*“I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all the countries where I have driven them, and will bring them back to their folds, and they will be****fruitful****and multiply...It is a declaration of Adonai.” Jeremiah 23:3-4 TLV*

**EFRAT (אֶפְרָת) - Land of Fruitfulness**

Nestled in the Judean mountains at 150 feet (960 meters) above sea level stands the flourishingtown of **Efrat**, previously called Efrata. This community, established in 1983, is located in a highly disputed area of Judea—7.5 miles (12 km) south of Jerusalem between Bethlehem and Hebron. Efrat is only 4 miles (6.5 km) inside the security wall which protects the contested land.

Efrat has blossomed to a population of 11,500. Despite great opposition, the Israeli government made plans to expand it by adding 225 acres for 7,000 additional housing units in the town; this could triple its size!*[Jewish News Syndicate]* Although it is located in the Gush Etzion block (a cluster of Jewish communities), Efrat is a separate municipality with its own local government and services. The residents are mainly religious Zionist, with some [ultra-orthodox](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haredi) and non-observant Jews.  *Because* it is primarily an English-speaking town and a popular destination for immigrants from the United States, Efrat has been called *“Little America”*[.](https://www.breslev.co.il/articles/israel_and_society/israel_and_aliyah/efrat__little_america.aspx?id=23758&language=english)*[Breslev]*In addition to native-born Israelis, many of its courageous residents have also flowed in from the United Kingdom, Australia, France, South Africa, Argentina, The Netherlands, Canada, and Russia.

Efrat is named after the biblical place Ephrath (also Ephrata) meaning ***"fruitful***.***"*** It contains seven neighborhoods named for the seven species found in Israel as described in Deuteronomy 8:8: Rimon *(pomegranate)*, Te'ena *(fig)*, Gefen *(grapevine)*, Dekel*(date palm)*, Zayit *(olive),* Tamar*(date)*, and Dagan*(grain- both wheat and barley)*.

On a recent home visit to Efrat, we went to help celebrate a little boy’s first birthday with his brave, single-parent mother, Jenna, who raises sheep and donkeys on the outskirts of town. This celebration was also a recognition of a milestone in their arduous, but fruitful journey.

This young woman relayed an incident she had experienced. After returning home from buying supplies, she saw that her three donkeys had wandered away. Searching for them, Jenna contacted people in the area. Later an Arab man informed her that her donkeys had been found, but she would need to pay an exorbitant fee to have them returned. When the donkeys were brought home, they had been badly beaten. Consequently, in addition to the cost of their return, she had to buy medicine for their wounds and help them recover from the trauma.

Despite the difficulties Jenna has experienced since immigrating alone, this undaunted young mother perseveres in Efrat where she feels called to live. She is representative of the many valiant Jewish ‘pioneers’ who have returned to the land of their forefathers. As they look to God, may their lives be fruitful just as He has declared.

**Join us in praying for Efrat**

**Praise God**that His promises are eternal and irrevocable. We can trust Him to do whatever He said!***“Forever, Adonai, Your word stands firm in the heavens”****(Psalms 119:89 TLV).* God loves Israel!  He said to Zion, ***“…I will not forget you. Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of My hands. Your walls are continually before Me.”****(Isaiah 49:15-16)*

**Request that the Lord** would supply an abundance of riches, from both Christians and affluent Jewish people, so that those Jews who make aliyah from less wealthy nations, will not be hindered from making the journey to come home. ***“All who choose to remain behind, wherever they may be living, should provide the people who are leaving with silver, gold, supplies, livestock, and freewill offerings to be used in Elohim’s temple in Jerusalem.”****(Ezra 1:4 NOG)*

**Appeal to God** to provideemployment, protection, endurance, resilience, wisdom, and success for the immigrants in Efrat and other parts of Israel**.**Assimilating into Israeli culture and maintaining stability is not always an easy process―especially forthose like Jenna who do not have family nearby. **“*‘Also I shall bring back the exiles of My people Israel...They will also plant vineyards and drink their wine, and make gardens and eat their fruit. I will also plant them on their land, and they shall never again be uprooted from their land which I have given them,’ says the Lord your God.”****(Amos 9:14-15)*

**Yield to the Holy Spirit**as you pray for God to turn the hearts of Jewish people from all over the world toward “home” ―Israel.   ***“…my Lord will again redeem—a second time with His hand—the remnant of His people who remain... He will lift up a banner for the nations, and assemble the dispersed of Israel and gather the scattered of Judah from the four corners of the earth.”****(Isaiah**11:11-12)*

Our Dear Intercessors,

As we begin this new calendar year of 2021, we look to God more diligently than ever to guide our steps in these difficult times. While situations around us grow more challenging, the time spent in God’s presence grows more precious, powerful, and sweet! Now is time to draw closer to Him and to allow the Holy Spirit to refine our prayers, so that our words hit the bullseye of His will.

We are deeply grateful for your continued prayer support in such times. We value the comradery of our brothers and sisters in Yeshua and are strengthened by the time spent in intercession alongside you. If you are not a part of our *Israel Watch* prayer network, we invite to join us by contacting us at prayer@cfijerusalem.org. May God’s blessings rest on you all.

In His Service,

Linda D. McMurray

Wall of Prayer, Supervisor