

# KIRK HOUSE PUBLISHERS ANNOUNCES

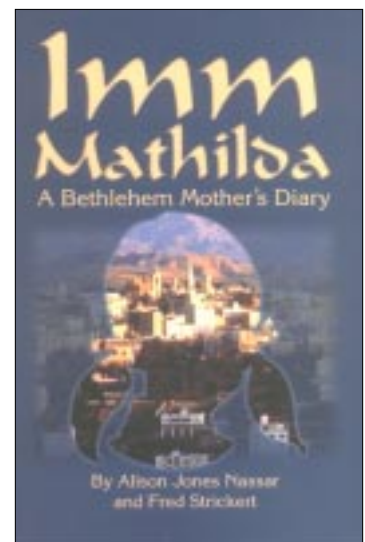
## Imm Mathilda A Bethlehem Mother's Diary

by Alison Jones Nassar  
Fred Strickert, editor

*"Imm Mathilda" is Arabic for "mother of Mathilda."*

In August 2001, the second Palestinian Intifada (Uprising) was almost a year old. The Palestinians of Bethlehem were living under the oppression of a military occupation. The Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory had been constant since 1967, but with the coming of the Intifada in September 2000 the lives of everyone in the West Bank and Gaza became more controlled. Daily existence was marked by a maze of closures, curfews, and checkpoints. Israeli tanks and Apache helicopter gunships were now part of the landscape.

In this setting Alison Jones Nassar decided to prepare regular updates on the living situation of her family. She sent them by e-mail to relatives and friends in the United States and around the world. This book is a collection of those writings.



This is the voice of a wife and mother, an American expatriate living with her Palestinian husband and their young children in occupied Bethlehem during the incursions of the Israeli army following the uprising known as the Al Aqsa Intifada. Alison describes the daily existence of Palestinian civilians—a life of curfews, checkpoints, and closures which produce relentless humiliation and fear. Her e-mail journal reveals her attempt to find reason for hope that one day normalcy will come to the land called Holy.

### Imm Mathilda *A Bethlehem Mother's Diary*

Perfectbound • Pages: 244 • Size: 6 x 9

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\$15.00

Available: Baker & Taylor  
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**KIRK HOUSE**  
PUBLISHERS

PO Box 390759 • Minneapolis, MN 55439

952-835-1828 • Fax 952-825-2613

stephanie@kirkhouse.com

www.kirkhouse.com

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## What the Reviewers Say

*Imm Mathilda* gives the reader a front-row seat to observe the tragedies occurring in Palestine today. It offers both an opportunity to hear the personal accounts that humanize the situation and the factual reports of this little-understood conflict. And it is a page-turner as well! A “must read.”

**Jerri Bird**  
President, Partners for Peace

Alison Jones Nassar is a voice in the wilderness that must be heard, the voice of a wife and mother, an American expatriate living with her Palestinian husband and their young children in occupied Bethlehem during the brutal incursions of the Israeli army following the uprising known as the Al Aqsa Intifada. Jones Nassar is a Christian writing with a passionate zeal for justice and truth. Hers is a voice with an overwhelming responsibility—to defend a people unjustly portrayed as “terrorists.”

**Sister Elaine Kelley**  
Administrative Officer, Friends of Sabeel—North America

For those who have the courage to hear “the other side of the story,” Allison Jones Nassar describes the daily existence of innocent Palestinian civilians. It is a life of curfews, checkpoints, and closures which produces relentless humiliation and fear. There will be a just peace in the Middle East only when voices such as Nassar’s are heard, and the daily violence can cease.

**Bishop Margaret Payne**  
New England Synod of the ELCA

Alison Jones Nassar has written a fascinating account of life under Israeli attack and occupation. It is a book that should be read by every member of Congress.

**Jim Abourezk**  
Former U.S. Senator from South Dakota

Alison writes not as a diplomat or humanitarian worker, not as a journalist or a church leader. Alison writes as an ordinary person, a wife and mother, who is just trying to manage from day to day under seemingly hopeless circumstances. And trying to find meaning in the distress of every day.

Her writing is powerful. It is filled with passion and poetry. It has faith-prompted insights, along with doubts that God will keep promises. It reflects Alison’s deep anger, along with genuine love for her neighbors, both Israelis and Palestinians. Alison tries to find reason for hoping amid despair and for maintaining her faith that one day normalcy will come also to the land called Holy.

**Charles P. Lutz**, retired social ministry executive, Palestinian advocate

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## Alison Jones Nassar

Alison Jones grew up as a typical American girl in the United States. She did all the things common for children in the 1960s and 1970s. A good student, she participated in drama and band. She attended Virginia Commonwealth University, majoring in math and reading education.

What marked her character was a sense of adventure and a heart of compassion. As a young woman she learned to fly an airplane. She joined the Peace Corps and volunteered to work among the poor of Senegal.

Alison volunteered to work on an archaeological dig in Israel. For five years she worked with the archaeology department at Hebrew Union College. Later, her artistic talents led to a position illustrating archaeological material at the Albright Archaeological Institute in Jerusalem. She also studied Hebrew on an Israeli kibbutz and Arabic at the Jerusalem YMCA.

At the age of thirty she married a Palestinian, George Bishara Daher Nassar, from an old Bethlehem Christian family. They have three daughters. This book is titled after Mathilda, the eldest. ("Imm Mathilda" is Arabic for "mother of Mathilda.")

## Fred Strickert

Fred Strickert, a professor of Religion at Wartburg College, has been leading study groups to the Middle East for fifteen years. While living in Bethlehem in 1995-96, he co-authored *Bethlehem 2000: Then and Now* (Palmyra: Heidelberg, 1998) with Palestinian Lutheran Pastor Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb. He edited the newly released book by Jerusalem Lutheran Bishop Munib Younan, *Witnessing for Peace: In Jerusalem and in the World* (Fortress: Minneapolis, 2003). He has published articles on the Middle East in *The Christian Century*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *The Des Moines Register*, and *Scripps Howard Syndicate* newspapers and writes a monthly column on Christianity and the Middle East in *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*.

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