

The children in Bethlehem need your help!

If you are able to make a donation to support the Mar Ephraim School, please send a cheque to:

Mr John Radford,
22 Sunningdale Avenue, Kenilworth,
Warwickshire CV8 2BZ and made payable to 'Coventry Cathedral International Account (Bethlehem School)'

If you are a tax payer, resident in the UK, please complete the cut off slip below and return it with your donation.

Thank you .

I am a tax payer, resident in the U.K. and wish for tax to be claimed back from my donation.

Signed:

Address:-

STONE BY STONE

A song inspired by and dedicated to the Syrian Orthodox Christian Community in Bethlehem

How far is it to Bethlehem?
Not far in a Jumbo and car.
How far is it to Bethlehem?
Not far when you're led by a star.
And yet there are children in Bethlehem
whose dream is a school of their own.
They're Syrian Orthodox Christians
feeling far off and alone

No room down there in Bethlehem.
Poor folks trying hard to get on.
No school down there in Bethlehem.
Same story two thousand years on.
And yet there's a star over Bethlehem
whose light shines all over the world.
Please help us to build up God's Kingdom
so children can see it on Earth.

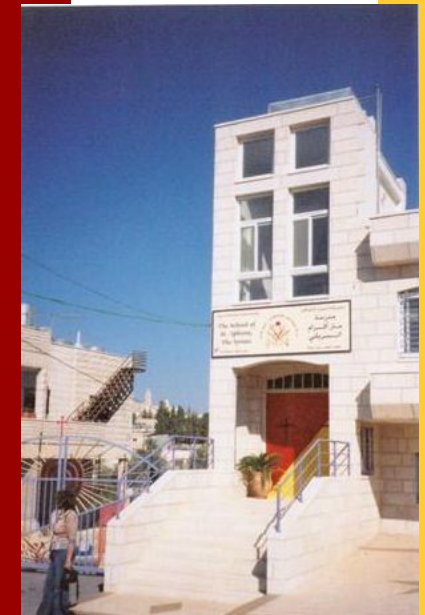
Stone by stone we'll build together,
stone by stone we'll raise the roof!
Stone by stone we'll build a future
full of love and light and truth.
And with Jesus as the Architect
He'll bless the 'living stones'.
Then the dreams of all those children
will become a School of Hope.

*Peter Morrell
© Copyright2000*

*Copies of this song are available from
Peter Morrell, 01926 332488*

SOCS Support Group

MAR EPHRAIM SCHOOL BETHLEHEM



Syrian Orthodox
Christian School
Support Group

Syrian Orthodox Christian School (SOCS) and Community in Bethlehem

Some time ago, a group of Syrian Orthodox Christians, originally from the borders of Turkey and Syria, made their home in the 'little town of Bethlehem'

For many years the Community dreamed of a school of their own where their traditions and especially the Aramaic language, the language that Jesus spoke, could be taught.

The Christian schools that already exist in Bethlehem are fee paying and with the high level of unemployment few parents can afford to send their children to school. Therefore many children had little or no formal education. Through the efforts of the Syrian Orthodox Christian School Support Group (SOCS), fees are kept to a minimum and no child is turned away.

In 2000, a group of pilgrims from the Coventry Diocese visited this Community in Bethlehem and witnessed the plight of the children.

On their return they were so moved by the situation that SOCS was established to raise funds to help realise the Community's dream and with significant funding from the Barnabas Fund a site was acquired, which local workers transformed into the beautiful school that stands there today.

The first intake of children took place in September 2003 with just 15 children of kindergarten age.



Children in one of the classrooms

Major extension work followed to add more classrooms and in December 2006 the Mar Ephraim School in the Beit Jala district of Bethlehem was officially opened.

In 2008, 145 children attended the school, aged from 3 to 8 years, a small number of these from Muslim families.

The Situation today.

The Mar Ephraim School is providing a wonderful education for children mainly from the Syrian Orthodox Christian Community as well as a Community Centre for their families. It is a 'beacon of hope' for Christians in Bethlehem and beyond.

With the continuing high unemployment, a depressed tourist industry and a 20 metre high wall surrounding Bethlehem, life remains difficult for the Community. Many families are struggling to access the very basic needs of living

Why support the Project:

- Families will remain together as a unit.
- Young people will have a good education
- Encourages other Christians in the Holy Land.
- Education gives greater opportunities for employment.
- Respect for a marginalized Christian community will increase.

Can I help?

- Be an *international eye*: praying, raising awareness and giving financial support to this on-going project which was chosen as the Community of the Cross of Nails Millennium Project.
- Encourage a rapidly dwindling Christian community to remain alive in the birthplace of Jesus.
- Give hope to families and education to their children.

And by taking care of these children, we fulfil the Lord's command: 'to love one another as I have loved you'.

If you would like to know more about the school please contact:

Mr John Radford, Chairman,
Tel: 01926 854 475,
email: hjradford@tiscali.co.uk

Mrs Pauline Morrell, Secretary,
Tel: 01926 332 488

Miss Sue Bourne
Tel: 024 7636 8257,
email: sue.bourne@hotmail.co.uk