الكنيسة الإنجيلية اللوثرية في الأردن
The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan

URGENT NEWS RELEASE

from

BISHOP DR. MUNIB A. YOUNAN
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan (ELCJ).
The ELCJ has its headquarters in Jerusalem and is working in Jerusalem, Palestine, Jordan and Israel.

April 2, 2002 12 noon

The Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church, the pastor's home and the church's International Center in Bethlehem have been hit by shelling from Israeli tanks and soldiers today, April 2, 2002, at about 9:00 am, Palestinian time. Rev. Mitri Raheb, pastor of the church, reports that the Israeli tanks entered the Old City of Bethlehem at 3:30 am today. Tanks were also positioned in a circle around the Old City. The shelling began at 6:30 am. The heaviest gunfire and fighting is taking place now in the Old City, from Manger Square to the Christmas Church compound.

Rev. Raheb reports that tanks have destroyed the first floor entrance to his home and also have destroyed the garage doors. The family is living on the second level of the building and fears that they will be invaded. The tanks and soldiers are stationed immediately outside the church and parsonage. At 10:10 the electricity was lost in the church and parsonage.

Also, Rev. Raheb reports that they have heard much glass breaking, both in the church and in the offices. Although they cannot go to see the damage yet, it seems that at least some of the 110 year old stained glass windows have been destroyed.

The parsonage has tanks on both side of it, so the tank fire is deafening and shakes all the buildings. Rev. Raheb has been making telephone calls to members of the congregation, one-fourth of whom live in the Old City. To date no one has been injured, but all are terrified of the fighting and invasion.

According to the Fourth Geneva Conventions, places of worship and churches should never be assaulted.

To contact Rev. Gustaf Odquist call +972-50-388976 or +972-67-255733.

Noted by Rev. Dr. Mary E. Jensen, Communications Assistant to Bishop Younan

P.O.Box 14076, JERUSALEM 91140
Tel: +972 – 2 – 6276111; Fax: 6285764; E-mail: ga_elcj@netvision.net.il