

Introducing *The Living Word* | *Partners Spotlights 2020*

THE LIVING CHURCH

CATHOLIC

EVANGELICAL

ECUMENICAL

Parish Ministry

\$5.50 livingchurch.org September 6, 2020



Jerusalem Peacebuilders

Since 2011, Jerusalem Peacebuilders (JPB), a nonprofit ministry of interfaith reconciliation, has gathered thousands of Jews, Christians, Muslims, and Druze, both adults and youth, for people-to-people encounters focused on producing the leadership and understanding necessary to transform the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In March 2020, COVID-19 upended life as we knew it. Undaunted, we at JPB faced pivotal choices about operating our summer peace and leadership institutes for American, Israeli, and Palestinian educators and students.

Our programs in dozens of schools in the USA and the Holy Lands quickly shifted to an online format. Check-in calls, social events, projects, and educational webinars were offered to support our active alumni community. In some ways, physical borders became less of an issue, as we adapted to the constantly changing dynamics of the pandemic and engaged participants from their homes. Our Lord's words, "for nothing will be impossible with God" (Luke 1:37), soon became our mantra.

Peacebuilding during the pandemic quickly becomes prophetic. We found ourselves witnessing to God's power and purpose as we leveraged our structure and professional network to determine how we might safely operate our peacebuilding programs this summer. Thankfully, God's

grace moved us beyond the impossible, and the doors of opportunity were opened to us.

Despite restrictions, we have offered online summer programs that advance reconciliation. Teens enjoyed workshops, dialogue, social events, and guest speakers including prominent Jewish, Christian and Muslim faith leaders in Jerusalem. With the Lord's help, we remain undaunted in our ministry of reconciliation in the Holy Lands.

