

Lifegate in October 2024 The first anniversary and memorial day

The war, which began on October 7, 2023 in southern Israel with the Hamas attack and has continued to escalate ever since, has now been going on for a year. A war on numerous fronts with many victims and unspeakable suffering. Many fear for their lives and enemies are numerous.

The peace that Christ has given to us in our hearts is the source and the reason for our practice wherever we live and work. We may and must tell the truth (after due consideration and in good conscience), because the truth (not lies and not half-truths) shared in love is known to "set people free". The peace that Jesus gives will be contagious and spread. We experience this every day and, with God's help, we want to share it with all people. We know that the thoughts God has toward us are those of love and reconciliation and they will reach people today. It is for this reason that we ask for the strength to live it every day.

First an entire nation and many huts

Israel is probably the only country in the world where an entire population builds a hut once a year, in the garden, on the balcony or on the street in front of the house, and then eats meals there, invite guests and some people even sleep in it. Why? Because God has commanded it in his word (Exodus 23:34) and it has something to do with the birth and blessing of God for this people. People remember the exodus from Egypt (many years without houses and a permanent home), the thanksgiving for the harvest at the end of the year, and the 10 commandments that Moses received from God on Mount Sinai.

People pray for a rainy winter and as part of this festival the water was brought from the Gihon spring to the temple in Jerusalem in a solemn ceremony. Jesus said to the people in John 7:38 "Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from his body". A feast that will play a major role for the world's population when all nations celebrate it after the return of Jesus and the establishment of his kingdom of peace (Zechariah 14:16 ff). On Passover, Jesus gave his life for the forgiveness of our sins; on Pentecost (Shavuot), the Holy Spirit was poured out on Jesus' disciples in Jerusalem and the first churches were formed; according to the Bible, the Feast of Tabernacles will find its fulfillment in Jesus' kingdom of peace and will be part of our lives all over the world.

A "coincidence" that Israel was invaded exactly on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles (a Shabbat), the day of rejoicing over the Torah (the Ten Commandments) on October 7, 2023, also the anniversary of Yom Kippur War, where Israel was also taken by surprise and had to fight for its existence. For many years our Lifegate young people celebrate together with friends from the Israeli "Village of Hope" rehabilitation center in the Tabgha Tabernacle on the Sea of Galilee. First we build the hut and cover it with palm branches, then we learn the meaning of the festival, cook and eat enjoyable meals together and spend a good week together with a varied program. On October 6, 2023, all the participants came back happy. The world changed the next morning. This year, sadly, we had to take a break because of the war. We are patiently waiting for new opportunities in the future!



„There is room in the smallest house“



Hooray the **first** volunteers are back!

Michael, Adalbert and Johannes are men without fear. They took one of the few airplanes that still fly to Israel and are now with us. Before that, they organized a bicycle marathon in the Ore Mountains. 250 cyclists rode many kilometers to support Lifegate's work and a wonderful sum of money was raised, which was a very welcome donation in these difficult times. At Lifegate, they are now laying floor tiles in the early intervention center, which will replace the laminate flooring that has become outdated and unsightly.

The volunteers should have an opportunity to get to know people on all sides and, of course, visit the biblical sites in Jerusalem's Old City. There will be no more queues at these places so they will be alone and have plenty of time to reflect and pray.



...we are happy about the cherished and industrious guests...

The **first** group to stay overnight at Lifegate Garden in a year

Young Life is an international youth movement for young people who follow Jesus. The leadership of this work in our country asked our guest house to host a three-day seminar for 70 young people from the Palestinian territories. We were more than delighted to prepare the guest house, had to do some "last minute" repair work, but were ready and well placed to receive the group. Joyous young people felt at home with us, had good conversations, Bible studies, times of prayer and sharing. How much we have missed the life they brought to Lifegate Garden! All the better that we have now been able to contribute to the strengthening and upbuilding of these young people. A blessing for both sides!

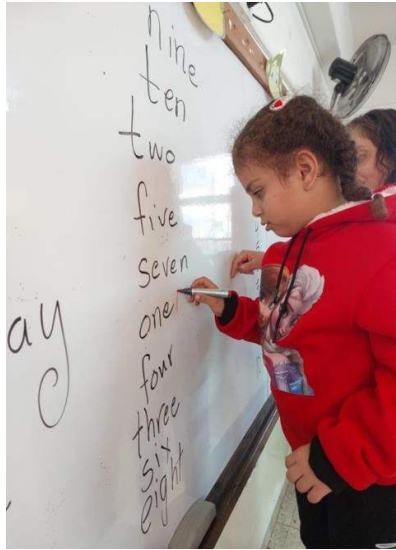




"Young Life" local Christians as guests in our guest house

Sidra's **first** days at a mainstream school

The Lutheran school in Beit Sahour (a town next to Bethlehem) opened its doors to this girl from our special education program. A student from a local university was prepared by us to accompany this inclusion process in the regular school class for a month. Sidra now goes to this school one day a week and is with us on the other days. We now want to increase the number of days at the mainstream school each month and hope that Sidra and the teaching staff at the school will then perhaps accept the girl completely. So far Sidra has made lots of new friends and for the first time has expressed the wish to go to the new school every day. We are working on it. It is often not the children who have problems with each other, on the contrary, they quickly make friends and accept our children. It is the adults with their reservations that we have to win over and we hope that we will succeed.



Sidra (red jacket) is not yet wearing school clothes and stands out beautifully

The **first** day in the Lifegate workshops

The final year of support at our school includes a “taster” internship in the Lifegate workshops. The young people are given an insight into and orientation in various departments where training and small-scale production or services take place at the same time. In the workshops, there are a number of "sheltered workplaces" for young people with cognitive restrictions and mental health problems, as well as trainees from previous school years and young people who came to us from outside. With these internships, we want to prepare the young people from our special school and encourage them to choose an area of training in the future. At the same time, we are in discussions with their parents, who should also develop plans or options for an apprenticeship. In an area with over 50% unemployment (among non-disabled people) and no training opportunities in companies or firms, training and, above all, later jobs for people with disabilities are virtually non-existent. We are very grateful that after their training in Lifegate, thanks to our contacts and initiatives, we are able to offer most young people a place of work or, with the help of their families, provide them with jobs at home.



The **first** picnic with fathers this year

"How do I deal with my anger and how can I control myself when I am angry", such a serious but important topic for our fathers' meeting, required a pleasant and “appetizing” environment or rather "good packaging". The venue was a nearby park, a barbecue was quickly set up and we were delighted to have 15 participants, who were very open about their experiences with frustration and anger during this cozy get-together in beautiful weather.

Our employee Erik used an experiment in which, with every "frustration example" mentioned, he took a small amount of colored water and poured it into a glass until it turned red and finally foamed over (with a bit of chemical help). This illustrated very nicely how pent-up anger can eventually get out of control. Alongside possible self-control exercises like breathing there was the important testimony from our team that you can also forgive your neighbor for an injury, an injustice, etc. and renounce the right to revenge or retaliation. A successful meeting for which we are very grateful!



"Around the barbecue" - fathers exchange ideas and receive encouragement

The **first** cool nights

remind us of the olive harvest, which is now underway in our country. Summer has bid farewell and jackets and sweaters are being brought out and many families like to combine the harvest with a cheerful picnic. We are still waiting for the abundant rain and are using the present time to harvest the olives on the neighboring property we purchased. Fresh olive oil will be arriving in Germany in January and we are delighted that we can offer this healthy natural product, which is given to us every year, to our friends.



The olive harvest is always a social event for the whole (Lifegate) family

The "last" shall be the **first**



Visits by our children to the not very numerous homes for the elderly are part of our annual program. Very often, the people in the homes are well looked after, but have no regular contacts and no activities to enrich their everyday lives. They are all the more pleased when someone comes by and has prepared a nice program for young and old alike. In October it was time again and we visited an old people's home with our children and had a lot of fun together. We brought the elderly people a small cross made of olive wood and encouraged them to hold it in their hands during prayer. We sang songs, played games and painted together. We invited a group of elderly people to Lifegate and they came to sing for us. We saw many happy faces at the lunch afterwards. As is often the case in life, when you give something, you receive a lot of joy in return!



Playing and painting with older people



With good wishes for a blessed month of November, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for all your care and support and ask you to remain at our side in prayer. With best regards

Yours, Burghard Schunkert and the Lifegate team