Lifegate

Lifegate in October 2026

A warm and varied October came to an end, and we look back with gratitude on many activities.

Choice and agony

The very high voter turnout of 77.7% is encouraging; large segments of the Israeli population wanted to make their voices heard this time. Compared to previous elections, many Arab Israeli citizens also cast their ballots, thus securing a significant number of potential seats in parliament. The opposition, fragmented into many smaller parties, must now unite to form a coalition with the right-wing Likud bloc. So far, "grand coalitions" are not entirely ruled out. The growing fragmentation of Israel into various individuals and religious groups, which we have witnessed for years, was reflected in this election. The apparent irreconcilability in many areas has led to a stalemate that divides the country and its people, leaving behind a nervous population. After the many traumas, fears, hopelessness, and lack of prospects experienced by Israelis and Palestinians in recent years, many people long for a genuine respite, or better yet, a lasting peace. If only people would learn to do good for one another, support each other, and build a better future together. As Christians, we are privileged to exemplify this through our Lord, who grants reconciliation and peace, wherever we are. May He grant us, and you in your countries, the strength to inspire others and encourage many to embark on new paths with Him.

Team outing to the nearby countryside

The terraced fields of the nearby Arab town of Hussan, which extend through a picturesque wadi to Battir were the start of our excursion. Numerous small springs run through a flooding system that was used in antiquity to irrigate the fields of the area, where vegetables, spices, and flowers are grown. We watched as a farmer opened the sluice gates and the water slowly flowed into the fields. A mountain path along the edge of the wadi led us down to Battir, the small town located on the old railway line from Jerusalem to Jaffa on the Mediterranean coast. Battir's lush vegetation provides a home for many beekeepers, and its high-quality honey is in great demand in Bethlehem. After some physical exertion a delicious lunch together was the perfect end to our day. A successful day with many good conversations along the way.










The water arrives slowly on the developed land (flood irrigation system)









…many friendly people and many helping hands…

For almost three years, we didn't dare invite people; the situation in the country was too unpredictable and the responsibility we would have assumed too great. We were therefore delighted that a small group of people registered for this October, many of whom already knew us, but also some new faces. We quickly prepared a program, and our guests from the Ore Mountains, Franconia, Hamburg, Amsterdam, and Hesse arrived safely and spent a blessed and fulfilling time with us.

In our play area, the posts for the shade structures and benches were installed, and two women helped out in our early childhood development groups. We received support in the olive wood department, the bakery, and the mosaic workshop, and the mosaic cladding of some exterior walls could continue. Visits to church communities and excursions were also part of our guests' program. The Lifegate team and our young people received attention and appreciation through these wonderful encounters.

We sincerely thank all visitors and hope they will fondly remember their time with us.




Foundations for a wheelchair swing and shade posts are being poured from concrete in the play and adventure landscape.









Mosaic work - creativity - group work - community - joy



Before flying home, we visited Jaffa on the Mediterranean coast to see our helpers from the Ore Mountains.

…our friends were celebrating an anniversary...

The Christian center Beit Al Liqa in Beit Jala celebrated its 30th anniversary. It was a special day for the initiators, the sending organization DMG, and the local leaders Jonny and Marlene Shawan and their team, as they looked back on 30 years of Christian work with children, teenagers, and adults. Many locals, as well as many guests from Germany, came to share in this joyous occasion. Besides a kindergarten, women's groups, play and sports facilities, a beautiful swimming pool, and a comfortable guesthouse, Beit Al Liqa offers a place where one can feel God's love and compassion for people in all its activities. For years, we have enjoyed a close friendship with this important and impactful work in Beit Jala. We wash the bed linens and towels for the guest area at Beit Al Liqa and use the lovely playgrounds for our Lifegate children. Marlene Shawan paints wonderful landscapes and many biblical scenes from our country, and her beautiful collection can be admired throughout the center. Ingrid and Christoph Zehendner and Angela and Jürgen Werth are good friends of both organizations and also visited Lifegate recently. I was delighted to join Miriam Holmer for an evening of songs performed by the two artists in Beit Al Liqa. We wholeheartedly wish Marlene and Jonny, their family and their team, God's abundant blessings and His grace and guidance for the years to come!



Jonny and Marlene Shawan, the founders and initiators of Beit Al Liqa







Jürgen Werth and Christoph Zehendner "in concert" with Miriam Holmer (left) and wives





Visiting Lifegate with other guests

…arrived in India...

It was Christoph Zehendner's initiative to produce an olive wood cross for the Nethanya Church in India, with whom he has a close friendship through Lifegate. Our first exemplar was quickly met with approval by the Indian Bishop Singh, and soon many crosses from our workshop were on their way to India. We could not have imagined the joy these crosses brought to the pastors there, who received a cross from the Holy Land upon their commissioning. We are truly delighted, and a follow-up order is already underway! Lifegate has been very well received in India!





Bishop Singh and Pastor Markus Schanz



We are delighted to share a small Lifegate contribution with our brothers and sisters in India.

…Construction stories…

Work on the upper floors is progressing well. A heavy downpour required a night shift from many staff members, who quickly mopped up the water that had seeped into the school floor. The insulation of the upper floors had not yet been finally completed. The final roof of the Lifegate Center is now within reach and partially finished. We are now beginning the interior work on the fourth floor. We hope, pray, and work that individuals, organizations, and foundations will help us complete this meeting, seminar, and support center for people with disabilities from the Middle East and around the world. This can happen in many small phases. In addition to numerous encounters, shared exchange, and learning opportunities, we plan to facilitate trips to the Holy Land for wheelchair users, weekends for parents with disabled children, and courses from the Joni and Friends program (Beyond Suffering) for members of church communities. We want all those who visit us to be strengthened in body, soul, and spirit and to take a piece of hope and joy back into the world!





The Lifegate Center sees the last roof!

…Christmas is just around the corner…

Young people with physical and intellectual disabilities work year-round in the Lifegate workshops, creating beautiful gift items. This year, natural soaps made from olive oil and glycerin have been added to our product range. In our mosaic workshop, small works of art are created, combining mosaic tiles with olive wood. Our classic Christmas tree ornaments and nativity scenes, salad servers, bottle openers and stoppers, cell phone stands, memo boxes, and olive wood keychains (which we can personalize with any name and logo upon request) are available. Hand-embroidered book covers for Bibles, yearly devotional booklets, and hymnals are also in stock, as are our tactile books for toddlers. We also welcome your own individual requests and ideas for special products made from wood, fabric, ceramics, mosaic, and embroidery, and we will check if we can produce them.

We would be delighted if you could offer our Lifegate products to your friends, colleagues, church community, or at local Christmas events, thus helping to ensure that many young people with disabilities will have a purpose and an income next year as well. Our staff at the warehouse in Tauberbischofsheim look forward to hearing from you!



Motifs of your choice.



Philipp from Bavaria helps us build the nativity scenes



..we take the evening light falling upon the construction of the upper floors as both a mandate and a sign..

May God's light always shine upon us and within us,

brightly illuminating our lives and everything that takes place inside this building!

May hope, guidance, joy, and light radiate from the Lifegate Center out into our world.

Yours, Burghard Schunkert