

## *Lifegate in August 2026*



*Love goes through the stomach*

To our delight and surprise, we had the first heavy rain in some parts of the country, which washed away the dust from houses, streets, and vehicles and was very welcome in the dry landscape. Perhaps a sign of a rainy winter; we hope and pray.

Israel is eagerly awaiting the elections in October, and the alliances of small parties. Forecasts, fears, hopes and assumptions dominate the news broadcasts these days.

What will happen next in Lebanon, in the Gaza Strip, with Iran, and now also in Syria with the Turkish troops supporting it? Will the US become embroiled in a protracted conflict with Iran, similar to the war between Russia and Ukraine? Many questions and few answers, and much is happening "behind the scenes" and will only be revealed to us later, if at all.

As Christians, we have a hope that accompanies us despite all the disputes and conflicts in this world! We are encouraged to live out this hope practically, especially in times of brokenness, hopelessness, and despair, and to accept people, comfort them, and, whenever possible, invite them to reconciliation. We

practiced this again in August at Lifegate and in other locations, and the Lord blessed us. Thus, we enter the new month with gratitude and the certainty that the loving God, with his Son Jesus Christ, stands by our side and goes before us on the path.

We invite you to join us (also in prayer)!

### ***Starting at Lifegate: Early intervention***

Fourteen new children began a new chapter in their lives at the Lifegate Early Intervention Center, joining our five support groups. We are delighted that their integration has gone so well, thanks in part to the support of their mothers, who were present during the first few days. Alongside the arrival of these children, four "smartboards" were introduced to the early intervention area. These interactive whiteboards allow the children to actively access numerous learning modules, communicate with each other during exercises and games, and complete a wide range of learning activities. These boards, already standard equipment in many schools and organizations, were provided to us by a charitable organization and are now being used to support the children's learning. They are stored safely in cabinets when not in use.



*An early intervention group at Lifegate*





*Smart TVs have arrived at the early intervention center*

### ***Special needs school***

Two groups from kindergarten have now started school. This means the available support rooms are fully utilized, and the school is delighted with the urgently needed expansion on the next floor, which is currently under construction. Six "smartboards" have also been installed in the school. These "electronic whiteboards" are attached to our traditional blackboards and are used for learning and communication.

Our department for children with severe and multiple disabilities currently has 9 children receiving support. This department will be able to accommodate up to 30 children on the next floor.



### *Therapy at Lifegate*

Medical and therapeutic work at Lifegate is a cornerstone of our rehabilitation program. In July and August, our team redesigned our therapeutic approach in consultation with the parents of our children. This was also prompted by the request of some parents to establish an intensive therapy program for their children. Starting in August, all children and young people will now receive daily therapy (e.g., physiotherapy) for three months.

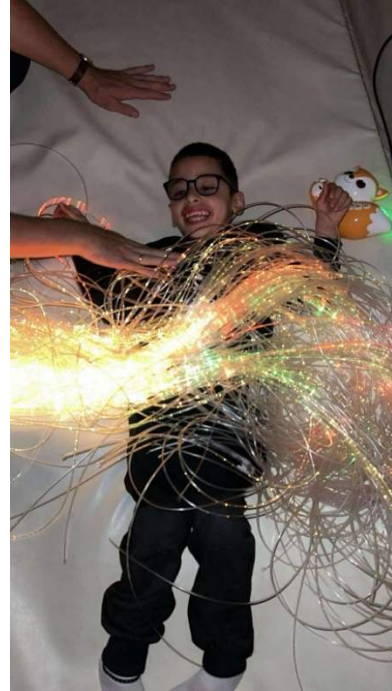
After the initial three months, if needed, a different form of therapy will be implemented daily for three months, and the previous therapy may be reduced to once or twice a week. We anticipate faster and better results for children and young people from this daily intervention. After the first phase, we will internally evaluate the new therapy and make adjustments if necessary. Parents are encouraged to attend a weekly therapy session and learn exercises from our team that they can practice at home. In this way, we aim to ensure continuous and ongoing therapeutic care for our young patients.



*Student interns*



*Snoozel Therapy*



*Snoozel elements*

### ***From the workshops***

While our young trainees enjoyed their well-deserved summer break, the Lifegate service areas and several departments worked on important projects. The laundry washed and ironed for local customers, the assistive devices department and the shoe repair workshop operated on a day-to-day basis, and the bakery supplied the shops that had ordered baked goods. Our flowers and vegetable garden needed watering, and a greenhouse made from recycled materials was constructed in our carpentry workshop during the holidays.





*Environmental projects are very welcome: greenhouses made from old wooden pallets and plastic bottles*

### ***Sister Magdalena and the St. Charles Hospice in Jerusalem***

At 90 years old, Sister Magdalena, a member of the Jerusalem order of the Baroque Sisters of St. Charles, is still active for Lifegate. Throughout the year, this nun from Beit Jala practices an old, now-extinct craft: creating Christmas cards by weaving gold and silver threads into beautiful designs. She has often told me that this will probably be her last year doing it; her eyesight and hands are failing her, but she smiles mischievously, and I know (and hope) she will call me again next year when the cards are finished. For many years, this order, beautifully situated in the heart of the former German colony of Jerusalem, has been a friend and supporter of our work and Lifegate. The energetic and friendly sisters run a welcoming guesthouse and a kindergarten.



*Sister Magdalena (90) and her embroidered cards*

***Open for use***

The neighboring property has been developed, and we are very grateful that our children can now play and explore there. The wheelchair carousel and swings, barefoot path, slides, and caves bring the children great joy. A sensory station, a theater pavilion, and a sandbox are still being completed, and this little oasis will serve many people.





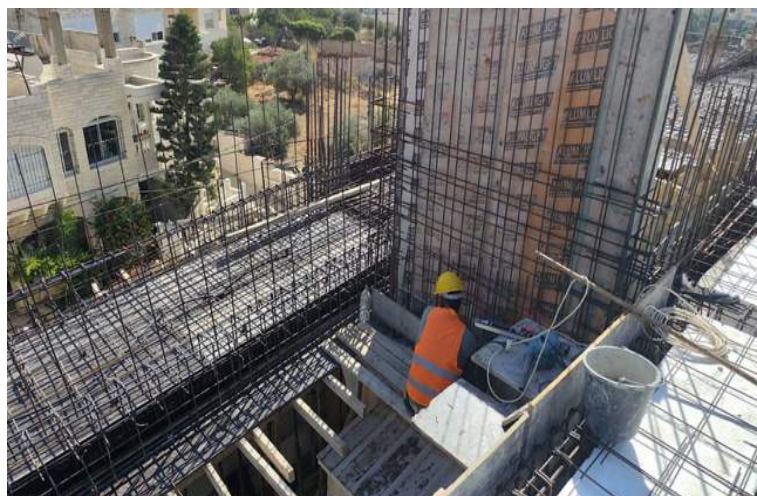
## Rare guests

The official travel warnings of various European governments are being respected, and as a result, visitors to Lifegate have become rare. We were all the more pleased, therefore, that two women from an organization that supports our early intervention work visited us and were able to see firsthand what the funding has been used for on the ground. Bethlehem was exempt from the travel warning in their country, which unfortunately still applies to visitors from Germany, for example. Perhaps a reconsideration of the travel warnings could take place here in Germany; it would significantly benefit our work and the many hotels and guesthouses (and the many unemployed people) in Bethlehem!

## Construction stories

The Lifegate construction site is progressing rapidly. The shell of the fourth floor is complete, and the columns for the next floor have already been poured. We are grateful for the efficient and swift progress. We will soon begin the interior work. We look forward to seeing more of the progress. We are seeking supporters and people who are committed to this area, which, in addition to expanded rehabilitation capacity, will also bring Lifegate a significant step towards local financial stability. The facilities on the upper floors will help local families participate in the rehabilitation of their family members. They will also welcome people with disabilities from around the world to learn with us, explore the Holy Land, engage in international exchange, and return to their home countries with encouragement and hope. We therefore like to call these two floors **the Lifegate Lighthouse**, from which guidance and light will shine out into our world for people with and without disabilities.

We are always ready to provide information and details and welcome your assistance!





### *Lifegate – Lighthouse*

*Light and hope for our region and for the whole world.*



### **Pass it on (Joni and Friends - JAF)**

I followed a request to meet people with disabilities in Turkey, and it was my first time in the country. I met wonderful, helpful Christians who showed me Istanbul and Ankara and helped with transportation, accommodation, and meals. In Ankara, a staff member who works with JAF had invited families with members with disabilities to spend two days together. For the Joni and Friends annual theme "Hidden Treasures" for family gatherings in 2026, I had the opportunity to present the story of Moses and the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. Two days prior, the conflict between Israel and Turkey escalated, and I knew that 15-20 Iraqi refugee families with their disabled children and adults (of the Muslim faith) were expected. I could only rely on God's wisdom and support.

The team of local and international Christian volunteers gave the participants a warm welcome, a spontaneous worship team won the hearts of those present with heartfelt songs and readings, and when everyone joyfully sang "Hevenu Shalem Aleichem" in Turkish, I knew "our Lord was wonderfully present." It was a pleasure for me to introduce the "Prophet Musa," who is also highly revered in Islam, and whom God chose to lead his people out of slavery despite his speech impediment and terrible past. I was able to connect with people that day with one thought: "Most of us are no longer in the countries where we were born. Whether by force, because of war, or voluntarily, or because of a calling, we live elsewhere today. The people of Israel also faced an unknown future; they had to leave behind what was familiar. In a discussion group with eight teenagers with various disabilities, I learned that neither medical intervention, therapy, nor support for people with disabilities was sufficiently available to those present. I was very surprised by such news in a large, modern, and rapidly developing country. During my four days in Turkey, I unexpectedly met people who have a truly open heart for supporting people

with disabilities. I was able to talk about Lifegate and our beginnings, and I realized once again what a blessing we have been given in Beit Jala over the years, a blessing I am now privileged to share. I returned from these days feeling fulfilled and enriched, and I am now eager to see how things will continue in Turkey. One reason for this is the support of Turkish and international brothers and sisters in faith. The foundation has been laid; may the Lord build something "wonderful" for people with special challenges.

*On a visit to Turkey*





*Hagia Sophia in Istanbul*

The mosaic in Hagia Sophia, now a mosque in Istanbul, which was once the largest church of antiquity (built in Constantinople in 537 by Emperor Justinian), depicts Jesus as the Pantocrator, the ruler of all things. The touching thumb, middle finger, and ring finger symbolize the triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). The two raised fingers (index and little finger) represent the dual nature of Jesus as true man and true God.

It is impressive that at least some mosaics from the once magnificent church have survived on the walls and can be viewed by visitors today. It is also part of the history that two major denominations, the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Churches, at this site separated from each other and remain so to this day.

The Apostle Paul was born and raised in Tarsus (southern Turkey). After training as a scribe in Jerusalem and his conversion near Damascus, he began his missionary journeys in his former homeland and founded the first churches there. The word of God then came to us in Germany through the faithful people from these churches, as well as from Cyprus, Greece, and Rome. Thus, we have a connection of faith to Turkey rooted in biblical history, and today we are privileged to support the "body of Christ" in this country.

We await the return of the world ruler! With kind regards, your Burghard Schunkert

## ***A note:***

### ***Travel to the Holy Land***

Courageous friends organize trips even when good news is scarce. From November 9th to 23rd, 2026, Alexander Schick, Qumran specialist and renowned expert on the Holy Land, is organizing an exciting trip to Israel featuring new archaeological highlights and a visit to Lifegate. A few places are still available on this trip. Contact: [info@scuba-israel-reisen.de](mailto:info@scuba-israel-reisen.de)

During the Easter holidays of 2027, we are planning a very special trip to Israel for Lifegate friends, supporters, and those newly interested, from April 20th to 30th, 2026. The trip will be led by our friend, Israel expert and author (Welcome to the House of Laughter), Christoph Zehendner. Visits to Lifegate with possible participation in activities, interesting encounters in the country, and visits to historical and biblical sites are planned. A warm welcome awaits you!

