

# Journey in Palestine

LOVING & LEARNING IN A NEW COMMUNITY

## About Me



### A NEW ADVENTURE

I grew up just north of Seattle in Everett, Washington, with my two sisters, Evie and Maggie, and my brother, Eli. About 11 years ago, my family packed up our childhood home in Everett and drove halfway across the country to Rosemount, Minnesota, a suburb of the Twin Cities that we now call home. I graduated from Rosemount High School in 2019 and started my college education at Gustavus Adolphus College that fall. I graduated from Gustavus in May with majors in mathematics and computer science and minors in dance and economics.

As I considered options for what to do after college, I found myself feeling called to something different. Starting a career or going to grad school were both likely and reasonable options, but I struggled to narrow down exactly what I wanted to do. I felt stuck – unsure about what was right for me in this season of my life. I kept coming back to the idea of Young Adults in Global Mission. A natural adventurer, I was excited to explore the opportunity for learning a new culture and language and embracing a new way of living. As I continued through the discernment process, I learned more about the intentionality of the program and the focus on being present within a culture that is different than my own. It seemed like the perfect fit.

I look forward to all that this next year has in store – whatever that ends up looking like. As I begin this new adventure, I hope to keep my heart and mind open to all the beauty that this place and its people have to offer. After this year, who knows what my life will hold. For now, I hope to be present in each new relationship and soak in the beauty, light, and learning opportunities that surround me. Thanks for joining me on this journey. I'm glad you are here!

As part of accepting this call, I am asked to raise funds that will support my year in Jerusalem and the West Bank. If you are interested in making a financial contribution, please visit my fundraising page!

## Support YAGM

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# Orientation

## CHICAGO

This August, I packed my bags and headed to Chicago for ten days of program orientation before moving to my country placement as a Young Adult in Global Mission in Jerusalem and the West Bank. The ten days in Chicago were loaded with valuable lectures and trainings, meaningful worship services, and powerful and intentional activities that helped provide context and resources for this next year of service. During this time, I had the privilege of getting to know this year's YAGM cohort, YAGM alumni, and the YAGM staff. Sharing learning and laughter with this incredible group of people grounded me as I prepared to move abroad.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM YAGM ORIENTATION

- engaging, empowering, and ethical storytelling
- importance of knowing my own story
- finding peace in sufficiency
- being present with my new community
- having an open heart and mind
- unpacking my own privilege

## JERUSALEM AND THE WEST BANK



On August 28th – after an 11-hour flight from Atlanta, GA – I arrived at Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv with my four other Jerusalem and the West Bank YAGM cohort members. Our country coordinators, Pastors Adam and Jordan, greeted us with a beautiful sign made by them and their two children. To begin this year together, we drove to the Mount of Olives and shared a delicious meal looking over Jerusalem. The next two weeks were spent getting to know one another and learning more about this extraordinary place we have the privilege of calling home for the next year. We heard powerful personal stories and caught a glimpse of the reality of the occupation of Palestine. We heard of resilience, oppression, beauty, disaster, and hope. If you are interested in learning more about the occupation, below are some resources I recommend.

## Resources

### - BOOKS -

*Sharon and My Mother-in-Law:*  
*Ramallah Diaries* Suad Amir

*I Was Born There, I Was Born Here*  
Mourid Barghouti

### - ARTICLES -

[Palestine 101](#) - US Campaign  
for Palestinian Rights

[Colonialism & Apartheid  
Summary](#) - BDS Movement

### - MEDIA -

[5 Broken Cameras](#) (2011) -- FILM

[Anthony Bourdain: Parts Unknown  
'Jerusalem'](#) -- PODCAST

# Volunteer Site



## LUTHERAN SCHOOL OF BEIT SAHOUR

I am placed as a volunteer at the Evangelical Lutheran School of Beit Sahour ([ELSBS](#)). This is a K-12 school with about 460 total students. The beautiful campus is full of joyful energy and life and diverse activities including athletics, music, dance, academic clubs, and a vocational education program. During my first two weeks, I have been assisting with English classes for fifth through tenth graders. The teachers, staff, and students at ELSBS have been exceptionally welcoming and patient with me as I continue to adjust to life here. Most days I assist in class preparation, in-class readings, and activities. My favorite moments have been when I am able to talk with students outside of class. It is a great opportunity for me to practice my Arabic and for them to practice their English. I am excited to continue developing relationships with them over the rest of the school year.

## LEARNING A NEW LANGUAGE

My YAGM JWB cohort is about three weeks into formally learning spoken Arabic. Our Arabic class includes some delightful German teachers who are currently teaching at Talitha Kumi – another ELCJHL school – and another Minnesotan who is in the Holy Land visiting extended family. It's such a "small world" experience to learn Arabic in the Holy Land with someone who grew up 20 miles from you! We take class twice a week with this same small group. We've become friends and always find new ways to laugh with one another. This has been such a fun and lively environment where a surprising amount of learning takes place. I am now able to hold a short conversation, count, ask for items at the store, and give several classroom directions in Arabic.

## Spoken Arabic



## A New Home



## SACRED ENCOUNTERS

Amidst all the change and unfamiliarity, I have already started to feel at home. Opening my eyes to the authentic joy and unbounded grace of the Palestinian people has shifted my perspective and brought reassuring hope. Most days, I find time to walk around and explore this beautiful place. I walk past spirited children playing, cars stopped in the middle of the road as their drivers take a moment to catch up, and friends laughing as they share a meal. I encounter flashes of God's love alive and at work in this place. My own faith and conviction grow in the simple moments of beauty that are present in each day.

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