



The people who have walked in darkness  
have seen a great light.

Isaiah 9:2

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given;  
and the government shall be upon His shoulder:  
and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor,  
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:6

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through Him, and without Him nothing came to be. What came to be through Him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. A man named John was sent from God. He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came to be through Him, but the world did not know Him. He came to what was His own, but His own people did not accept Him. But to those who did accept Him He gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in His name, who were born not by natural generation nor by human choice nor by a man's decision but of God. And the Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us, and we saw His glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.

John 1: 1-15

## RESPONSE

Leader: The Lord has made known His saving power.  
All: The Lord has made known His saving power. Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Leader: The Word was made man.  
All: And He dwells among us. Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Leader: From His fullness we have all received.  
All: Glory to You, Eternal Father, Redeemer Christ and Sanctifying Spirit.

## HYMN: SHINE JESUS SHINE

Lord, the light of Your love is shining  
In the midst of the darkness, shining  
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us  
Set us free by the truth You now bring us  
Shine on me, shine on me  
Shine, Jesus, shine  
Fill this land with the Father's glory  
Blaze, Spirit, blaze  
Set our hearts on fire  
Flow, river, flow  
Flood the nations with grace and mercy  
Send forth Your word  
Lord, and let there be light

Lord, I come to Your awesome presence  
From the shadows into Your radiance  
By the blood I may enter Your brightness  
Search me, try me, consume all my darkness  
Shine on me, shine on me

As we gaze on Your Kingly brightness  
So our faces display Your likeness  
Ever changing from glory to glory  
Mirrored here may our lives tell Your story  
Shine on me, shine on me

## **REFLECTION**

In early Christian times, long before hydroelectric or nuclear power plants existed, a blessing was said every time the household lamps were lighted. As the spark ignited the wick, the lamplighter would say, "Praise God, who sends us the light of heaven". That in a nutshell, is the intention of the feast of Christmas. It is to praise God, Who indeed has sent us the Light of heaven—Jesus Christ, Who has become the Light of the world. In the calm glitter of a quiet moment, we discover the sparkle of this Light. And we sense that the darkness can no longer frighten us or cause us pain. Christmas invites you to remember Jesus Christ as the Light of the world every time you touch a light switch.

In every culture light is a symbol of good, or knowledge and understanding while darkness speaks of ignorance and evil. "Let light shine and darkness be banished forever", we should shout every evening. "Let the brightness of Christ illumine the world this night and every night so that no one need ever crouch in fear again".

Thus we focus on Bethlehem and that tiny Infant Who illumined the whole world with a love that never pales. We see the Virgin tenderly tending her Child, and Joseph keeping a watchful eye in that cramped stable, filled as it must have been with barnyard animals, their pungent aromas mixed with the smell of straw, the cooing of the doves augmented by the occasional braying of a donkey and bleating of a sheep. The shepherds arrive with the excitement of children to marvel at what the angels had said, and to tell their wondrous story of hearing the heavenly hosts praising God and revealing the birth of the Messiah. Through Bethlehem's dark fields they stumbled toward the one glowing Light, that Baby called Jesus, Whom Isaiah named Immanuel, "God with us." Every Christmas light bulb, amongst all the selfish commercialism in the shopping malls or above the homeless, prostitutes and drug addicts sitting on the street, every light bulb reminds us that Jesus Christ is the only Light within all darkness; in your darkness of unemployment, depression, sickness, or guilt. Jesus is the Light. May you let Him be that Light.

## **LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE AT CHRISTMAS**

Leader: The Advent time of waiting and preparing is over! During Advent we lit four candles that reminded us about waiting in hope and peace and joy and love.

People: **These candles reminded us that God promises to be with us, to comfort us, to help us rejoice, and to teach us to love.**

Leader: Today as we light this Christ candle, we celebrate that God has come to be with us in the Child called Jesus, our Emmanuel.  
(Light candle.)

Leader: Christmas is a time of giving

People: **Help us God, to give to others.**

Leader: Christmas is also a time of receiving.

People: **Help us God, to receive Your precious gift of love, and lovingly receive what others have to give.**

Leader: Love came down at Christmas to live among us.

People: **Help us O God, to feel loved by You and others this Christmastime.**

Leader: We thank You for Y

our gift of unending love.

People: **Help us O God to reach out with that love to others.**

### **HYMN**

Joy to the World , the Lord is come!

Let earth receive her King;

Let every heart prepare Him room,

And Heaven and nature sing,

And Heaven and nature sing,

And Heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing.

Joy to the World, the Savior reigns!

Let men their songs employ;

While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains

Repeat the sounding joy,

Repeat the sounding joy,

Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

He rules the world with truth and grace,

And makes the nations prove

The glories of His righteousness,

And wonders of His love,

And wonders of His love,

And wonders, wonders, of His love.

### **WORK OF CHRISTMAS BEGINS**

“When the song of the angels is stilled,

when the star in the sky is gone,

when the kings and princes are home,

when the shepherds are back with the flocks,

then the work of Christmas begins:

to find the lost,

to heal those broken in spirit,

to feed the hungry,

to release the oppressed,

to rebuild the nations,

to bring peace among all peoples,

to make a little music with the heart...

And to radiate the Light of Christ,

every day, in every way, in all that we do and in all that we say.

Then the work of Christmas begins.

## **PRAYER**

“In Him, Your light came into the world.”  
Father of Jesus Christ,  
we thank You that in Him  
Your light came into the world,  
saving us from darkness  
and inviting us to the Way of Life.  
We thank You that He is ever with us,  
if only we have eyes to see,  
that He ever speaks to us,  
if only we have ears to hear.

Give us new eyes and new ears  
to see His presence and to hear His call  
in our lives and in others,  
and give us the courage to follow Him  
to whatever Jerusalem He leads us,  
today and every day, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

## **HYMN: BE LIGHT FOR OUR EYES**

Come and be light for our eyes;  
be the air we breathe, the voice we speak!  
Come, be the song we sing, be the path we seek.

Your life was given; food for all people,  
Body and Blood, new Life in our midst!  
Death is no longer, life is our future;  
Jesus, Messiah, name of all names.

We behold Your presence, risen forever!  
Your name now names us people of God!  
Filled with Your vision, people of mission,  
healing, forgiving, light for the world.

Lead us to justice, Light in the darkness;  
singing, proclaiming Jesus is Lord!  
Teach us to speak and help us to listen  
for when Your truth and our dreams embrace!

**May we carry the Christ Light  
throughout the world  
surrounding our brothers and sisters  
with the Love, Joy and Peace of the Lord.**



**Live Jesus in our hearts.  
Forever!**

