



NEWSLETTER
VOLUME 24 • ISSUE 1



Journey to **BETHLEHEM**



HOLY FAMILY HOSPITAL
of Bethlehem Foundation 

You ANSWERED THE Call

Because of your generosity, Holy Family Hospital provided over 150,000 services to the mothers and babies of Bethlehem in 2022. Thank you for ensuring the highest quality care for the next generation in Bethlehem.



Babies Delivered **4,604**

Women and Children Cared for in the Mobile Outreach Clinic **2,907**

Babies who Received Lifesaving Care in the NICU **473**

Appointments and Care for Expectant Mothers in the Diabetes Clinic **2,563**

Appointments and Surgeries Provided to Women in the Well Woman Clinic **1,424**

Babies Born Before 32 Weeks **42**



DONATE TODAY and make an impact!

letter from the president

AMBASSADOR MICHELE BURKE BOWE

Bethlehem ushered in 2022 still suffering from the twin economic and health crises. The empty town saw few pilgrimages. Bank accounts ran dry after two years without salaries. Nerves began to fray as they wondered when hope would return. Holy Family Hospital staff knows hope because it emanates from a Child born nearby 2000 years ago. Hope never leaves the only maternity hospital in Bethlehem. Hope is embodied in a baby tenderly tucked into her mother's arms. Hope is the face of a new Dad admiring his tired wife after delivery. In 2022, hope was repeated 4,604 times.



In 2022, hope was repeated 4,604 times.

Newborns show that hope is not gone but waiting to be rediscovered. In April, pilgrimages began anew. Some buses arrived like the first swallows of spring. Bethlehem reopened after the coldest winter in decades. The noise of construction resumed. The workers, grateful for employment, proudly worked on their community touchstone. A generous donor gifted limestone for the Hospital's exterior. Another donor named overnight rooms in honor of his favorite priests. Naming a project is a beautiful way to remember and honor those we hold dear. A few more naming opportunities remain.

Our wonderful monthly donors ensure uninterrupted care restoring health and renewing hope. A donor, touched by stories of increasing poverty, met only by longer tables and neighbors' generosity, announced a large grant to help families through difficult times. Families would no longer have to choose between medical care and groceries. The patients go home with their dignity intact and newfound hope. The resident doctors conduct rounds daily. We thank a special family for underwriting the costs of a resident doctor in memory of their father, a beloved physician.



We received bequests from Three Kings Society members. We were saddened by their loss and asked for memorial Masses. They live on in the everyday miracles they supported during life, having ensured hopeful futures through their wills.

2023 continues to challenge us in increasingly complicated work and our ability to raise funds to support life, peace and hope.

May I count on your ongoing prayers and support?

Blessings from Bethlehem,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Bowe'.

Ambassador Michele Burke Bowe, GCM

100,000 Blessings

On the twelfth day of Christmas, the Feast of the Epiphany, the 100,000th baby made his way into the world at Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem. Just 1,500 steps from the manger where the Christ Child was born, Baby Muhammad was delivered safely into the arms of his parents, Nadine and Abou Muhammad. The Hospital staff has eagerly been awaiting his birth since early December.



Baby Muhammad



Baby Muhammad and his dad



Ambassador Michele Bowe, Foundation President, with Baby Muhammad

100,000 babies represents half the population of Bethlehem. Holy Family Hospital serves a catchment area of 1 million people and provides over 150,000 services a year.

It was appropriate that the 100,000th baby was born in the wee hours of the morning on a day held dear to Christians around the world. A few years ago on Christmas Eve, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas addressed those gathered for Mass saying that, “Christianity is essential for Palestine. Our Christians may be few, but they are like salt; essential. Palestine has been a mosaic society for centuries and will continue to be so.”

Holy Family Hospital operates on this same premise. Christians and Muslims work together in our ecumenical workplace in service to the poor. All are welcome.

Nadine comes from the town of Hebron, and her husband works for the government. She chose to deliver her first child at Holy Family Hospital because that is where her brother’s children were born and the care was excellent.

“I appreciated the kind and warm midwives who were there with me when I delivered my son. They helped me forget my fears and pain. I am overjoyed to be a mother and looking forward to introducing Baby Muhammad to my friends and neighbors. The birth of a new baby is God’s way of telling us there is hope for the world. He is strong because he had a good start at Holy Family Hospital.”

— Nadine

the INNKEEPER'S corner

AN OASIS OF HOPE

According to St. Jerome and echoed by Pope Francis, “A pilgrimage to the Holy Land is the ‘Fifth Gospel.’” Those who recently went on pilgrimage with the Holy Family Hospital Foundation could not agree more.

“A pilgrimage to the Holy Land is something that is renewing to the spirit and soul. The people who you encounter throughout your time there make your journey absolutely beautiful. The people are extremely gracious in every sense of the word. We were blessed to have seen and experienced the miracle of life at Holy Family Hospital. The Hospital itself is a little paradise holding God’s most precious gifts in the faces of the parents and the little babies. The Hospital is God’s work, a message of faith, hope, and love.”

— Amber Thompson

“Visiting Holy Family Hospital was the highlight of our pilgrimage. As we entered the courtyard of the hospital I was amazed by the peacefulness and the quiet. In the midst of a very busy city in a turbulent country, where it would be very easy to despair, we entered this little oasis of calm and quiet that just was permeated with love and hope. Touring the hospital, we were able to see hope in the young expectant moms and in the families in the waiting rooms. It was humbling to see this love and hope in action with the staff helping the tiniest little babies in the NICU fighting for their lives. It is a truly inspiring and uplifting place and we hope to visit again!” — David Joyce

“Seeing the Hospital reinforces our belief in the Order of Malta’s service to ‘our lords the sick and the poor.’ Blessings to all!” — Tom and Sheila Weiford

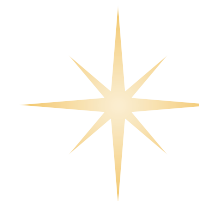


Amb. Michele Bowe speaking to pilgrims in the Holy Family Hospital courtyard



Holy Family Hospital Foundation’s full pilgrimage group, October 2022

If you are interested in going on pilgrimage with Holy Family Hospital Foundation, contact Kate Robinson, Foundation Director, at 202-785-0801.



IT TAKES A VILLAGE

Father Tim Nadeau, Pastor of Good Shepherd Parish in Saco, Maine and a longtime friend of the mothers and babies of Bethlehem, visited Holy Family Hospital in January of 2020. The experience moved him to initiate not just a parish program at Good Shepherd Parish in Saco, Maine, but a larger effort to include an entire campaign for Holy Family Hospital Foundation throughout his community.

The parish community engaged in a variety of activities to raise funds and awareness for the Hospital in Bethlehem. St. James School participated in the Babies in Bethlehem program and the five churches joined the popular Angel Tree initiative hanging our pictured ornaments on their giving trees. Volunteers and local grocery stores used their creativity to donate gift cards towards the parish community’s “Pork Pie Project,” which special volunteers baked and sold their famous pork pies with all proceeds benefiting the Hospital.

These are a few of the many ideas that the community of Good Shepherd Parish put together to help the families of Bethlehem. The Chair Commission at Good Shepherd Parish expressed, “It truly does take a village (in our case a Parish) to succeed in a project of this size. We have really enjoyed supporting Holy Family Hospital, especially knowing that we are helping the mothers and babies of Bethlehem.”



Fr. Nadeau on pilgrimage in Bethlehem



“We wanted to offer some desperately needed financial support to Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem. This Catholic Hospital is just 1,500 steps away from the manger where Jesus was born. It’s also the only hospital in the area that can properly handle premature and problematic births, and every woman wants to deliver a healthy child so many women travel many miles to give birth at Holy Family Hospital.” — Fr. Tim Nadeau

Father Nadeau’s efforts in Saco, ME brought love and support to the mothers and babies in Bethlehem. There are many ways to involve your school and church in 2023! To learn more, call Olivia Leaman, Development Associate, at 202-785-0801.

HOLY FAMILY HOSPITAL: *Providing Holistic Care*



Running a hospital in Bethlehem requires experienced staff, equipment, supplies and you. Your ongoing generosity ensures the uninterrupted delivery of hope and care at Holy Family Hospital. Your gifts not only allow for medical care but also education and ongoing training.

In 2022, our dedicated doctors delivered over 470 fragile and premature babies and admitted them to the NICU where our team nurtures them for as long as six months. Holy Family Hospital cares for a disproportionate number of premature and sick babies as it is the only hospital in the region that can deliver and care for babies born before 34 weeks. In 2022, 20 babies were delivered weighing less than 1.5 pounds and before 27 weeks. Two were born at less than one pound. Holy Family Hospital remains the referral hospital for the region's most challenging cases.

Holy Family Hospital's excellent reputation for high-risk pregnancy and neonatal care is the reason Magdalena and her husband Imad chose to deliver there. Magdalena and Imad were expecting spontaneous triplets and knew that specialized care for the duration of pregnancy and a level III NICU would give their babies the greatest chance at success.

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On January 9, the delivery team readied the operating room for a carefully orchestrated C-Section delivery of three little girls. C-Section deliveries for high-risk cases take place in the operating room upstairs near the NICU. The team of 11 assembled waiting for Magdalena to arrive. As the first baby, Maryam, was born, the neonatologists received her and began post-delivery care. The neonatologist then signaled the team to deliver baby two and Sarah was born and placed in the care of the second neonatologist. The teams were silent until the Chief Resident, who was performing the surgery, broke out singing a traditional love ballad. The midwife in training joined him in song and baby Reema was brought into the world to a beautiful old tune. Reema, the littlest of the sisters, needed extra help to begin breathing and joined her sisters in the NICU.

Such deliveries are the result of excellent protocols and ongoing training. Since Holy Family Hospital is a teaching hospital, each encounter is one of learning. At each visit, the women and their husbands learn about pregnancy, childbirth, childcare and parenting. The experienced obstetrician instructs and oversees the residents during operations and procedures. Nursing and midwifery students spend many hours on clinical rotations in the NICU, learning how to care for the most fragile babies.

Excellence, training, education, and compassion are the hallmarks of care at Holy Family Hospital. Holistic healthcare provided to mothers and their babies since 1990 has made Bethlehem a healthier and more hopeful town.

MIRACLES IN THE NICU

Malaak and Muhammad were excited to become parents to their twins. Newly married and beginning their careers as lawyers, they were always on the go. Malaak woke up in early September and immediately knew something was wrong. Muhammad brought her to the closest hospital as it was clear she was in labor at 24 weeks.

The receiving hospital immediately called Holy Family Hospital for an emergency transfer. Unfortunately, the NICU was over occupancy with 22 babies, 4 over the licensed limit. The Chief Neonatologist explained that they would need some time to evaluate when they could make space. Sadly, this capacity issue occurs more often since the pandemic.

Malaak was given medication to stop labor and mature the babies' lungs. They could only wait and pray for a transfer as Holy Family Hospital is the only one in the region that can deliver and care for babies born before 34 weeks. On the morning of September 8, the Nativity of the Blessed Mother, Malaak learned her twins could wait no longer. They were well on their way.



Muhammad had just learned that two spaces opened at Holy Family Hospital and that his sons would be offered the best care available. Malaak travelled by ambulance and was met at the doors by the staff. Within twenty minutes, the twins were delivered. Keenan was born first at 540 grams, just over a pound. Muntaser was delivered weighing a mere 400 grams.

The NICU team dashed into action intubating the tiny preemies and inserting their lines. The team knew that Keenan and Muntaser had a chance of survival and they wanted to make it happen. While the twins were tiny, they seemed to be fighters with a strong will to live.

When Malaak saw her tiny sons, she said only God can give them life. She had never seen a premature baby and she knew how precarious their conditions were. The doctors explained that the medications she was administered gave her babies a chance at life. The nurses did not need to explain to the parents the importance of visiting and interacting with their sons. They visited daily willing their boys to grow and thrive.

Over the days and weeks, the boys grew stronger. They also suffered setbacks common among micro-preemies. They both developed brain bleeds, one more severe. They required blood transfusions and treatment under lights. They grew bigger and responsive to their parents' voices and touch.

Finally, the day came when Muhammad and Malaak could hold Keenan. They were overjoyed and afraid at the same time. The nurses taught them how to hold their son without disturbing the lines, tubes and monitors.

Muhammad spends every afternoon in the NICU sitting quietly in a chair watching over and feeding his sons. Malaak joins him each afternoon eager for her time with their new Family. They are both grateful that the grandmother can visit every morning singing to the boys and telling them family stories.

Keenan is still at Holy family Hospital five months after delivery. He requires oxygen and needs to gain more weight before he goes home. After an emergency surgery at a Hebron hospital, Muntaser is back at Holy Family Hospital with his brother.

Muntaser, Keenan and their grandmother have become favorites in the NICU. The nurses have grown fond of the boys and their devoted family. The almost constant presence of the family has helped the babies develop.



“My goal is to bring the boys to the NICU reunion to celebrate with the other families and to have the first birthday party of Keenan and Muntaser at the Hospital with the NICU staff in September 2023! Thank you for teaching us how to be a family!”

— Malaak

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A Primary Work of the Order of Malta

Holy Family Hospital is a primary hospitaler work of the Order of Malta. Its U.S. Foundation is a shared work of all three U.S. Associations. The Grand Master has asked all Knights and Dames throughout the world to share in its support.



HOLY FAMILY HOSPITAL *of Bethlehem Foundation*

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We encourage you to share the good works of Holy Family Hospital of Bethlehem Foundation by passing this newsletter along to a friend!