

## TREATING THE INJURED

Our partner Al Ahli hospital was at the forefront of the response, helping to treat the wounded in Gaza. They set up an emergency ward and additional round-the-clock care to ensure the casualties could be treated. Many of those admitted had serious wounds, including complex leg injuries and severe burns. Your donations helped pay for extra staffing needed to cope with the influx of patients, as well as new hospital equipment, including a blood bank refrigerator and surgical instruments.



## MAINTAINING MEDICAL SERVICES

The fighting damaged 10 hospitals and 23 primary health clinics, severely impacting Gaza's fragile medical infrastructure. Your donations meant our partner Caritas Jerusalem could dispatch extra mobile medical teams, bringing much-needed medical services to towns and villages. The teams are still visiting those communities most badly affected by the violence and, so far, have provided diagnosis, treatment and medication to over 10,000 people.



Pictures above and right: Caritas Jerusalem mobile medical services.

## Kabir's Story:

### Learning to Smile Once Again

The bombs may have stopped falling, but their psychological effect will last much longer. Your donations have helped fund two psychological support programmes, run by our partners Caritas Jerusalem and the Pontifical Mission for Palestine, helping children traumatised by the violence. The sessions provide guided activities, including drawing, storytelling and games, to allow the children the opportunity to express their feelings and practice coping skills.

8-year-old Kabir lives in a Bedouin village close to the Gaza border. His home was badly damaged by the airstrikes. The bombing traumatised young Kabir

and he became extremely withdrawn. His schoolwork deteriorated and he stopped playing, or even talking, to his friends. In October he began attending Caritas's support programme.

For the first few sessions Kabir remained virtually silent. But, little by little, thanks to the support of the team's psychologists, he began to interact again, both during the sessions and at home. His mother is overjoyed at the change she's seen in him: *'Thanks Caritas, who helped my child overcome his sadness. His smile shines every time he attends the sessions.'*



**“ The contribution of Embrace supported us in healing those who needed medicines, treatments and most importantly attention, love and care. Caritas Jerusalem ”**

Bomb damage in Gaza.  
(Credit: Caritas Jerusalem)



**Our heartfelt thanks goes to all who supported our response in Gaza, either financially, through prayer or through advocacy. Sadly, the situation in Gaza is still extremely grim but your support means our partners can continue to bring comfort and assistance to families in desperate situations.**



# REBUILDING LIVES AND COMMUNITIES

**T**he Rt Rev Bashar Warda, Archbishop of Iraq's largest Christian denomination, the Chaldean Church, estimates the number of Christians in Iraq has shrunk from around 1.5 million before the US invasion in 2003 to just 250,000 after the terrors inflicted by the Islamic State fighters in 2014. During those fear-filled days in 2014, the large Christian town of Alqosh in the far northern Nineveh Plains emptied overnight as its population of 50,000 fled for their lives.

Today thankfully some of the Christians of Alqosh are returning. Embrace partner CAPNI is helping to rebuild the community by providing business loans to returnees so they can establish new (or restart old) enterprises.

While visiting the town recently, our Programme Managers Bruce Clark and Kat Brealey went to a food production business supported by the scheme. What they heard and witnessed was really encouraging, as Bruce explains:

*'Dunia, the owner and driving force behind the rapidly growing 'Alqosh Food Supplies', told us that she had previously run small jewellery business. But the effects of the conflict and the economic crisis that followed meant it was no longer sustainable. In 2019 she began making the local delicacy 'kuba' (cooked meat in between dough). The Embrace-funded loan of \$2,800 meant she was able to rent premises, purchase machinery and employ local women from Alqosh to expand her fledgling business. As well as kuba, Dunia's range now includes borak (pastry rolls filled with meat) and other delicious savoury delicacies, and her business now delivers to the nearby cities of Mosul and Dohuk, as well as Alqosh.'*

*'During the visit, I also spoke to Almeda, who had recently joined the workforce. She was really enthusiastic about her work and the changes her increased income was making. This included paying for her children's school fees and more financial resources for health costs.'*

*'Dunia told us of her ambitions to grow the business further. She is saving hard to purchase her own premises. Her vision is to be able to employ more Christian women and further grow the scale and range of Alqosh Food Supplies. It is an inspiring success story from a land that has suffered so much in recent years.'*

**Please keep the work of CAPNI and all those they help in Iraq in your prayers.**



Dunia.



Food production at Alqosh Food Supplies. (Photo credit: CAPNI).







# TEARING DOWN BARRIERS

The group at Quamran, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found

**In February a group led by Rt Revd Rachel Treweek, Bishop of Gloucester, travelled to Israel and Palestine on the Embrace Encounter Tour. Reflecting back on the trip in a blog she wrote for us, Bishop Rachel said:**

During our visit we marvelled and rejoiced at so many doors of entry: the beautiful doors on the Church of the Annunciation and the narrow entrance into the crypt at the Church of the Nativity. We visited the Palestinian Bible Society in Jericho and were welcomed through the doors of their newly renovated building and heard about the work with young people. We were inspired too by the Princess Basma Centre in Jerusalem (another partner with Embrace), who open their doors to welcome families with disabled children.

Yet amid all these places and inspiring stories of open doors it was sad to see so many doors of shops closed, presumably hit hard by the lack of tourism during the pandemic. There were also the strong emotions and thoughts within us regarding entry and barring. Points of entry can indeed be about welcome and hospitality but they can also be about keeping out 'the other'.

A REFLECTION FROM  
BISHOP RACHEL TREWEEK

This was stark as we waited at the checkpoint to enter and leave Bethlehem, observing an ever-lengthening wall, and more roads and land open to some and not to 'others'. This included the continually emerging Israeli settlements appearing on land where entry has not been invited.

The rejection and keeping out of the other was also present in the pictures and stories of the Holocaust History Museum of Yad Vashem. Vivid words and images of people seen as 'other' driven out from homes and communities before entering the terror of the concentration camps and being met with torture and horrific death.

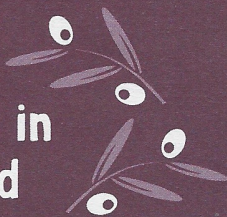
As I remember the different entrances we encountered on our tour and as I look at people fleeing their homes in Ukraine, I not only cry yet more loudly 'Lord have mercy' but I also give thanks for the people who are committed to being gateways of welcome and hospitality, and who desire not only to let in the light of Christ, but who seek to tear down metaphorical walls and unlock love and hope. Thank you Embrace and all those you partner with who are being and doing just that.

Read the full blog at [embraceme.org/blog/tearing-down-barriers](http://embraceme.org/blog/tearing-down-barriers)

**BEYOND  
THE NEWS**

ما بعد الأخبار

**Join us for  
olive picking in  
the Holy Land**



Travel with us to the Holy Land to help with the olive harvest. You will meet and work with farmers and local Christians, eat amazing food and visit places off the tourist trail.

15-25th October, £1,490 per person (single supplement applies)

For more information email [visit@embraceme.org](mailto:visit@embraceme.org)





# BRINGING THE **MIDDLE EAST** TO YOU

In the last couple of years, we've been working hard to grow Embrace's online resources. We can now bring you podcasts, blogs and online events, giving you more ways to learn about and enjoy fellowship with our Christian partners in the Middle East. Anna, our Digital Co-ordinator, has led all this work and here she reflects on Embrace's digital transformation and on what it has been like working for Embrace.

On joining Embrace in early 2020, I couldn't help but notice that we were a little behind when it came to digital. Revamping the embraceme.org website and putting the organisation on the digital map has been at the centre of my work. Since I started, we've built a new website, launched our partner blog series, made our first forays into the world of digital events, and most recently launched our new podcast 'My Middle East' - a series of personal interviews with people who have dedicated their lives to helping marginalised and vulnerable people in the region.

The last few years have not been easy for anyone, but they have been some of the most fulfilling I have experienced. When I joined Embrace in early 2020, I had no idea what to expect. Not coming from a Christian background, I admit I was a little apprehensive about what it would be like to work for a Christian charity – would I be looked down on or judged for my lack of faith? Would I connect with the mission of the charity?

I needn't have worried. Almost immediately, I felt at home. As I move to a new job, I want to say thank you to Embrace, to our partners, and to you, our wonderful supporters, for your dedicated support and encouragement which means that the wonderful work that this charity does is actually possible.

And finally, I'd like to say a word about my colleagues: people of faith – yes, for the most part, but also of integrity, honour, and genuine kindness. They are people I have learnt from – not only about the Middle East and our partners there, but about the real meaning of Christian love.

**“The last few years have not been easy for anyone, but they have been some of the most fulfilling I have experienced.”**



## Check out our new podcast

All episodes of our new podcast, 'My Middle East' are now available.

To listen, head to [embraceme.org/podcast](http://embraceme.org/podcast) or search 'My Middle East' in Spotify or the Apple podcast app.



## New webinar series 21 June - 12 July

Join us for a 4-part webinar series with Colin Chapman and guests, discussing his book *Christian Zionism and the Restoration of Israel: how should we interpret the scriptures?*

See [embraceme.org/christian-zionism](http://embraceme.org/christian-zionism) for more details and how to register.

