

Garden Tomb Newsletter: March 2016



Spring has arrived in Jerusalem, and the garden is in full bloom!

Visitor numbers are increasing, with over 16,000 people in February, and around 25,000 expected in March.

We thank the Lord for testimonies of changed lives, and the following is a testimony from a recent visitor – *“I was so very impressed with the grounds and the people there.... What a peaceful place! I was so emotional inside the tomb, and I was left alone with Him for the amount of time I needed. Thank you for the understanding and respect. God continue to bless you for keeping this place holy and sacred”.*

Pray that every day people will have life-changing encounters with the risen Christ.

March volunteers:

Stan + Molly Doland were with us until 10th March, and **Ron + Cindy Youde** until 15th March. **Paul + Dawn Doble, Boyd + Deb Huff, Anthony Keast** and **Bertil + Gun Wik** are here all of March; while **Joe Armstrong** and **Bob + Jenny Lillyman** arrive in time for Easter.

Changes to the gardens and meeting areas

- **A pergola** has been constructed at the entrance to the garden, and once established with vines and other shrubs, will provide colour and shade as people enter.
- **The Haven** apartment renovation work has been completed and includes a new kitchen, bathroom and windows.
- **Stone benches** have now replaced the plastic benches in meeting areas at the back of the garden. Seating capacity has been increased in these areas and will allow us to accommodate worship services as large as 350 to 400 people.
- **The Olive Grove** redevelopment [formerly Centre Platform] is nearing completion. Plastic benches have been replaced with stone benches, and a path added to allow easy wheelchair access.



The improved meeting areas at the rear of the garden have enabling us to establish the centre of the garden as a quiet Olive Grove where visitors can sit and view the empty tomb, reflecting on the Love of God revealed in Christ Jesus



Prayer points:

Safety and Security: The area around the garden is still tense, with occasional outbreaks of violence. Because we are close to Damascus Gate, a focal point for tension, we now have an almost permanent group of armed police at the entrance to our lane. Whilst this does provide a sense of security it is also intimidating for visitors as they walk past heavily armed security forces. Please continue to pray for protection for staff and visitors as they travel to and from the Garden Tomb.

Visitors from the East: we continue to see increasing numbers of visitors from China and Asia. Pray that the Lord will draw more volunteers from these countries to serve at the garden, so that people will be able to hear the good news of the risen King in their own language.

Easter Weekend: Only 2 weeks to go until the Good Friday and Easter Sunday services, always a high point in the Garden Tomb calendar. Pray for the speaker, Michael Ramsden; and for local people that they will be drawn to attend the celebration of Jesus' resurrection.

Partnership in Prayer

Romans 1:4: *‘[He] was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead; even Jesus Christ our Lord’.*

Join with us in praying that the death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah will be ‘Declared with Power’ this Easter time, and throughout the year.

Blessings from Jerusalem!
Stephen and Sue Bridge

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