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The Episcopal / Anglican Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East



أبروشية الكنيسة الأسقفية / الأنجليكانية بمصر وشمال أفريقيا والقرن الأفريقي
The Episcopal / Anglican Diocese of Egypt with North Africa and the Horn of Africa

Annual Report 2011



Church for the Deaf in Old Cairo, Egypt

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Dear Friends in Christ,

This past year marked my third anniversary as a priest for the Deaf community. I am grateful for the many blessings that God has shown me while serving among the Deaf community. In so many ways, the Church for the Deaf is my home.

As I look back on 2011, I see a year with mixed results. We are encouraged by many aspects of the ministry, and there are other aspects where we want to continue to grow and develop. I continue to believe that the Church for the Deaf is showing Christ's presence in Cairo and beyond.

First let me thank God! Second, I want to thank the team of deaf people who are working hard with me shoulder to shoulder in our many ministries. I especially want to thank Bishop Mouneer of the Episcopal / Anglican Diocese of Egypt for his regular support to the Church for the Deaf.

Finally, I want to share a story with you. It started when two deaf people and I were invited to attend a Bible translation conference in Germany. For the two deaf men, this was an amazing experience. It was their first time to fly in a plane, to visit another country, and to experience another culture. They came back to the Church for the Deaf and shared about their experience with the congregation. They explained to them how amazing it was to see the sky from the plane, how they were encouraged to meet deaf people from many different countries, and to share their experiences in translating the Bible into sign language. A month later, two of the deaf congregation travelled to Kenya, Uganda and Ghana for training. They came back full of enthusiasm and energy to serve God. They want to lead different parts of the church service by themselves. This is what I was looking for three years ago; deaf people taking responsibility and leadership in the church. Now this dream has become true.

Thank you for your prayers and support for the Deaf Church.

May the Lord bless you!

Rev. Faraj



Sunday Church Services

Every Sunday evening, deaf adults and children meet together at Jesus Light of the World Deaf Church in Old Cairo. The whole service is conducted in Egyptian Sign Language led by deaf people.

Highlights

Eleven young people (8 deaf and 3 hearing) were confirmed by Bishop Mouneer in June 2011. We communicated to them their new responsibilities and role in the Church using Egyptian Sign Language.

The deaf congregation are increasingly taking responsibility for leading different parts of the service. They have confidence in leading worship in their own language, especially those who have received training.



We celebrated special Sundays together. For example Palm Sunday, Easter Sunday, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. The deaf people are always longing to see the good news, not just to hear it.

For Easter, Christmas and thanksgiving day we shared food, prayers and spent time together. This strengthens our relationships and church community.

We were honored to receive many visitors to the Deaf Church this year. In July, the Most Reverend Lord George Carey, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, visited the Church for the Deaf (pictured right).

In addition to the Sunday evening service, we also have a Bible study meeting every Saturday to prepare the deaf for outreach work, Friday bible study, Sunday morning for hearing parents and their deaf children with the teachers at the Deaf Unit, and the daily morning meeting with the children and some deaf teachers



The wedding of two of the deaf congregation was officiated by Bishop Mouneer. The vows were given in Sign Language. It was a long fight for the Church to get the wedding legally accepted. Thanks be to God for the blessing of this family. They recently had a baby girl, Esta, who will be baptized at the church soon.

Most Friday mornings, a group of deaf adults and children attend the English speaking congregation at All Saints Cathedral in Zamalek, Cairo. We also attended the combined Easter and Christmas services at the Cathedral, joining the Arabic, Sudanese and English speaking congregations. It is important for the deaf to see other churches and to share the good news

Bible Translation Project

A group from the Church for the Deaf are working on a project to translate the Bible into Egyptian sign language. There are twelve people in the team, male and female, from all over Egypt and from all denominations. Rev. Faraj is the only hearing member of the team.

The Bible is translated into Egyptian Sign Language and then professionally filmed and subtitled in Arabic, so that hearing impaired persons can see the signs and the words in Arabic at the same time. This also means that Deaf and hearing people can watch it together. The aim of the project is to help Deaf people to experience Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior through the provision of His Holy Word. The videos will be distributed across churches in Egypt and the Middle East.



The Church for the Deaf is working with other organisations and denominations in this project. We would like to thank the Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt (Pope Shenouda and Bishop Mouneer are pictured left), the Bible Society of Egypt, DOOR international, the SEED company, other individuals and churches who are partnering with us in this project. Equipment such as laptops, video camera, lights, and a screen have been donated for this project. We are praying for a bigger video camera, as the current one is not suitable for the needs of the project.

The team has finished translating and filming up to the fifth chapter of the Gospel of Mark. During this process, we discovered that the deaf community in Egypt are not familiar with the sign names of the books of the Bible, the places in the Bible and the names of people in the Bible. Therefore, the committee responsible for the Bible translation project decided that before finishing the translation of Mark, they needed to accomplish the names of the books, places and names. We have now completed the sign names of the books of the Old Testament, and we have to started to do the sign names for Bible characters in the Old and New Testament, which we hope to finish by the end of 2011.



Supporting our Deaf Congregation

Many deaf people are not able to find a job or earn a very low wage, and find it difficult to support themselves and their families. The Deaf Church offers assistance to deaf people in need, through assisting with food, healthcare, education, and advocacy.



Highlights

Many deaf families were badly affected by the January 25 Revolution. The Egyptian economy was negatively affected and many people in Egypt lost their jobs and were unable to feed their families. Through emergency funding provided through a Special Appeal of the Diocese of Egypt, the Church for the Deaf was able to provide many food packages to deaf families during this time.

The Church for the Deaf assisted and advocated for seven deaf people from our congregation to gain employment in different companies in Cairo.

Rev. Faraj assists many members of the congregation in situations when interpretation and translation is needed. For example, providing interpretation at hospitals, police stations, election day, as well as family counseling (especially for those who have hearing relatives).



A group of deaf people travelled to Harpur Memorial Hospital in Menouf, a ministry of the Episcopal / Anglican Diocese of Egypt. They received free health care from the staff at the hospital.



The importance of the Deaf Church was illustrated during the January 25 Revolution in Egypt, in the attack on Christians at the Maspero Building in Cairo in October, and in other situations in Egypt in 2011/. Many of the deaf cannot read, and it was difficult for them to understand the events in Egypt. Some are angry and aggressive about the events, others are very scared, and are afraid to leave their houses. The Church for the Deaf is one of the few places where they can understand an honest picture about the situation in Egypt. They also share and discuss about how they can respond in a Christian way.

The Deaf Church played a major role during the election time through explaining how to vote, and how to find the closest polling station. We used a film and PowerPoint at the Deaf Church to help people understand. Rev. Faraj took a group of deaf people to vote on the 28th of November (pictured right).



Deaf People Serving the Community

The Church for the Deaf encourages its members to look outwards and serve people in their community. We encourage deaf people to love and respect people from all faiths.

Highlights

On the 1st of December 2010, Harpur Memorial Hospital in Sadat City, a new ministry of the Diocese of Egypt, was opened. Before the opening, a group of deaf people volunteered to spend the day in Sadat City to clean the hospital in preparation for its opening (see picture right).

In November 2011, the Church for the Deaf invited a group of young people and children who have cancer to join us for lunch and a time of prayer. This was a very moving experience, and it was wonderful for members of the Church for the Deaf to join with these young people and to pray together and eat together (see picture below).



Training



Training inside the Church for the Deaf

Several deaf experts from the UK, USA and Jordan visited the Church for the Deaf to provide training for the Bible translation team. They provided training in the technical aspects of recording and editing, as well training in how to translate stories from the written word into pictures, and then into sign language.

Every Saturday, we have a special training for a group of deaf people who lead the Bible translation and are leaders in the church. There are now deaf leaders who are able to lead the church service. At

beginning of December, two deaf people started studying at the Alexandria School of Theology (AST), the theological training institution of the Diocese of Egypt. When they heard that they were accepted into this course, they were over the moon!

Training outside Cairo

The Church for the Deaf seeks to reach out to support other deaf people in Egypt. For example, in June a group of deaf people from Upper Egypt visited the Deaf Church for one week.

Every second month, a group of leaders from the Deaf Church go for a one day retreat. For example, we visited St Mercurius Monastery and other monasteries and spiritual places. The Church has also enjoyed the opportunity to have several days of spiritual workshops outside of Cairo.



Training outside Egypt

In September, two of the deaf leaders (Clement and Nael) joined Rev Faraj and Father Shenouda from the Coptic Church to attend the Sign Language Bible Translation Conference in Germany (pictured top left).

In October and November, Clement and Maged (both deaf) spent four weeks in Kenya, Ghana and Uganda to attend training run by DOOR international. They are the first deaf in the Middle East to be trained as consultants in translating the Bible into sign language.



In March, Rev. Faraj was invited by SIL International to lead a workshop on multi-lingual deaf education in Myanmar. This was held at the Mary Chapman School for the Deaf in Yangon, and had a particular focus on literacy.

The Deaf Church is thankful to God for:

- Deaf people who started to be mature and able to lead the church services and the Bible translation project.
- Hearing parents who encourage their deaf children to come and join the Deaf Church.
- Good relationships with other denominations in Egypt. We have visited other churches around Egypt, and they are very welcoming to us.
- Despite the difficulties of the situation in Egypt in 2011, the number of people attending the Deaf Church has increased remarkably. For example, on a recent Sunday (11 December), there were more than 150 deaf adults and 70 children at the church.
- The Christmas Appeal of the Archbishop of York to support the Deaf Club.
- The opportunities for some of the deaf leaders to attend conferences and training in other countries.
- That some deaf people found employment.
- The opportunity for two of the deaf leaders to study at the Alexandria School of Theology
- Harpur Memorial Hospital in Menouf where deaf people are always supported, respected and received free medical care.
- The welcome of the English speaking congregation at All Saint's Cathedral to members of the Church for the Deaf.



Thank you!

We are so grateful for the support of many individuals, organisations and churches. We are excited to see how God will use the Church for the Deaf in 2012.

For more information about the Church for the Deaf, please contact:

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