

Grief & Gratitude

LOVING & LEARNING IN A NEW COMMUNITY

SAYING GOODBYE...

On October 13th, the Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) Jerusalem & the West Bank (JWB) 2023–2024 cohort along with our Country Coordinators and their two children said goodbye to the Holy Land. By October 15th I was back in Minnesota, heavy with grief. Grief for the beloved community that I left behind. Grief for the imprisoned and injured, the hungry and hurting, the brokenhearted and burdened. At the same time, I was filled with gratitude. Gratitude for the beautiful and resilient people I met and the stories they shared. Gratitude for the learning and growing I experienced during my short time in Palestine. Gratitude for my loving host family that continues to support and inspire me now.

A piece of me will forever be in Palestine with the land and its beautiful people.



MEANINGFUL MEMORIES

Although my time in Palestine was not as long as I originally planned for, I am beyond grateful for every moment I was there and all the people who made it so special.

Here are some of the people and places that I miss dearly.

RE-ENTRY

In November, the JWB 2023–2024 cohort was reunited in Washington DC. We came together with our coordinators to share stories, process our experiences, and better understand how we are called to show up in this time of uncertainty. During our time together we had the opportunity to connect with individuals who participated in the YAGM JWB program in past years and learn about their experience in Palestine and beyond. We also had the privilege of visiting the ELCA advocacy office where we discussed how we can be stewards of change for a more just and peaceful world. Visit <https://www.elca.org/advocacy> to find out more about how you can be involved in faithful advocacy!

- TAKING ACTION -

As Israel continues to bomb innocent people in Gaza, I urge you to learn about how the United States government continues to support these actions both financially and diplomatically. Your voice matters—contact your elected officials and demand change now.

You can find your senators and representatives [here](#). Make a call and take a stand against the siege on Gaza. For more information about how to make your voice heard, feel free to reach out to me at abigailpdoran@gmail.com. Please explore the resources below to learn more about the realities of the Israeli occupation, life in Palestine, and the history of the land.

RESOURCES**- BOOKS -**

Apeiogon by Colum McCann (Random House Publishing)

Mornings in Jenin by Susan Abulhawa (Bloomsbury Publishing)

Sharon and My Mother-in-Law by Suad Amir (Anchor Publishing)

I Was Born There, I Was Born Here by Mourid Barghouti (Bloomsbury Publishing)

- ARTICLES -

Palestinian Lutheran Pastor Galvanizes Matthew 25 Summit – Presbyterian News Service

Peace Not Walls: January 2024 – ELCA Advocacy

A Walk in Bethlehem – Walking Diaries with Jordan Miller-Stubbenick

Palestine 101 – US Campaign for Palestinian Rights

Colonialism & Apartheid – Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) Movement

- MEDIA -

Al Jazeera – News Source

[@eye.on.palestine](#), [@wizard_bisan1](#), [@motaz_azaiza](#) – Instagram

The 100 Year History of Israel-Palestine by Let's Talk Palestine – Podcast

5 Broken Cameras (2011) by Emad Burnat and Guy Davidi (Kino Lorber) – Film

Financial Support

If you feel called to financially support the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and its educational ministries (including the Evangelical Lutheran School of Beit Sahour), click [here](#).

If you feel called to financially support organizations that bring aid to civilians in Gaza, click [here](#).

If you feel called to financially support my year as a Young Adult in Global Mission, click [here](#).



NEXT STEPS

Experiencing a new culture and being invited into a new community was such a transformational experience. Seeing God at work across the world—in the people, land, and ministries—reminds me of how much we can learn from our global partners. After learning more about other YAGM country programs, I am excited to join this year’s Central Europe cohort. I and my fellow YAGM JWB 2023–2024 cohort member Braden Hayes have just arrived in Nyíregyháza, Hungary where we will be living and serving for the next six months.

A WARM WELCOME

Braden and I have been welcomed with such warmth and generosity. We spent the last week with our amazing coordinators Kelly and Aaron (and their sweet dog Winnie) in Budapest learning more about the history of this place and the cultural context that we are being invited into. We had the privilege of getting to see some of our cohort members’ site placements and experience some of the ministries that they are involved in. We were then joined by the rest of our new cohort and had time to intentionally grow in community with one another. We shared what life has looked for each of us over the last few months and celebrated the beauty of being fully present in both the joys and the sorrows we face in these new experiences.



Now in Nyíregyháza, Braden and I have just begun to settle in and learn about all the remarkable ministries that are present in this community. Our site mentor Erzsébet Molnár has introduced us to some of the many volunteer sites we will be a part of in the coming months. Our days will soon be filled with volunteering in a variety of places including a bilingual Lutheran primary school and kindergarten, a center for disabled adults, a family shelter, and a Roma university student program. I am so excited to be a part of this vibrant community over these next six months. I look forward to taking part in all the wonderful ways that God is already at work here!

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