

## Lifegate in March 2025



Warm and cool days, flowers and trees in bloom, rockets from Yemen and Lebanon, resumption of the war in Gaza. 55 Israelis still abducted in Gaza, demonstrations in Israel for the release of the hostages and against the permanent dismantling of democratic structures by the right-wing Israeli hardline government. First demonstrations against Hamas in Gaza, American threats and troop concentrations around Iran.

The news in the last few days of March is anything but uplifting. Muslims are looking forward to the Id il Fittr festival at the end of the fasting month of Ramadan, Jews are preparing for Passover and we Christians are preparing for Easter. However, many people don't really feel like celebrating.

The year 0 in Jerusalem. The land is occupied and ruled by Roman troops. The Roman centurions are tense on the Jewish holidays and especially the Passover. In addition to the 50,000 inhabitants of Jerusalem, 500,000 Jewish pilgrims come from all over the world. Pontius Pilate leaves his residence in Casarea on the Mediterranean and comes to Jerusalem especially to lead the troops himself. The smell of a Jewish uprising was always in the air at these festivals. And now, of all things, a trial for religious disputes and then an execution so close to the festival. Pilate hands over the "innocent man" to the outraged people, the other "Bar Abbas" (literally translated: the son of the father) remains alive. The Romans nail the real Son of the Father to a cross, Jesus Christ dies for our sins. A solar eclipse, an earthquake, a torn curtain in the temple from top to bottom. The Holy of Holies, where God is present, is forever accessible from heaven to earth in the death of Jesus! Jesus is in the realm of the dead for three days, since then this place has never been "free from God", then he rises from the dead. The shroud is neatly folded at the foot of the stone bench in the tomb, no one has been carried away or hastily disappeared. Someone has risen with dignity. Jesus' friends are scattered, frightened and extremely disappointed. Before long, Jesus comes to them, talks to them, comforts them and eats with them. They begin to understand and they begin to believe.

For hundreds of years, Jewish people have set an extra table for the herald of the Messiah, the prophet Elijah, on Passover Eve (Exodus from Egypt). During the evening, they open the front door and the prophet is cordially invited to enter. We are already allowed to sit at the table with our Lord and share bread and wine. Let us remember His gift to us, "forgiveness of sins and eternal life with HIM", we may invite Him in and He will enter and stay! Happy Easter Your Burghard Schunkert

***In-Sight:***

**Two of our 45 children diagnosed with autism**

**Yazan** is an 11 year old autistic boy who has been at Lifegate for 6 years, first in our kindergarten and now at school. Yazan often lives in his own world, is very intelligent and has learned to recognize and include other children. Yazan forms words with five letters, he knows the Arabic alphabet, the numbers up to 50 and has mastered the plus-minus calculations up to 20. He can say a few words in English and likes to hum melodies that he likes. Yazan puts together puzzles with 50 pieces, can read the clock and sort objects by size and color. He likes building with Lego and knows exactly when and where a piece is missing. Yazan can assign headings to pictures. The boy is on his way to becoming more and more accepted in our world. We invite him in and give him the "time-outs" he needs from time to time. We are happy about his motivated parents who help and accompany the boy into a good future.



***Yazan***

**Sedra** is four years old, a quiet, withdrawn girl with ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder). She joined an early intervention group with seven other children in 2023. Initially, she didn't want to communicate with us and was overwhelmed by every new toy and every new task. She cried a lot. With great patience from our team, supported by the occupational therapists, Sedra began to develop confidence and a wonderful development process began. Sedra learned colors, numbers, formulated words and then full sentences. Her confidence developed through structured play with other children. She learned to dress and undress herself independently, to eat and drink and to use the toilet on her own. In the Lifegate inclusion program, Sedra is now in a "regular kindergarten" two days a week with the aim of being admitted to a

regular school by the time she starts school. Sedra is an example of how love, patience and professionalism in education can bear fruit and help children learn and develop. We are delighted that this girl will be heading towards a promising future.



**Sedra**

***Seeing clearly:***

**Friendly helpers**

A team of doctors and specialists from St. John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem came to Lifegate and examined the eyes of our Lifegate children free of charge. Several children need glasses, which we now want to make possible for them. We are delighted about this kind service, which will help many children to see better. Many thanks.





### ***Seeing Safely:***

#### **Backyard put into operation**

The new shelters and storage rooms behind the Lifegate building have been put into operation. In March, we carried out a first alarm drill in which all the young people in our workshop and our team had to get to the shelters in the shortest possible time. The drill went well. We hope that we will all arrive safely in the rooms in an "emergency". Our young people greatly enjoy using wheelchair basketball court on the roof of the rooms. Now we just need artists to design and paint the remaining boundary wall. We look forward to hearing from interested parties.





***Seeing through the eyes of someone “in the know”:***

**Georg Neumann**, accompanied by his father **Torsten and his family**, ran another training course for our team of therapists. During an interesting week, our therapists learned new approaches and techniques (PNF) and practiced them with each other. This training series will be continued by Georg this fall and expanded by speech therapists and occupational therapists from Paulustherapie in Halle. A team of Slovakian therapists who are very advanced in "Therasuit Therapy" are also planning to visit us. Lifegate has some of these special therapeutic suits that we would like to use in the future. All participants received a certificate.



***Georg and Vera (physiotherapist) Georg on the right and Torsten Neumann with the Lifegate therapists***





***PNF training with Torsten Neumann***

***Seeing the big picture:***

The wheelchairs from our partner Joni and Friends will be distributed to many people who need a wheelchair in April as part of an initial campaign. Our team together with young people from the Immanuel Church in Bethlehem will carry this out at Lifegate. We are planning to send a Lifegate team to Jordan and Egypt again this year for a wheelchair campaign. And we are looking forward to a visit from our new friends from Armenia at Lifegate in June, who will be carrying out a second wheelchair distribution with us.



***Wheelchairs from Joni and Friends stored for the next issue***

**Looking back:** Two faithful friends who have supported us for years, "Lifegate veterans", met in the USA. Richard Stephan (left), an assistive technology specialist from Montana, set up the Lifegate assistive technology workshop with his organization Wheelchair Angels, trained a local employee and helped many children, young people and adults gain mobility in more than 10 years of working for Lifegate and in campaigns with organizations throughout the country. He returned to the USA a few years ago. Rudolf Schöning (right), orthopaedic shoemaker from Hamburg, trained our local shoemaker Munther in the manufacture of orthopaedic insoles over many years during monthly missions and provided many people with insoles and the right shoes to go with them. We are delighted that this meeting was possible! What neither of them knew was that they happened to be sitting in front of a sign with the date July 18, 1987. In the summer of 1987, Lifegate's work began in a residential home for blind and disabled men in Beit Jala.



***...and then there was a nice party...***

On Purim, people in Israel read the Book of Esther in the Bible and remember the evil intrigues in the Persian Empire and the intentions to wipe out the Jewish people (nothing new under the sun). The tide turned for the good, the wicked were punished and the evil plans were prevented. Since then, young and old have been dressing up for a few days in Israel and celebrating this festival, the Jews have survived and are still alive today! This year Purim coincided with the carnival, which is better known in Europe, and so it came to pass that at Lifegate the children and the team also dressed up on that day. You can actually celebrate the victory of good over evil every day and it certainly has something to do with the cross and the resurrection. Evil is defeated and life triumphs.



**Bogi and Erik**

***We wish all our friends and  
supporters a happy and blessed  
Easter.***

***Jesus' resurrection is a reason for  
hope and joy.***

***Yours sincerely, Burghard  
Schunkert***