



All Saint's Church, Peshawar

The All Saints' Church, Peshawar, built in 1883, a unique Church, which looks like a mosque from the outside

### Individual Highlights

- Christmas in Captivity 1
- Bishop's Christmas Week 2
- Waziristan – needs prayer supports 3
- Teens' Games, Bannu 4
- Christmas Fair (Mela) & New Year Party 5
- Brilliant Performance, Edwardes College School, Peshawar 6

## Christmas in Captivity



Bishop Humphrey leading Prayer Service at Jail

24 December 2011: The Diocese of Peshawar through its Prison Ministry organized a special Christmas programme in the Central Jail, Peshawar for the Christian prisoners.

The Bishop of Peshawar, Rt. Revd. Humphrey S. Peters, the Prison Chaplain, Revd. Rasheed Nazir, along with other priests and a good number of people from local Christian community visited the Peshawar Jail on 24 December, and a Holy Communion Service was conducted for the people in captivity.

After the Worship Service, Christmas cake cutting ceremony was also held, led by the Bishop. In a fellowship lunch arranged by the Diocese, the Bishop and his team listened to the problems and issues faced by the prisoners, and assured them of their support.

The special Christmas gifts for the prisoners were a source of happiness for them. They were very thankful to the Bishop and the Diocese for remembering them and celebrating Christmas with them.



Worship in progress

It is worth mentioning that the Prison Ministry of Peshawar Diocese provides moral and legal support to the Christian prisoners in Peshawar and other jails of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.



Local & foreigner prisoners attending Prayer service

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2-Cornth 5:17)*

*Let's enter the New Year with new commitments with a refreshed soul & spirit.*

*May God bring happiness to all of us in the year 2012, and beyond!*





## Bishop's Christmas week

### December 24:

- 10:00 am Worship in Jail
- 3:00 pm Newly initiated Church at Lalazar, in a slum area of Peshawar
- 11:00 pm Midnight Service All Saints' Church, Pesh.

### December 25:

- 10:30 am St. John's Cathedral
- 3:30 pm Mardan

### December 30:

- 11:00 am Clergy's families Get-together, at Bishop House, Peshawar.

### December 31:

- 8:00 pm St. John Vianney, Roman Catholic Church, Pesh.
- 11:30 pm Christ Church, Nowshera



Christmas Parties/Activities



Christmas activities at St. John's Cathedral, Peshawar

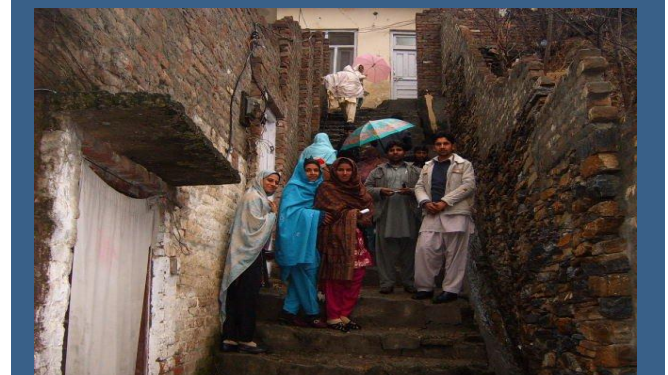
## A gradual progress

Swat, the land of mountains, streams, rivers and orchids, its beauty is immense, a heaven on earth. Its tranquility was tempered by miscreants in the past, but now a days the general situation in Swat is getting better and the things are settling down gradually. Thanks God that the Church remained functional during the Taliban regime and the operation against militants.

This Christmas, special services and other programmes were held in the St. Luke's Church, Swat and at the St. George's Church, Malakand, in which people from far flung areas also participated. Although the weather was cold and rough, the people participated in the Christmas programmes with full religious zeal and spirit.

The youth group of Swat parish, visited all the Christian families in Malakand, Batkhela, Mingora and Saidu-Sharif, and held prayer meetings and carol singing in their neighbourhoods. The Christian community appreciated the efforts of the youth, and of the clergy for visiting their homes and organizing such prayer meetings.

The Christmas is always a season of hope and happiness for the Christians of Swat, thus, the messages of 'Hope & Peace in Lord Jesus' further strengthened their faith, and was a source of comfort and reassurance for them.



(Top) St. George's Church, Malakand  
(Bottom) Youth members during their door to door visit in Swat

# Waziristan – needs prayer support



Worship in progress, at Church of the Holy Name, Bannu.

Peshawar Diocese has an active Church and Parish in Bannu, this parish also includes the areas of North Waziristan. Although, the security situation is not very promising in Bannu, but the Parish is still thriving and actively to carrying out a number of activities. In November, 2011, an Annual Convention was held, and a good number of people from Bannu and its surroundings attended the religious convention, and felt blessed. People also came from far-flung; like Miranshah and Mirali in the North Waziristan, and received the Biblical teachings. The theme of the Convention was 'Peace'. The Rt. Revd. Humphrey S. Peters was the keynote speaker, and the Convention concluded with his message on 'Joyful Life'.

The other speakers were Revd. Nazir Sheerazi and Revd. Naveed Malik.

In December, 2011, 175 young people have been confirmed and blessed by the Bishop, in the Church of the Holy Name, Bannu. Similarly, a 'Rafaqat-e-Khawateen' (Women Fellowship) Service was held in the Church. Mrs. Agnes Sheerazi was the speaker at this occasion, she delivered a message on the topic; 'Listen to God'. During Christmas season, Services were held in all the three churches in Bannu, Carol singing and other Christmas activities were also organized by the Bannu parish. The Pennell Memorial Hospital and Pennell School, Bannu organized special Christmas programmes in their respective premises, as well.

## Healing Fridays

Every Friday a 'Healing Service' is held at different areas of the Bannu parish. A good number of people attend this service, and get healed in the Name of Jesus.

### News from the 'Earthquake hit' areas

#### Couldn't believe my eyes

After the 2005 earthquake, the Peshawar Diocese adopted six villages for their relief, development and rehabilitation. And that work is still going-on, but most of the work is now carried-out by the locals.

In 'Shawal' village the Health Clinic is providing all the health facilities possible in a remote area, and it not only caters for a particular village, but for the people from surrounding areas, as well.

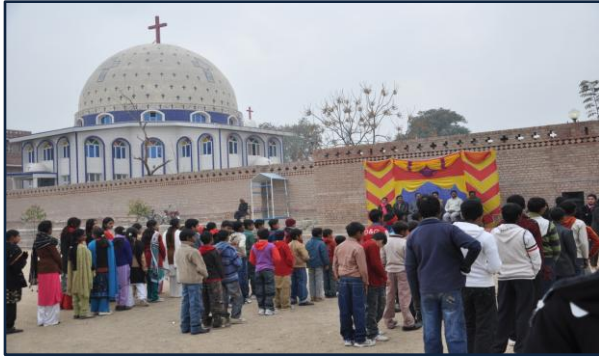
Similarly, the English Medium School i.e. 'New Light Public School' is showing good progress in Patika village. This school has quickly gained reputation as one of the top schools in the area, as it shows 100% result, every year.

The Community Based Organization (CBO) is only guided by the Diocesan professionals, whereas, all the main actors are now locals, they look after their community interests and needs. Agriculture, Livestock and small business were initiated by the Diocese, and are now at their full swing, whereas, locals are at the helm of affairs, thus, enjoying the fruits of their hardship.

***"I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw Patika & Shawal, I was there right after the horrified earthquake, and supported the Diocese being their partner to help the devastated communities. But, I could never imagine that things could develop so nicely and in such a short span, the life is back to normal, and 'hats-off' to the Diocese."*** said Mr. Laurence. from DanMission. Danmark. on his visit in 2011.



## Despite Tensions – Church keeps the smiles Teens' Games, Bannu



Teens' games, opening ceremony

The town of Bannu has passed through very tensed and difficult times in the last few years. Terrorism, suicide bombing and the military operations against miscreants, followed by prolonged curfews made the life of the people miserable.

In January, 2012, the Diocesan Youth Desk organized 'Teen Games' in Bannu, to provide healthy social activities to youth. These 'Games' were arranged with the collaboration of 'National Sports Coalition', at the Pennell High School's ground.



Games in progress

A team of 4 Sports persons from 'National Sports Coalition' and Diocesan Youth team from Peshawar, led by Mr. Insar Gohar also participated in the event. Whereas, the Bannu Church youth group was the host of the event. Despite many other games, a Cricket match was also organized, and much enjoyed by the audiences.

Earlier, the programme started with the prayer led by Revd. Murad Masih, and was followed by a religious drama presented by the youth leaders. About 60 teen agers participated and enjoyed the games. The 'Sportsmanship' and moral lessons were taught through Biblical examples to the youth. A number of Christian families from Bannu attended the occasion and enjoyed the programme.

Mr. Fredrick Das, the Principal, Pennell High School and Revd. Nazir Sheerazi, the priest incharge, Bannu Parish were the guests of honour at this occasion. The programme ended with prayer, followed by a fellowship lunch.

The Diocesan Youth Desk is using Sports as a tool for bringing young people closer to God and the Church, and through games and sports activities, different Biblical lessons are taught to the youngsters.

### Youth Seminar at Bannu

13 January 2012: The Youth Group of the Church of the Holy Name, Bannu organized a 'Youth Seminar' in their Parish. A large number of young people from different areas of Bannu participated in the seminar. A team of young people from the Diocesan Youth Council and a team of National Sport Coalition also participated in this Seminar.

The first session of the seminar was led by Rev. Nazir Sheerazi, in which he talked about the importance and power of prayer in our lives. He said that while praying, we should also spend some time in listening to God. The second session was led by the Diocesan Youth Officer, Mr. Insar Gohar, which was about the Importance of 'Youth Ministry' in the modern day times. He appreciated the efforts of the Bannu youth for organizing seminars and various youth activities for the development of their youth.

At the end, the youth spent some time in prayer. The programme ended with a refreshments, and fellowship.



Youth Seminar in progress, at Bannu Church

## Christmas Mela (Fair)



Christmas Fair at Cathedral lawns, Peshawar

## The New Year Party

A New Year party was arranged by the Youth Group of the St. John's Cathedral, Peshawar. In this Get-together a number of Christian families participated and enjoyed the Social event.

The Programme started with praise & worship. At this occasion, Revd. Naeem Patrick highlighted the importance of Christmas Tree and of the Santa Clause, and the youth sung Christmas Carols.

After 'Praise & Worship', various dramas and skits were presented by the youth to entertain the guests. The audience also participated in the show and enjoyed a lot. Later, the youth group presented its activities report through power-point presentation.

Bishop Humphrey Peters appreciated the efforts of the youth for organizing a nice New Year Party, and for the promotion of the youth ministry in Diocese.

The Bishop also appreciated the youth's efforts to bring Christmas tree all the way from Abbottabad, and for putting it on the roadside, which attracted many people, and became a great witness for Christianity in the region.



Youth getting a Christmas tree, from Abbottabad

After a long break of 6 years, the St. John's Cathedral Peshawar organized a Christmas Fair at Cathedral lawns, on 26 December 2011. The suicide bombings and other terrorist activities have squeezed the social life, and people avoid to participate in huge gatherings. Thanks God; the Law and Order situation is getting better and people are less reluctant to participate in social events.

The Christmas Fair was quite successful, as large number of people attended/participated. Many Stalls of fast food, and games for recreational purposes were arranged. The Parish committee of the Cathedral and being the organizers were responsible for security arrangements.

It was a wonderful opportunity for people to meet and greet each other after Christmas. They thanked the parish committee of the Cathedral and the Diocese for organizing this much need break and social event.



Youth presenting various Skits and Activities

## Brilliant Performance

Edwrades College School,  
Peshawar



Hasaan Omer

The Edwardes College School is one of the prestigious educational institutions of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) Province. Their students always show brilliance in academics and in co-curricular activities at local, and national level in Pakistan.

This year again, a student of Edwardes College School, Hasaan Omer, secured top position in O'levels, in Biology and Physics, in 2011 session/exams. Thus brought honour to the school, the Province, and the country at large and they have kept the tradition of maintaining the prestige of the institution alive. This achievement speaks volumes about the hard work of teachers and the students as well.

The Commdesk congratulates him, the staff, and the Principal of the school on this great achievement.

In another development, two Christian students of the same Edwardes College School, Peshawar, qualified for the 'YES' Pakistan programme, and have been selected for higher education in the USA. They appeared in the entry test and have been successful to obtain the 'YES' Scholarship. The Commdesk also congratulates them and wishes them every success for their future.

## Courtesy 'The Mirror Update 6' Gosha-e- Aman demolition



The Christian Action Committee organized a prayer service and protest rally today January 16, 2012 in front of the demolished compound of Gosha-e-Aman at Allama Iqbal Road, Garhi Shahu – Lahore. Over 2000 persons including representatives of different Church denominations (Roman Catholic Church, the Church of Pakistan, Presbyterians and Full Gospel Assemblies), human rights activists, social workers and political activists participated.



Bishop Sebastian Francis Shaw (Catholic Church), Bishop Alexander John Malik (Church of Pakistan), Dr. Majeed Able (Presbyterians), Dr. Liaqat Qaisar (Full Gospel Assemblies), MPA Shahzad Elahi (PML-Q), MPA Najmi Saleem (APMA),

MPA Pervaiz Rafiq (APMA), human right activists Ms. Neelam Hussain (WAF) and Ms. Shahtaj Qazalbash (JAC) addressed the rally. The speakers and participants strongly condemned the illegal act on part of the Punjab government.



They made the following demands:  
Return the possession of Gosha-e-Aman to its legal holders immediately  
Initiate a judicial inquiry of the incident and brought the culprits to justice for illegal demolition of building, destroying the Church, desecration of the Holy Bible and Holy Cross  
Pay all the loss to the legal property holders



The rally ended after peaceful protest for about two hours.

## Bishops reject government land offer

Bishop Sebastian Shah of Lahore and Church of Pakistan Bishop Alexander John Malik dismissed the government's version of events and its offer of land.

"They said nobody owned the land and mysterious activities were happening here; it's a pack of lies. We were kept in dark", said Bishop Malik during a protest yesterday in front of the demolished building.

More than 2,000 people including bishops, priests and pastors shouted anti-government slogans and blocked traffic close to the demolition site for two hours. Several Catholic priests demanded a judicial inquiry.

"We shall continue protesting until the government returns all the land it took and pays for the losses. We do not fear anyone and will fight for our rights", said Father Morris Jalal.