



A SIMULTANEOUS SERVICE FROM  
WASHINGTON NATIONAL CATHEDRAL  
AND  
THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN  
CHRISTMAS CHURCH  
IN BETHLEHEM, PALESTINE

DECEMBER 18, 2010  
TEN AM IN WASHINGTON, DC  
FIVE PM IN BETHLEHEM, PALESTINE

## WASHINGTON NATIONAL CATHEDRAL

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### **ORGAN VOLUNTARY**

*Allein Gott in der hoh sei ehr, BWV 663* Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

### **PRELUDE HYMN**

*Sung by Dar al-Kalima School Choir, Bethlehem*

### **WELCOME**

*The Reverend Dr. Mitri Raheb  
The Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church  
Bethlehem*

### **OPENING HYMN 87, STANZAS 1-3**

*Hark! the herald angels sing*

*Christmas Church*

### **OPENING GREETING AND ACCLAMATION**

*The Most Reverend Katharine Jefferts Schori  
Presiding Bishop and Primate of The Episcopal Church  
Washington*

*The people make the responses in bold.*

The glory of the Lord shall be revealed.  
**All flesh shall see it together.**

Beloved, in this Holy Season we gather in Bethlehem and in Washington to celebrate the great gift with which God blesses all creation in the birth of Jesus Christ our Lord. Let us hear and receive the Good News of Christ, and offer to God our thanksgiving in joyful songs of praise.

The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you.**

O God of all the nations of the earth, we pray for the needs of the whole world, for all who hear the call of God, and all who seek the truth: for peace on the earth and goodwill among nations; for unity within the Church; and for the welfare and prosperity of the people of the Holy Land. **Amen.**

Bring strength to all who live and work in the midst of violence; give comfort to those who are in distress; give hope to the grieving, and above all, make our lives show forth your love in the world. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

### **HYMN 96, STANZAS 1 AND 3**

*Angels we have heard on high*

*Washington National Cathedral*

*Read in English by  
The Very Reverend Samuel T. Lloyd III  
Dean of Washington National Cathedral  
Washington*

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

*The people stand.*

**COLLECT**

*Read in English by Karen Chane, Washington*

Transforming God, you break the yoke of oppression and turn even instruments of war into fuel for the fire of everlasting peace. Reveal to us the child born among us, that your reign may be known in all the world. In the name of Jesus, Prince of Peace, we pray. **Amen.**

*The people are seated.*

**ARAB ORTHODOX HYMN**

*Washington National Cathedral*

*Chanted in Arabic by  
Cynthia Samaha Melki  
Saints Peter and Paul Antiochian Church, Potomac, Maryland  
Washington*

**SECOND LESSON**

Isaiah 40:1-2, 10-11

*Read in Arabic by Dr. Alfred Khoury, Washington*

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

*The people stand.*

**COLLECT**

*Read in English by  
Gretchen Theobald  
Palestine/Israel Advocacy Group, Washington*

Consoling God, who speaks tenderly to all your people; when we are exiled your voice strengthens us, your love sustains us. When we are captive you come as the good shepherd and liberate us. In all our exile and in all our captivity, gather us and lead us. In the name of Jesus, Mighty God, we pray. **Amen.**

**HYMN 79, STANZAS 1-2**

*Christmas Church*

*O little town of Bethlehem*

*The people are seated.*

*Read in Arabic by  
The Reverend Canon Hosam Naoum  
St. George's Cathedral, Jerusalem  
Bethlehem*

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called the Son of God."

*The people stand.*

### COLLECT

*Read in English by  
Ms. Rana Houry  
Vice-President for Development and Outreach, Diyar Consortium  
Bethlehem*

Creating God, in Mary's yes to your call, the Son of the Most High, Jesus, was conceived. Empower us to embrace the challenges of this life knowing that you will lead us to the possibility of your new creation, more glorious than we could ever ask or imagine. In the name of Jesus, God with us, we pray. **Amen.**

*The people are seated.*

### FOURTH LESSON

*Read in Arabic by  
The Reverend Imad Haddad  
The Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church  
Bethlehem*

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

*The people stand.*

### COLLECT

*Read in Arabic by Ms. Hala Faddoul  
Church Elder, Christmas Church, Bethlehem*

Redeeming God, You came to us as an infant, homeless, helpless and vulnerable yet safe in the loving embrace of Mary. Wrap our world in your arms that we may grow strong to care for the needs of the oppressed, the poor, the destitute, and all who suffer in this world. In the name of Jesus, Desire of Nations, we pray. **Amen.**

## CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

*The Reverend Richard Graham  
Bishop of the Metropolitan Washington, DC, Synod  
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Washington*

## HYMN 98, STANZAS 1 AND 4

*Unto us a boy is born!*

*Washington National Cathedral*

*The people are seated.*

## FIFTH LESSON

John 1:1-14

*Read in English by  
The Reverend Jan Naylor Cope  
Vicar, Washington National Cathedral  
Washington*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of human will, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

*The people stand.*

## COLLECT

*Read in English by  
Grace Said  
Palestine/Israel Advocacy Group, Washington*

Reconciling God, you loved the world so much that you sent your only Son to be born as one of us. Illuminate our humanity that we may find it shining forth in ourselves and others. In the name of Jesus, Dayspring from on high, we pray. **Amen.**

## HYMN

*Sung by Ajyal Elderly Choir, Bethlehem*

*The people are seated.*

## CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

*The Right Reverend Suheil Dawani  
Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem  
Bethlehem*

*The people stand.*

## PRAYERS

*The Reverend Canon John L. Peterson and the Reverend Dr. Samuel Pagan, Bethlehem  
The people pray the responses in **bold.***

Incarnate God, the Word became flesh and dwells among us. With confidence in the power of that miracle, we offer our prayers on behalf of the church and the world praying, Come now, O God of love. **Reconcile your people and make us one body.**

That the child born to all humanity may awaken us to heal this broken and hurting world, and the peace proclaimed by angels in the shepherds' field may be realized in every place of war and on every violent street, we pray to you, O God. Come now, O God of love.

**Reconcile your people and make us one body.**

That as you entered this world in the poverty of a cave, you would instill in us the courage to dismantle the barriers that separate rich from poor, so that we may build together the just world you intended, we pray to you, O God. Come now, O God of love.

**Reconcile your people and make us one body.**

*The Reverend Susan P. Wilder and the Reverend Gwendolyn W. Tobias  
Washington*

That the consolation of the incarnate Lord may bring wholeness and healing to all who are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity and our lives may be offerings of hope to our neighbors, we pray to you, O God. Come now, O God of love.

**Reconcile your people and make us one body.**

That the blessed hope we celebrate this day may be the fulfillment of all who have gone before us, knitting your people into shared life for all eternity, we pray to you, O God. Come now, O God of love.

**Reconcile your people and make us one body.**

Light of life, you came in flesh, born into human pain and joy. Grant us faith, O Christ, to see your presence among us. Fill us with your light, that as we walk in the way of peace, we may join our voices with heaven and earth in singing songs of gladness. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. **Amen.**

**HYMN 100, STANZAS 1-2, 4**

*Washington National Cathedral*

*Joy to the world*

**PRAYER**

*The Right Reverend John Bryson Chane  
Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington  
Washington*

Almighty God, Creator of our diverse human family: you fashion us in your image and command us to love one another. Stretch out your arm that the wall shall come down in Bethlehem, the birthplace of your Son, the Prince of Peace. May the crumbling wall herald the end of all barriers which divide us and may we be bound together in that love that gives rise to harmony among all people. All this we ask with expectant hearts through Christ Jesus, our Lord. **Amen.**

**BLESSING IN ENGLISH**

*The Right Reverend John Bryson Chane  
Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington  
Washington*

**BLESSING IN ARABIC**

*The Right Reverend Munib Younan  
Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land  
Bethlehem*

**HYMN 83, STANZAS 1-3**

*Christmas Church*

*O come, all ye faithful*

## DISMISSAL

*The Reverend Dr. Mitri Raheb  
Bethlehem*

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

## ORGAN VOLUNTARY

*In dulci jubilo, BWV 729*

J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

*An offering will be collected as worshipers exit. All donations will go to support Bright Stars of Bethlehem which serves the International Center of Bethlehem in its ministries of health, education, the arts, and social services. Donations may be made by cash or checks written to "Bright Stars of Bethlehem."*

*With deep gratitude to the Palestine/Israel advocacy group of the congregation of Washington National Cathedral for their generosity in underwriting this service.*

## ABOUT THE SERVICE

In 2006 a group gathered in concern for the deteriorating situation in Palestine and Israel. It was a few months before Christmas, and thoughts turned to Bethlehem and the present-day wall around the city. What if the Christmas events took place today? Would Mary and Joseph be able to cross into Bethlehem on their journey from Nazareth? The 30-foot wall that separates Bethlehem from Jerusalem would block the way. Perhaps Mary would give birth while waiting to cross through a checkpoint, as happens for some Palestinian women today on their way to the hospital. Recognizing that most Americans do not know about the realities of Palestinian life, the Ad Hoc Committee for Bethlehem was formed to raise awareness.

This committee then sponsored events to lift up the need for justice and peace in Bethlehem and throughout the land, and to remind the faithful of the calling to be peacemakers. This service is an outcome of their work.

Today, four years later, a concrete wall remains, separating Bethlehem from neighboring Jerusalem, five miles away. Residents find themselves cut off from relatives, unable to worship at religious sites in Jerusalem, and limited in their opportunities for higher education and employment.

The concrete wall not only separates the West Bank from Israel: it cuts through Palestinian land, separating farmers from fields and effectively annexing their land. Israeli roads and settlements in the region further segment Palestinian communities.

Many Palestinians who have the means have left the Holy Land in search of a better life elsewhere. The Christian population of Bethlehem has declined from a majority several decades ago to about fifteen percent today. The presence of Christians throughout the Holy Land has dwindled to less than two percent.

The current situation in Bethlehem is of concern to Christians around the world who seek to follow the Prince of Peace in building bridges that connect rather than walls that divide. Today we turn our hearts to the one God who loves all equally, and pray that a new day will dawn for us, for Palestinians, and for Israelis.



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