

Service *of the* Word | PALESTINE

TRANSCRIPT

0:00 *Introduction*

Carla Blakley:

Welcome. Hi, I'm Pastor Carla Blakley from Canadian Lutheran World Relief, where I'm the director of community and donor relations.

The global pandemic has given Canadian Lutheran World Relief a great opportunity to reach out to you in new ways. Thanks for joining in the Service of the Word worship. I'm pleased to bring you the voices of our global partners.

Today, you'll hear from Pastor Rodny Said from Church of the Hope in Palestine. You will enjoy the beautiful and educational music from the choir, Inshallah. Thanks to the many people who have brought you the prayers of the people.

Together with God, our faith, prayers and determination, as partners together in this life, we will journey together to make this world a place of hope, equality, and justice for all. Thank you for your continued generosity, partnership and support.

1:00 *Gathering Song*

Debbie Lou Ludolph:

My name is Debbie Lou Ludolph. I'm the director of Inshallah at Martin Luther University College. Inshallah is an Arabic word that means, God willing, and our group is a group of singers from Waterloo region who sing songs of faith from around the world toward peace and justice.

You're going to hear the song, Between Darkness And Light. It was written for a peace rally in 2008 in Nazareth. It's a gift of song from Palestine and Israel. Listening at first in Arabic and then in Hebrew, and then we invite you to join in the English. Between Darkness And Light, I will always walk. And wherever I will go, I will open windows of light and plant seeds of love.

2:05 *Inshallah Singing*

Carla Blakley:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Carla Blakley:

Let us pray. Creator God, hear us, oh God. Calm our fears. Still our hearts. Bring us your peace. Walk with us as we open our hearts to the voices of our neighbors. Give us fierce determination to work against injustice, to utter our voices to those who call for racial justice, gender justice and climate justice.

Carla Blakley:

Hear the voices of our siblings in Palestine today. Let us be the instruments of your justice work in this world. Be with us now, in Jesus name we pray. Amen.

5:10 Greeting

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6:10 Reflection

Brooklyn Lane:

Hello. My name is Brooklyn Lane. I am the pastor at St. John's, Mahone Bay, and Mount Calvary, Upper Northfield. Today, I have the pleasure and delight in introducing Rodney Said. Rodney and I went to Martin Luther University College together while we were taking our masters of divinity. He is a wonderful person with a passion for people, singing, soccer and taking care of fish. He is currently serving the Lutheran Church of Hope in Ramallah, Palestine, after recently being ordained. With that, I introduce my friend and colleague, Rodney Said.

6:50 Rodney Said:

The gospel is taken from John 16: 19-22. "Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, and he said to them, 'You're questioning among yourselves about my saying, "A little while and you will not see me. And again, a little while and you will see me." Truly, I assure you, you will be weeping and mourning while the world feels glad. You will be grieved and your grief will turn into joy.

"The mother in childbirth has anguish because her time has come. But when she has born the child, she no longer remembers her affliction because a human being has been born into the world. So you have grief at present, but I shall see you again. And your hearts will

be glad, and no one will be able to deprive you that joy.” The word of God.

The reality is, I as a Palestinian, live a troubled life. I grew up with so many questions. Like, why are we suffering? Why do we have to go through checkpoints? Why do we not have our full freedom, and why can't I just simply live my childhood free? So many questions that I struggled with, and to be honest, I still do.

Today, I walk in the street and I see so many oppression and depression. Young adults are struggling to find who they are or where they belong. Today, I'm fed up with the way we are treated. People are struggling to see the light that lies at the end of the tunnel.

I keep asking, why can't we just live our lives justly? We have so many walls in our lives that stop us from being who we really are. Injustice has so many layers to it here in Palestine. The wall of poverty, the wall of oppression, the wall of darkness and the wall of occupation that binds it all together.

We have been turned apart by these walls. Our language has been displaced. Our culture has been stolen. Our mentality has been manipulated, and now we live on reservations on our own land.

Growing up, I used to scream and shout at God, “Where are you? Why do you allow this to happen? Why do we have to keep suffering?” Today, I grew to realize that God is actually suffering and weeping with us.

When I first started seminary in Canada, I became more aware of how terrible our Palestinian situation is. I realized that they normalized our suffering and it became part of our daily life. It's so dangerous when you think that going through checkpoints is normal. Or when you think that living in a refugee camp is normal. Or when you have an 18-year-old soldier humiliating an 80-year-old lady that can barely even walk. Or how they prevent students from the most basic human right, which is education. Or even as simple as not being able to build the house because you're just simply a Palestinian.

The gospel today spoke to me as a Palestinian. I hear a message of courage in Jesus' saying when Jesus says, “Truly, I assure you, you will be weeping and mourning while the world feels glad. You will be grieved, but your grief will turn into joy.”

Well, let me tell you this. This saying actually gives me hope, but I have to be honest, sometimes it is hard to get through the day when having in mind that there will be joy when your life is at risk all the time, and when you can never take life for granted. But then simple things happen all the time that reminds me that God is bigger than the wall of injustice, is bigger than the wall of occupation, and that God is at work all the time. Even when we think that God is not at work, God surprises us with so many acts of kindness.

In the midst of all this darkness, I still see light. I still see people planting seeds of love in our community. I see it in the face of children being educated. I see it in the face of a man or woman hugging their olive tree. Even when the occupation tries to put an end to our lives, God puts new beginnings to it.

We do live a hard life, and our lives sometimes feel meaningless, but I truly believe that God is watching over us and God is working to end our suffering and to put joy in our hearts in

so many different ways. Today, we are thankful for so many opportunities provided for our children and women. It empowers a new generation and it helps us move towards the light at the end of the tunnel. So I invite you to pray with us, for peace, for justice and for new opportunities. And I pray all of this in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

13:05 Heather Platt:

Hello, everyone. My name is Heather Platt, and I'm the program manager at Canadian Lutheran World Relief for the GRIT project. GRIT stands for gender-responsive and inclusive technical and vocational education training. The GRIT project is a five-year project generously supported through the Canadian government with your support, and implemented by Canadian Lutheran World Relief in partnership with the Lutheran World Federation Jerusalem Program.

Before I dive into the details of the project, I'd like to provide some context about why this project is so necessary. You heard Pastor Rodny speak about the many walls Palestinians face in their day-to-day lives. The daily struggles, the checkpoints, the oppression, the poverty, and the deprivation of people's rights to education.

These walls impact all Palestinians, but men and women are impacted in different ways. There are several barriers that limit women's access to education and TVET, and subsequently, limit their opportunities for employment throughout their lives. Women face access barriers to education. As mentioned previously, mobility is very restricted in the region due to the permit system. This particularly impacts women, whose family members may have concerns about them traveling away from home, especially alone.

Transportation and tuition costs are additional financial barriers that many families can't afford. And if they can, they're often more likely to prioritize in investing in education and training for their sons, as opposed to their daughters.

Lack of access to childcare is another real barrier facing many women. There are challenges regarding the quality of training programs available. There are limited TVET programs available to women, and the existing programs are often in traditional low-paying fields, where there are not strong job prospects.

Course formats don't provide the flexibility that women require, especially if they have family responsibilities, such as caring for children or elderly parents. Due to cultural perceptions, employers are often reluctant to hire women, particularly in non-traditional fields. For this reason, women often require additional training and workplace experience in order to be seriously considered by employers.

Lastly, there are systematic barriers that need to be overcome. A strong gender divide persists within TVET programs. For example, even schools actively working to integrate women, still talk about men's programs and women's programs. So a broad cultural shift is necessary for women to have access to a wide variety of training programs.

The GRIT project was uniquely designed to meet these challenges, and is built on three pillars, which correspond to those three types of challenges I just described. Access challenges, quality challenges and systematic challenges.

As Pastor Rodney mentioned, education is a fundamental human right. It's referred to as a multiplier human right, as it opens opportunities to the enjoyment of other human rights. At CLWR, we recognize that positive education and employment opportunities will increase the agency and decision-making power of women and girls, and build their resiliency and self-confidence, improving their future opportunities for themselves and for their families.

This project is one way of helping to support Palestinian men and women overcome many of those barriers and walls that Pastor Rodney spoke so passionately about. If you would like to learn more about the GRIT project, please visit our website at www.clwr.org. Thank you for your continued support and partnership.

17:10 *Prayers of the People*

Hanne Kuhnert:

We gather together our prayers for the church and the world, responding after each petition, God be willing, inshallah. The bid is, God be willing. And the congregational response is, inshallah.

17:30 Karen Kuhnert:

God of grace and mercy, we give you thanks for the gift of the church and for your spirit, which connects the church around the world. We give you thanks for the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land, for Bishop Sani Azhar and for bishops, pastors, deacons, students and congregations.

We gave you thanks for the Lutheran Church in Canada, for Bishop Tim, for bishops, pastors, deacons, students and congregations. We give you thanks for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, for Bishop Susan, for bishops, pastors, deacons, students and congregations. We ask, gracious God, that you bless, protect, strengthen and inspire each of these churches. God be willing, inshallah.

18:30 Peter Kuhnert:

God of unity, we give you thanks for the witness and ministry of CLWR, the Canadian Lutheran World Relief, which unites our churches in becoming the hands and feet of Christ around the world. We give you thanks for ministries of refugee settlement and support of humanitarian crisis intervention of education and of healing ministries, like the Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem, and of the empowerment of girls and women to achieve health wholeness and gender justice. Bless these ministries that they might continue to build hope, health and healing around the world. God be willing, inshallah.

19:20 Kristina Kuhnert:

God of Isaac and Ishmael, we pray for religious peace and understanding between the three Abrahamic faith traditions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. We give you thanks for ongoing interfaith dialogues, such as those continued by the Lutheran World Federation. We give you thanks for the witness of Retired Bishop Munib Younan in working to bring faith traditions together for dialogue and peace building in Palestine. Strengthen these dialogues and may their fruit be for the healing of the nations. God be willing, inshallah.

20:00 Karen Kuhnert:

Lord of the nations, we pray for a just peace in Palestine. We pray for an end to violence. We pray for an end to all walls that divide and separate. We pray for an end to religious and ethnic discrimination so that all might work together equitably for peace, justice and prosperity. We pray for the governments of the Palestinian Territories. We pray for the government of Israel. We pray for the government of Jordan. We pray for peace in Lebanon, in Syria, in Yemen and in Iraq. God be willing, inshallah.

20:45 Hanne Kuhnert:

God of Sarah, Rebecca and Rachel, we give you thanks that you raise up strong, faithful and capable women to help guide, care for and strengthen your people in every nation.

Today, we give you thanks for the four K to 12 schools that educate boys and girls in Palestine and offer them a future of hope, of connection and of employment. Bless the teachers, staff and students of these schools. God be willing, inshallah.

21:15 Karen Kuhnert:

God of Martin and Katie, we give you thanks for the educational ministries of the Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land, especially for the Community Development Center in Jerusalem that offers vocational training and skills development for girls and for women. To allow them to fully develop their God-given talents and abilities for the blessing of their families, their communities and their churches. Uphold, strengthen and grow these ministries, we pray. God be willing, inshallah.

21:55 Hanne Kuhnert:

In your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy, through your son, Jesus Christ, our savior and Lord. Amen.

22:10 *Blessing and Sending Song*

Debbie Lou Ludolph:

For the troubles and the suffering of the world, [foreign language 00:22:18], is a gift of song from the church in Brazil. You'll hear Inshallah singing it at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary's 2014 Civis Mundi Award presentation. Today, we sing it as a sending, a blessing, that we might carry this song, this prayer in our hearts, and be a witness to God's mercy and makers of peace with justice in the world.

22:55 *Inshallah Singing*

27:05 Go in Peace. Serve the Lord.

27:30 *Credits*

Thank you to Inshalla

(Kanata Centre for Worship and Global Song, Martin Luther University College)
for the music that was provided today

For the Troubles and Suffering

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Between Darkness and Light

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