



# Services in Norfolk and Palestine for 'Father John'

**Derek James** looks at the life and work of Rev John Aves, and why so many will celebrate his legacy on the 20th anniversary of his death

Services of remembrance will be held in Norwich, Attleborough, Besthorpe and Palestine to mark the 20th anniversary of the death of "Father John."

Since the Rev John Aves died in Bethlehem while working at the Dheisheh Refugee Camp more than £500,000 has been raised in his memory to give 80 young women and men an education at Al-Quds university and hope for a future.

An extraordinary achievement which has been made possible by the people of Norfolk and Suffolk supporting the John Aves Education Project (JAEP) established by his wife Anne and sons Ben and Edmund following his death in January 2004 at the age of 52.

Today the project is run by Anne, Liz Magem and Samia Tabari and the work they do is more important than ever as the war between Israel and Hamas continues to cause heart-breaking death and destruction.

Currently there are no tourists or pilgrims visiting the Holy Land which impacts on the employment of Palestinians in Bethlehem and East Jerusalem.

All work in Israel by Palestinians has been stopped, many people are not being paid, debts are mounting and while students can graduate they cannot receive certificates or seek work until debts are paid.

Economic life has been paralysed and this has led to widespread poverty so the memory of Father John and the continuing good work of JAEP is more important than ever.

"Amid these difficult circumstances, we will not forget our friend John, who taught us the art of giving and loving people regardless of their colour, religion, or nationally," say the Ibdaa community at Dheisheh Palestinian Refugee Camp.

"John taught us that absence is not the end, and that giving transcends physical presence. Through his giving and your commitment to our youth John

remains present among us.

"Therefore, on January 25, we will hold a special day dedicated to John under the title 'John: Continuous Giving Despite Departure.'

"This event will include a lecture with creative youth where we will speak about John's life, his philanthropy, and your role in educating the youth of Palestine, accompanied by a photo presentation," say the partners.

The impact John had in Palestine was so strong that when Anne, Ben and Edmund visited the country following his death they were welcomed by the 1st President of the Palestinian National Authority, Yasser Arafat. He awarded Anne a posthumous medal for John's services to peace.

There will be four church services in Norfolk where Canon Dr John Aves, the son of a Suffolk farmer, served which we are all welcome to attend.

Sunday January 28 at 5pm. Evensong at St Peter Mancroft, Norwich, Anne Aves will speak during the service which will be followed by middle eastern light refreshments from the JAEP team. This is the nearest Sunday to the anniversary of John's death on January 25 2004.

Sunday February 4 at 10.30am, Mass at St Giles Church, Norwich. Anne will speak during the service. John's body was brought into St Giles on February 5, 2004. He was Priest in Charge from September 1999 until his death.

Tuesday February 6, at 5.30pm, Evensong at Norwich Cathedral. The Dean, the Very Revd Dr Andrew Braddock will preach and The Precentor, Canon Aidan Platten will lead the intercessions. Both knew John well. His funeral was held here on February 6, 2004. The service will be followed by refreshments.

Sunday March 17, at 10am, St Mary's Church, Attleborough, followed by one at All Saints, Besthorpe, at 11.30am. Anne will speak during the service. A memorial service was held on

Services of remembrance will be held to remember the Rev John Aves, who died in Bethlehem 20 years ago  
Images: NEWSQUEST LIBRARY



The late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat with John's sons Ben and Ed and wife Anne after his death 20 years ago. He awarded Anne with a posthumous medal for John's services to peace  
Image: FAMILY COLLECTION



The Bishop of Norwich, Maurice Wood, and John Aves, when he was installed Rector of Attleborough in April 1982



Members of the JAEP team with the President at Al Quds University, Professor Imad Abu Kishk, last year  
Image: FAMILY COLLECTION



Midwifery student Diana was named after Princess Diana. She says education is the only way forward  
Image: JAEP



Economics and finance student Tariq has ambitions to run a business in the Occupied Palestinian Territories  
Image: JAEP

March 27 2004. John was Rector from 1982 to 1999.

In addition to the services, JAEP has a number of talks

booked and members would like to thank everyone for their generous support in memory of Father John.