

Advent 2018
Methodist Liaison Office
Devotions
2nd Week of Advent



Philippians 1:3-11

In Philippians chapter one Paul writes to the members of the church there, *“I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of you sharing in the Gospel from the first day until now.”* The verse reads so appropriately for the Palestinian Church, now rapidly dwindling in size wholly due to the occupation. The Palestinian Church in the Holy Land is the direct successors of the churches we read about in the Acts of the Apostles. Throughout a turbulent history they have faithfully sustained a witness for the

Gospel in the land where Jesus walked. Although, for how much longer? As the situation in the land gradually deteriorates for Palestinians more and more Christians are leaving. Even Bethlehem is no longer a majority Christian town.

In Bethlehem there is an icon which become my favourite. It is of Mary, clearly very pregnant, weeping. It is not to be found in the Church of the Nativity, indeed not in any of the churches of Bethlehem. It is found painted on the “Wall,” the separation barrier that cuts Bethlehem off from its twin city, of Jerusalem. Why does she weep? Perhaps it is because her way is bared today on her journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, perhaps it is at the plight of the children of Bethlehem today, still, like in her day, open to the abuse of a foreign power, perhaps it is at the plight of the Church her Son founded in the land of his birth, but weep she does.



As we prepare for Christmas, may we remember in our prayers the Christians of Bethlehem - and those all across Israel

and Palestine today. Perhaps 2019 will be the year when the occupation will end and Palestinian Christians from across the world will be able to return to the land they love.

Christ Be Our Light

By Bernadette Farrell

Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has power to save us.
Make us your living voice.

Christ be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness,
Christ be our light!
Shine in your Church gathered today.

Let us pray,

Jesus, your mother, Mary weeps today, at the plight of the Christians in the town of your birth. Why has peace taken so long? May the coming year see the end of the occupation and the dawn of peace for all the people of the land called Holy. Amen.

Devotion written by John Howard,
former Methodist Mission Partner from the UK
served in the Methodist Liaison Office.
Picture taken by John Howard