan participant in the youth exchange programme “Young in the World-wide church”, who some weeks later headed for her three-months stay in the North-Western diocese.

In August, bishop Abednego Keshomshahara and his wife Melisa Keshomshahara, also from Bukoba, visited the youth camp LIFE, where he and bishop Johan lead a Bible study on Psalm 23. Bishop Abednego participated in the service later in the evening. The bishop and his wife spent time with the youths, and they talked about church-life in Tanzania.



*From the left: Anne Falk, Rev. Jonathan Ntwale, Rev. Dr. Elmerck Kigembe, Madelen Stavehaug Photo: Magdalena Öhrling*



*Photo: Magdalena Öhrling*

The priests in the deanery of Drammen and Lier, in the diocese of Tunsberg came to stay at the diocesan centre Stjärnholm, on a study tour, to make reflections and to gain new insights. They were welcomed in several parishes in the diocese of Strängnäs, and new contacts were made during the week of their stay. The picture shows the guest at the diocesan office in Strängnäs, with bishop Johan and The Cathedral Dean Christofer Lundgren.



*Photo: Magdalena Öhrling*

## Partnership Agreement

In November, Bishop Johan visited Tampere, together with Lars Johnson, first vice chairman of the Diocesan board, and Magdalena Öhrling, bishop's chaplain. During the visit, a new Partnership agreement was signed, which stipulates, among other things, that the dioceses will regularly pray for each other and exchange experiences of living in a post-Christian society. Many good meetings and conversations during the days showed that the relationship is very much alive.

Bishop Johan also participated in a solemn ordination mass in the Cathedral of Tampere, when three deacons were ordained to ecclesiastical service.



*Photo: Magdalena Öhrling*



*From the left: Lars Johnson, The Rt. Revd. Johan Dalman, The Rt. Revd. Matti Repo, Timo Koivula. Photo: Magdalena Öhrling*

## 150 years of International Relations

In Uppsala, on 12 – 13 October, the big celebration of The Church of Sweden's 150 years of International Relations took place. Participants from all of Church of Sweden, together with guests from all over the world gathered for a two-day festive meeting. One of the guests was Rev. Sally Azar from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and Holy Land. The days contained sharing of experiences from the Worldwide Church and discussions about the importance of engagement and community in times of insecurity.



The participants from the diocese of Strängnäs, gathered outside the hall of the meeting.

## Prayers

We are constantly praying for all of you in our diocese. Let us also pray with Mother Teresa of Calcutta, every day at noon local time:

*Lead us from Death to Life, from Falsehood to Truth.*

*Lead us from Despair to Hope, from Fear to Trust.*

*Lead me from Hate to Love, from War to Peace.*

*Let Peace fill our Heart, our World, our Universe.*

*Peace, Peace, Peace.*

We wish you a blessed Advent and a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

With God's blessing,

Anne and Magdalena

*International relations The Diocese of Strängnäs*