

Prayers and Wishes for Advent and Christmas in Bethlehem 2009

For the 10th consecutive year, Christmas celebrations will take place in a difficult climate for people in the Holy Land. As we prepare to celebrate Advent and Christmas in the security of our homes and communities, let us not forget to pray for justice, peace and security for Palestine and Israel.

Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus Christ, is still first and foremost a city of peace. And even in these trying times, many individuals and groups refuse to give up hope. They continue to search for non-violent ways to voice their rights and work for a peaceful and just future for both peoples.

Since December 2000, we have begun a new Christmas tradition of sending peace messages to our friends in Bethlehem. Once again, we would like to invite individuals, communities, churches and congregations, organisations and partners from across the world to email Advent and Christmas 2009 wishes and prayers for justice and peace to our partners in Bethlehem.

Wishes and prayers will be printed and handed out as personal messages, educational materials (e.g. at schools), and in the context of interfaith prayers (in places of worship) and in the peace house of the Arab Educational Institute opposite the Wall at Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem. The wishes and prayers could also include ideas for non-violent actions. The action will be launched at the beginning of Advent.

Sending a wish or a prayer by email is an important way of communicating with many people who long to hear a word of hope. Our partners in Bethlehem greatly appreciate receiving wishes and prayers from people outside the region, both as personal and spiritual gestures of comfort and hope on the occasion of Christmas. These messages are one way of breaking through the isolation our Bethlehem partners experience.

This initiative is locally supported by:

The Arab Educational Institute
Library on Wheels for Non-violence and Peace
The Centre for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation
The Justice and Peace Commission of Jerusalem
Wi'am Center.

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Church and Peace
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the Asian Center for the Progress of Peoples, and the
Commission for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation USG/UISG Secretariat

Please e-mail your Christmas messages and prayers for peace before the 25th of December 2009 (Western Christmas) and/or the 7th of January 2010 (Eastern Christmas). While English is the preferred language, non-native English speakers may also send wishes and prayers in their mother tongue. Messages can be E-mailed to the Arab Educational Institute at the following address: aei@p-ol.com

Read all messages at www.aeicenter.org

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