

Light for Our Darkness

A Children's Christmas Service
Jesus, the Light of the World – John 8:12
Christmas Eve - 2020

Processional Hymn: “Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful” - C.W. 55

INVOCATION

Pastor: In the Name of God the Father,
God the Son + and God the Holy Spirit. AMEN

Psalm 89

(selected verses, read responsively)

Pastor: I will sing of the LORD's great love forever;

**Congregation: with my mouth I will make your faithfulness
known through all generations.**

Pastor: I will declare that your love stands firm forever,

**Congregation: that you have established your faithfulness in
heaven itself.**

Pastor: You said, “I have made a covenant with my chosen one,

**Congregation: I have sworn to David my servant, ‘I will
establish your line forever and make your throne firm through
all generations.’”**

Pastor: Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your
throne;

Congregation: love and faithfulness go before you.

Pastor: Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you,

Congregation: who walk in the light of your presence, LORD.

PRAYER

Pastor: Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true light. Grant that as we have known on earth the wonder of that light, we may also behold him in all his glory in the life to come; through your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Congregation: Amen.

Hymn: “On Christmas Night All Christians Sing” - C.W. 52

Verse 1 will be sung by the students

The Congregation is invited to sing verses 2 & 3

1. WE ARE LOST IN DARKNESS

Pastor: It might seem unusual to think of Christmas as a dark and lonely time, but for many it is just that. Tree lights and the music of the season may mean little or perhaps nothing. The hustle and bustle of Christmas preparations can darken the holiday. For some people, when they look around, they have a hard time finding meaning in—to say nothing of the true meaning for—Christmas.

Even for us, the rush of the holiday season may dim the real light of Christmas. We may lose sight of the light, which gives way to darkness. And like everyone in this world, we walk in the darkness of sin.

Sin is everywhere. It causes us to hate and hurt each other. It causes disease, war, and other acts of evil. It causes families to split apart at the seams. Eventually, it causes each and every one of us to die. We stumble daily because of sin’s darkness. The prophet Isaiah put it this way:

Teacher: We look for light, but all is darkness; for brightness, but we walk in deep shadows. Like the blind we grope along the wall, feeling our way like people without eyes (Isaiah 59:9,10).

Teacher: Our offenses are many in your sight, and our sins testify against us. Our offenses are ever with us, and we acknowledge our iniquities: rebellion and treachery against the LORD, turning our backs on our God (Isaiah 59:12,13).

Pastor: Yes, sin affects all people of all time. No one can find the way to God because all are sinful. The psalmist David and the apostle John tell us:

Children: All have turned away, all have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one (Psalm 14:3).

Children: If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us (1 John 1:8).

Pastor: Sinners even love the darkness and by nature hide from God's light. Jesus tells us:

Teacher: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed (John 3:19,20).

Pastor: By nature, we all find ourselves in the darkness of sin, hiding from God's light. Let us join together in confessing this to God.

CONFESSION OF SINS

Congregation: Almighty God, you created us to enjoy the light of your truth and life, but we have loved the darkness of sin. We have filled our lives with all kinds of evil. We cannot even count our sins, and by our inherited nature we try to hide from you. For these sins we are guilty and deserve to be condemned. But we appeal to your mercy. Forgive us for the sake of Jesus our Savior.

ABSOLUTION

Pastor: God knew that we were lost in the darkness of sin and death. But he did not leave us lost, hopeless, and terrified. He sent light to shine in our darkness that we would be forgiven and saved. The light from heaven is Jesus Christ, God's only Son. He came into our world to be the light of God's forgiveness. Because of Jesus' perfect life and death for us, God declares that we are not condemned for our sins. Rejoice! Your sins are forgiven in the Name of God the Father, + God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

Hymn by Congregation:

“Now Sing We, Now Rejoice” - C.W. 34

2. THE LIGHT COMES INTO THE DARKNESS

Pastor: Tonight we celebrate the light sent from heaven at the birth of Jesus our Savior. Before the beginning of time, God planned to send his one and only Son. Jesus would come to make his home in the darkness among the lost.

The light from heaven had been promised many times before he actually appeared. Prophecies gave a glimmer of light to God's ancient people. The prophet Isaiah wrote this about the coming Messiah:

Children: The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned (Isaiah 9:2).

Children: To us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6).

Pastor: Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, prophesied several months before the birth of the coming Savior:

Teacher: The rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace (Luke 1:78,79).

Pastor: Let's recall how God sent the light into this dark world as we hear from Luke chapter 2:

Children: In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world.

Children: (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.)

Children: And everyone went to their own town to register.

Children: So, Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.

Children: He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

Children: While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born,

Children: and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Hymn by Congregation: "Behold, a Branch Is Growing" C.W. 47

3. GOD SENT CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Pastor: Lights are part of our Christmas celebration. We know it is coming when strings of lights begin to shine in homes and yards in the weeks preceding Christmas. God adorned the heavens with light on that first Christmas long ago when glorious angels appeared in the skies above Bethlehem.

Children: And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified (Luke 2:8,9).

Children: But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Christ, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find the baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger” (Luke 2:10-12).

Congregation: **Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests” (Luke 2:13-14).**

Children: When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger (Luke 2:15-16).

Pastor: The shepherds believed the words of the angels and found everything they announced to be true. They were the first to behold the light of the world that God had sent. With their eyes they saw the baby Jesus. With their hearts they saw their Savior.

In our day, God does not reveal his saving truths in the glorious light of heavenly angelic messengers. But he still adorns the world with light—the light of his precious Word of Truth in the Holy Bible.

The writer of Psalm 119, the longest psalm in the Bible, puts it this way: Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple (Psalm 119:105,130).

Like the shepherds, we believe this Word, and with eyes of faith, we also see Jesus in the manger and know him to be our Savior.

Hymn by Congregation: “Silent Night” - C.W. 60

Hymn by Students: “Away in a Manger” – C.W. 68

4. WE TOO ARE LIGHTS

Pastor: The excitement of seeing the holy light sent from heaven in our Savior Jesus was evident on the very night he was born. It is especially clear in the actions of the shepherds after they had seen the baby in the manger.

Children: When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what they had been told about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them (Luke 2:17-18).

Pastor: Like the shepherds, generations before us have shared this good news so that now we too have heard what God has said concerning this child. Jesus became one of us. He lived a holy life. He died to pay the price for our sins. He rose from the dead, securing victory over death for us. And he ascended to the glory of heaven where he rules forever. Everything in Jesus’ life happened just as the Scriptures promised! Jesus proclaimed himself to be the light for all to follow. John writes:

Teacher: When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12). And the Bible further says: I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness (John 12:46).

Pastor: The greatest gift found in the light of Jesus is our redemption from sin and death. Even when we were lost in spiritual darkness, God rescued us. Jesus explained this most clearly to Nicodemus when he said:

Congregation: **For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).**

Pastor: Believers in Jesus not only enjoy the brilliant light of Jesus, they become lights that reflect his light. Through faith in Jesus, the Holy Spirit moves us to shine in this world of darkness as we point others to the true light of our Savior. Jesus tells us:

Teacher: You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house (Matthew 5:14-15).

Congregation: **In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16).**

Pastor: We have seen the light of the Savior, Jesus Christ. Every year we celebrate his birth and anticipate his return again. He truly is the promised light from God. And now he calls us to be lights in this world. Through our words and actions, we draw many to God's holy light that they may believe in him and be saved.

Hymn by Congregation: "Joy To The World." – C.W. 62

**RESPONSIVE READING FROM
THE GOSPEL OF JOHN CHAPTER ONE**

Pastor: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Congregation: **He was with God in the beginning.**

Pastor: Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

Congregation: **In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.**

Pastor: The light shines in the darkness,

Congregation: **and the darkness has not overcome it.**

Pastor: There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe.

Congregation: **The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.**

Pastor: The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

Congregation: **We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

OFFERING

The Offering is given in thanks to God for all the blessings He gives us. Our earthly blessings, our spiritual blessings, and our eternal blessings. We do not give our thank offering to earn God's favor, undo past sins, or earn our salvation. If we did, how much would we need to give to earn His favor, undo past sins, or earn our salvation? Our salvation has already been won by Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. We simply say, Thank You Lord Jesus - in all that we say, do and think.

OFFERING PRAYER

P: Keep us Yours forever, O Christ child sweet and dear;
Uphold us with Your mercy and remain forever near.
From You we gladly all receive,
And what is ours to You we give,
Our hearts, our souls, and all we own.
Let these be Yours alone. Amen

Special Prayers

THE LORD'S PRAYER

C: **Our Father, Who art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

THE AARONIC BLESSING

P: The Lord Bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and ☩ give you peace.
(Numbers 6:22-27)

Closing Hymn by Congregation:

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” – C.W. 61



