



Dispatches from Seraj

2022 TOUR



Jordan Valley
Wednesday, October 19

In the Jordan Valley Near the lowest spot on earth

Rev. Gloria Hopewell, Seraj Palestine Tour Participant



I am not entirely new to Palestine and its struggles. I first visited the Holy Land 25 years ago, and have since been painfully aware of the injustice of the ongoing occupation. But this trip has provided a deeper look into the resiliency of the Palestinian people and the threads of hope that are woven through the fabric of their lives.

There is a saying that Palestinians are like water: They find a way. And indeed tales of perseverance abound here. Palestinians have had to be resourceful to survive in this hard land for thousands of years, and daily life continues to be a challenge.

Today we met a farmer who had to abandon his grape vines when the ground water became too salty, as he was not allowed to dig any deeper, on his own land, to reach fresh water. He has since built up an impressive date farm, knowing that any day his buildings could be razed and his palm trees uprooted.

Tomorrow we will have to take the long way to Bethlehem because the Palestinians staff is not allowed through the checkpoints surrounding Jerusalem. Roads and checkpoints are routinely closed without explanation.

Seraj ("light" in Arabic) is part of a subtle resistance movement. Their light, inviting libraries extend radical hospitality. To all comers, even rowdy youth with nowhere else to gather, they say, "Come in. This is your house. Let's read together." In a barren, isolated spot in the Jordan valley, an unassuming structure houses a colorful children's library where the local Bedouin women refurbish and sell clothing, make jewelry from plants and found objects, and organize to demand a local clinic. They find a way.

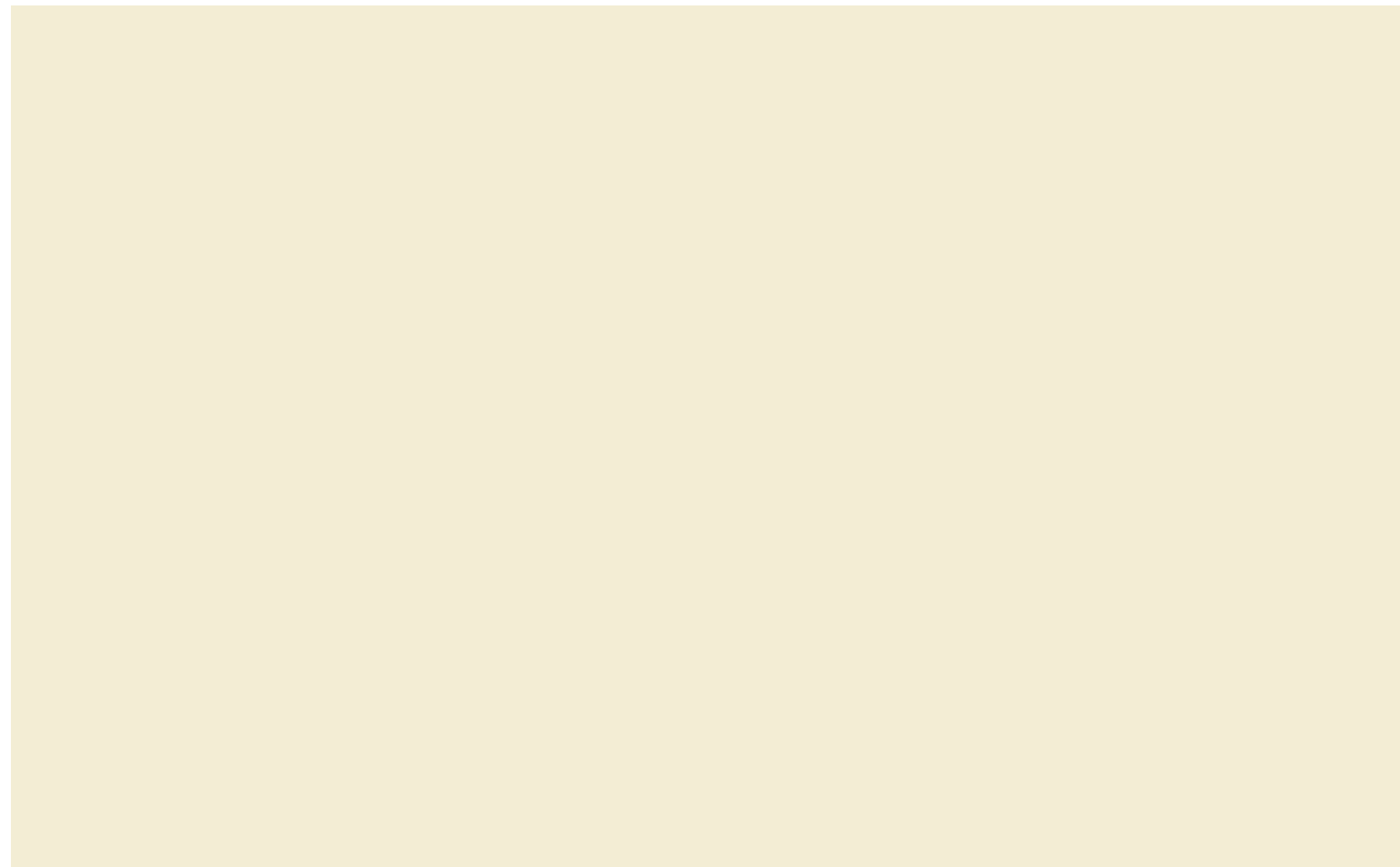
We'll continue sending updates on our journey. Watch your email.

See the full 2022 tour itinerary [here](#).

See past tour Dispatches [here](#).



Seraj scholarship recipient and staff member Mohammed interviews Jordan Valley date farmer





The exterior of the Seraj library and women's center in Jiftlek



The children's library in the Seraj building in Jiftlek

18 PEOPLE are exploring Palestine up close and personal with our SERAJ executive director, Laurie Salameh, and her dedicated staff. October 16 -25. We hope you enjoy these reports.

REMEMBER we are dependent on your support for the programming and the maintaining of the libraries.

JOIN US and learn more at our Benefit on November 13. Space is limited, buy your tickets today. On-line cut off, Tuesday, November 9. www.serajlibraries.org

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