

BETHLEHEM PRAYER SERVICE

AT 10:00 IN THE MORNING
IN BETHLEHEM CHAPEL
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2008

**SIMULCAST BETWEEN
THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF SAINT PETER & SAINT PAUL
IN THE CITY & EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF WASHINGTON
AND
THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHRISTMAS CHURCH
BETHLEHEM, PALESTINE**

ORGAN VOLUNTARY Christopher Jacobson, Organist.
Allein Gott in der hoh sei ehr, BWV 663 Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

PRELUDE HYMN Sung by Dar Al-Kalima School Choir. *In Bethlehem**

WELCOME
Bishop Munib Younan *In Bethlehem*

OPENING HYMN - 87 *In Bethlehem*
Hark! the herald angels sing Mendelssohn

OPENING ACCLAMATION *In Washington*

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

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

But first let us pray for the needs of the whole world; for peace on the earth and goodwill among nations; for unity within the Church; for the welfare and prosperity of the people of the Holy Land and the people of the United States; and for all who hear the call of God and all who seek the truth.

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 *Sung by all.* *In Washington*
Angels we have heard on high *Gloria*

The people are seated.

FIRST LESSON *Read in English by Dean Lloyd.* Isaiah 40:1-2, 10-11

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 Philip C. Wilcox.* *In Washington*

Delivering God: You rescue us from all our captivities. Your voice strengthens us and your peace sustains us. In all of our exiles, may we know that you travel beside us as a guardian and protector. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

**Broadcast live from Bethlehem.*

CHANT*Ruba Estephan, Cantor**In Washington**Orthodox Christmas Hymn**The people are seated.***SECOND LESSON** *Read in Arabic by the Rev. Said Ailabouni; read in English by Grace Said.* **Micah 5:2-5a**

You, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth;... And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace.

*The people stand.***COLLECT***Read in English by Samia Noursi.**In Washington*

God of small things: You surprise us. Coming among us in a small town, born in a lowly manger to a virgin mother, Christ taught us that glory is found in the most unlikely places. May we look to hidden corners and humble dwellings for glimpses of your likeness. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

HYMN 79*O little town of Bethlehem**In Bethlehem**St. Louis**The people are seated.***THIRD LESSON***Read in Arabic by Mrs. Marwa Nasser-Metzler.***Luke 1:26-35**

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 Natasha Hadweh.**In Bethlehem*

O God of unexpected opportunities: You give us the fresh air of new beginnings, but we often shy away from them in fear. Give us strength to embrace the changes of this world, knowing that you will lead us to a place more glorious than we could imagine. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

The people are seated.

FOURTH LESSON*Read in Arabic by the Rev. Imad Haddad.*

Luke 2:1-7

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 cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

*The people stand.***COLLECT***Read in English by Faith Rowold.**In Bethlehem*

Humble God: You came to us as a little baby, born in a cave; helpless and vulnerable, but with wide-eyed curiosity, you cherished all you greeted. May we be as caring and vulnerable as the smallest of babies, that we may know others as you know us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

HYMN 98*Unto us a boy is born!**In Washington**Puer nobis nascitur**The people are seated.***FIFTH LESSON***Read in English by Canon Peterson.*

John 1:1-14

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 Karen Chane.**In Washington*

Glorious God: From the tabernacle of heaven you came to earth to illuminate our humanity. As we search for the light you kindle may we find it shining forth in ourselves and others. For as long as your light shines in our world, we will find you among us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

HYMN*Sung by Dar Al-Kalima School Choir.**In Bethlehem**The people are seated.***CHRISTMAS MESSAGE***Bishop Suheil Dawani**In Bethlehem**The people stand.***PRAYERS***Read by the Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb.**In Bethlehem*

Almighty God, you have given your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and to be born of a pure virgin: Grant that we, who have been born again and made your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with you and the same Spirit be honor and glory, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Intercessor Incarnate God, your angel host announces that peace is born among us, embodied in frail flesh. With confidence in the power of that miracle, we bring you our prayers for the church and the world. That the child born to us may awaken us to heal this broken and hurting world, and that the peace proclaimed by angels in the shepherds' field will be realized in every place of war and on every violent street, we pray to you, O God.

People **Come now, O God of love. Reconcile your people and make us one body.**

Intercessor That the joy and consolation of the Wonderful Counselor will bring wholeness and healing to all who are afflicted with illness and disease, and that in this time of gift-giving, our lives may be offerings of hope to those who are grieving, we pray to you, O God.

People **Come now, O God of love. Reconcile your people and make us one body.**

Intercessor *Read by the Rev. Susan P. Wilder.* *In Washington*

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.

People **Come now, O God of love. Reconcile your people and make us one body.**

Intercessor 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.

People **Come now, O God of love. Reconcile your people and make us one body.**

Intercessor Light of life, you came in flesh, born into human pain and joy, and gave us power to be your children. 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, we pray to you, O God.

People **Come now, O God of love. Reconcile your people and make us one body.**

HYMN 100*Joy to the World**In Washington
Antioch***PRAYER***Bishop Richard Graham**In Washington*

We pray for all of those who are poor and helpless, cold and hungry, oppressed and sick, and those who mourn. We hold up to God's graceful direction and blessing the work we share in the ministry of the Holy Land, that walls will no longer divide us, so that our life together may be a reflection of God's love. We pray that our work may show forth God's gracious purposes and that our praises may bring honor to the Name of the Lord. **Amen.**

BLESSING IN ENGLISH*Bishop Richard Graham**In Washington***BLESSING IN ARABIC***Bishop Munib Younan**In Bethlehem***HYMN 83***O come, all ye faithful**In Bethlehem
Adeste fideles***ORGAN VOLUNTARY***Valet will ich dir geben, BWV 736**Christopher Jacobson, Organist.**J. S. Bach*

An offering will be collected as worshipers exit the sanctuary. 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."



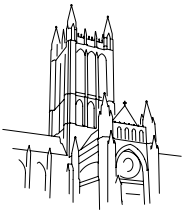
The following organizations sponsored today's service:

The Ad Hoc Committee for Bethlehem, the Washington Interfaith Alliance for Middle East Peace, Sharing Jerusalem, Washington National Cathedral, and the Holy Land Christian Ecumenical Foundation.

The organizers would like to thank the following persons for their donations:

Odeh Aburdene, Aida Armaly, Ziad and Leila Deeb, Alfred and Dina Khouri, Michael and Mona Maalouf, Clovis Maksoud, Wilhem and Rafia Simaan, Ludwig and Myr Tamari, Hania Osman.

Their generosity made this event possible.



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