

BETHLEHEM PRAYER SERVICE



*Simulcast from*

WASHINGTON NATIONAL CATHEDRAL  
IN WASHINGTON, DC



THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHRISTMAS CHURCH  
IN BETHLEHEM, PALESTINE

DECEMBER 20, 2014

TEN AM IN WASHINGTON, DC • FIVE PM IN BETHLEHEM, PALESTINE

# Bethlehem Prayer Service

SIMULCAST FROM WASHINGTON, DC & BETHLEHEM, PALESTINE

DECEMBER 20, 2014



## ORGAN VOLUNTARY

*In dulci jubilo, Op. 28, No. 41*

Marcel Dupré (1886 – 1971)

## CHORAL PRELUDE

*The holly and the ivy*  
*Rocking*  
*In dulci jubilo*

*Sung by Cathedral Voices, Washington*

English traditional; arr. H. Walford Davies (1869-1941)  
Czech carol; arr. David Willcocks (b. 1919)  
old German tune; arr. Robert Lucas Pearsall (1795-1856)

## PRELUDE HYMN

*The Little Drummer Boy*

*Performed by Christmas Lutheran Bell Choir, Bethlehem*

## WELCOME

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

*The people stand to sing.*

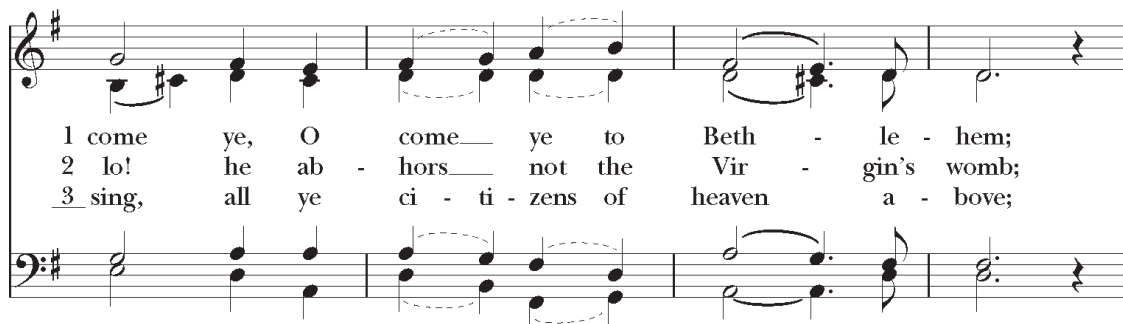
## OPENING HYMN

*O come, all ye faithful*

*Christmas Church*



1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant, O  
2 God from God, Light from Light e - ter - nal,  
3 Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,



1 come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem;  
2 lo! he ab - hors not the Vir - gin's womb;  
3 sing, all ye ci - ti - zens of heaven a - bove;

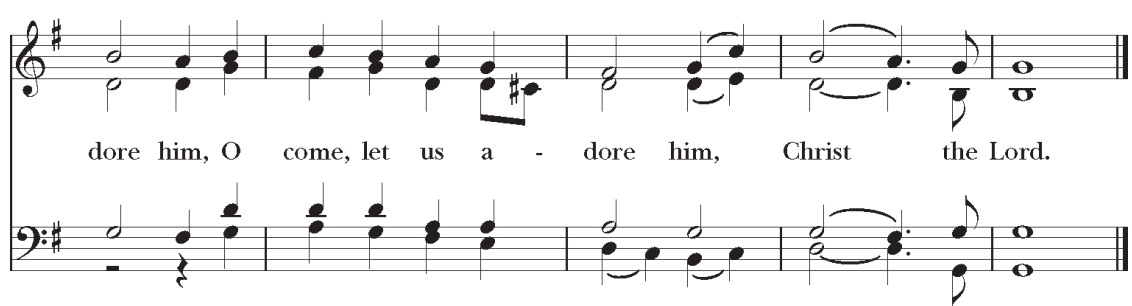


1 come, and be - hold him, born the King of an - gels;  
 2 on - ly - be - got - ten Son of the Fa - ther;  
 3 glo - ry to God, glo - ry in the high - est;

*Refrain*



O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a -



dore him, O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord.

**OPENING GREETING AND ACCLAMATION**

*Dr. Victor Makari  
Bethlehem*

*Dr. Makari* By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,

*People* **To guide our feet into the way of peace.**

*Dr. Makari* 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.

*Dr. Makari* The Lord be with you.

*People* **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.**

Angels we have heard on high

An - gels we have heard on high, sing - ing sweet - ly through the night,  
Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;

and the moun-tains in re - ply ech - o - ing their brave de - light.  
come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ, the Lord, the new - born King.

*Refrain*

Glo - - - - - ri - a

in ex - cel - sis De - o. Glo - - - - -

- - - - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

*The people are seated.*

FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 9:2–6

*Read in English by  
The Very Reverend Gary Hall  
Dean, 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  
The Reverend Sari Ateek  
St. John's Norwood  
Washington*

Almighty God, you show your majesty in meekness, in the birth of a child who is Emmanuel, God with us. Help us to humbly follow your Son in the path he sets before us, trusting in your love and resting in your grace. May we proclaim in our words and deeds the reign of the Prince of Peace. **Amen.**

*The people are seated.*

SECOND LESSON

Isaiah 40:1–2, 10–11

*Read in Arabic by Tarek Abuata  
Palestinian Christian Alliance for Peace  
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  
Rev. Susan P. Wilder  
Israel/Palestine Mission Network; Presbyterian Church (USA)  
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.**

*O little town of Bethlehem*

1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!  
2 For Christ is born of Ma - ry; and gath - ered all a - bove,

1 A - bove thy deep and dream - less sleep the si - lent stars go by;  
2 while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - dering love.

1 yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing Light;  
2 O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth!

1 the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.  
2 and prais - es sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth.

*The people are seated.*

THIRD LESSON

Matthew 1:18–23

*Read in Arabic by  
The Very Rev. Hosam Naoum  
Dean of St. George's Anglican Cathedral in Jerusalem  
Bethlehem*

The birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us."

*The people stand.*

COLLECT

*Read in Arabic by  
Mrs. Mai Nasser  
Church Elder  
Bethlehem*

Faithful God, you fulfill your promise to your people in sending your Son to be born of Mary. Open our hearts and minds to receive as Joseph did this gift of your love. With Mary, make us ready to allow your promises to be fulfilled in us. May you always find us prepared and ready to do your will. **Amen.**

*The people are seated.*

FOURTH LESSON

Luke 2:1–7

*Read in Arabic by  
The Right Reverend Munib Younan  
Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land  
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  
Mr. Anton Nassar  
Church Elder  
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.**

*The people are seated at the invitation of the preacher.*

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

*The Reverend Richard Graham  
Bishop of the Metropolitan Washington, DC, Synod of the ELCA  
Washington*

CAROL  
*On Christmas Night*

*Sung by Cathedral Voices, Washington*

arr. D. Willcocks

*The people stand.*

PRAYERS

*Grace Said  
Palestine Israel Advocacy Group  
Washington National Cathedral Congregation  
Washington*

*Ms. Said* 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.

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

*Ms. Said* 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.

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

*Ms. Said* 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.

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

*The Reverend Dr. Mitri Raheb  
Bethlehem*

*Rev. Raheb* 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 that our lives may be offerings of hope to our neighbors, we pray to you, O God. Come now, O God of love.

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

*Rev. Raheb* 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.

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

*Rev. Raheb* 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.**



*Joy to the world! the Lord is come*

Joy to the world! the Lord is come: let earth re -  
 Joy to the world! the Sa - vior reigns; let us our  
 He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the

ceive her King; let ev - ery heart pre - pare him room, and  
 songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains, re -  
 na - tions prove the glo - ries of his right - eous - ness, and

heaven and na - ture sing, and heaven and na - ture  
 peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing  
 won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his

1 and heaven and na - ture sing, and  
 2 re - peat the sound - ing joy, re -  
 4 and won - ders of his love, and

sing, and heaven, and heaven and na - ture sing.  
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.  
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

heaven and na - ture sing,  
 peat the sound - ing joy,  
 won - ders of his love,

## INVITING THE OFFERING

*As worshipers exit, an offering will be received in support of 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 in cash or by check made payable to "Bright Stars of Bethlehem."*

## PRAYER

*Dr. Munther Isaac  
Vicar, Christmas Lutheran Church  
Bethlehem*

Merciful God, Creator of the Universe and Sovereign of all, we beseech you to lead your people in the way of peace. Bridge with your love the divisions that separate us from one another. Give us the courage to approach our neighbor with trust and kindness. Grant us strength to stand firm in the face of injustice, and to boldly say and do what is right in your eyes. Keep us steadfast, confident that you are with us in the struggle against oppression. Be with us and guide us; give us strong hope and fervent faith. We ask these things in the name of our blessed Savior, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

## BLESSING IN ARABIC

*The Most Reverend Suheil Dawani  
The Anglican Archbishop of Jerusalem  
Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem  
Bethlehem*

## BLESSING IN ENGLISH

*The Right Reverend Mariann Edgar Budde  
Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington  
Washington*

## DISMISSAL

*The Very Reverend Gary Hall  
Washington*

*Dean Hall*      Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
*People*          **Thanks be to God.**

## HYMN

*Hark! The herald angels sing*

*Washington National Cathedral*

1 Hark! the her-ald an-gels sing glo-ry to the new-born King!  
2 Christ, by high-est heaven a-dored; Christ, the ev-er-last-ing Lord;  
3 Mild he lays his glo-ry by, born that we no more may die,  
Peace on earth and mer-cy mild, God and sin-ners rec-on-ciled!  
late in time be-hold him come, off-spring of the Vir-gin's womb.  
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us sec-ond birth.

Joy - ful, all ye na - tions, rise, join the tri-umph of the skies;  
 Veiled in flesh the God - head see; hail the in-car - nate De - i - ty.  
 Risen with heal-ing in his wings, light and life to all he brings,

with the an-gel - ic host pro - claim Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!  
 Pleased as man with us to dwell; Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el!  
 hail, the Sun of Right-eous - ness! hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace!

*Refrain*

Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing glo - ry to the new - born King!

ORGAN VOLUNTARY

*Bring a Torch, Jeanette Isabella*

arr. Keith Chapman (1945-1989)

PERMISSIONS *O come, all ye faithful*. Words: John Francis Wade (1711-1786); tr. Frederick Oakeley (1802-1880) and others. Public Domain. Music: *Adeste fideles*, present form of melody att. John Francis Wade (1711-1786); harm. *The English Hymnal*, 1906. Public Domain. *Angels we have heard on high*. Words: French carol; tr. James Chadwick (1813-1882), alt. Public Domain. Music: *Gloria*, French carol; arr. Edward Shippen Barnes (1887-1958). Public Domain. *O little town of Bethlehem*. Words: Phillips Brooks (1835-1893). Public Domain. Music: *St. Louis*, Lewis H. Redner (1831-1908). Public Domain. *Joy to the world! the Lord is come*. Words: Isaac Watts (1674-1748), alt. Public Domain. Music: *Antioch*, George Frideric Handel (1685-1759); adapt. and arr. Lowell Mason (1792-1872). Public Domain. *Hark! the herald angels sing*. Words: Charles Wesley (1707-1788), alt. Public Domain. Music: *Mendelssohn*, Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847); adapt. William H. Cummings (1831-1915). Public Domain.

## 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 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.



WASHINGTON

NATIONAL CATHEDRAL

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