

**The baby leapt in her womb with joy!**

**Such a "homey" story as we stand at the edge of Christmas!**

**In 1981, I visited Jerusalem.**

**One day we visited the Church of the Visitation in the hill country.**

**As we left the church a cluster of Israeli school girls stood on the corner, waiting for their bus, and chatting about their day's events.**

**And this too was Mary so long ago, hastening to visit Elizabeth--to have a very serious chat about her own recent event.**

**And the baby in Elizabeth's womb "leaped for joy!"**

**We all are in need of "good news."**

**We all in these troubled times need to "leap for joy.**

**For Christ is near.**

**He comes not as a "far away God."**

**but as someone close at hand.**

**And so we pray:**

**O come, O come Emmanuel,**

**comfort us "who mourn in lonely exile here.  
until the Son of God appear.**

**Be close.**

**Be near.**

**Come soon,**

**O Emmanuel!**

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