

Light In The Darkness

Jesus Said: 'I Am The Light Of The World'

1st December 2024



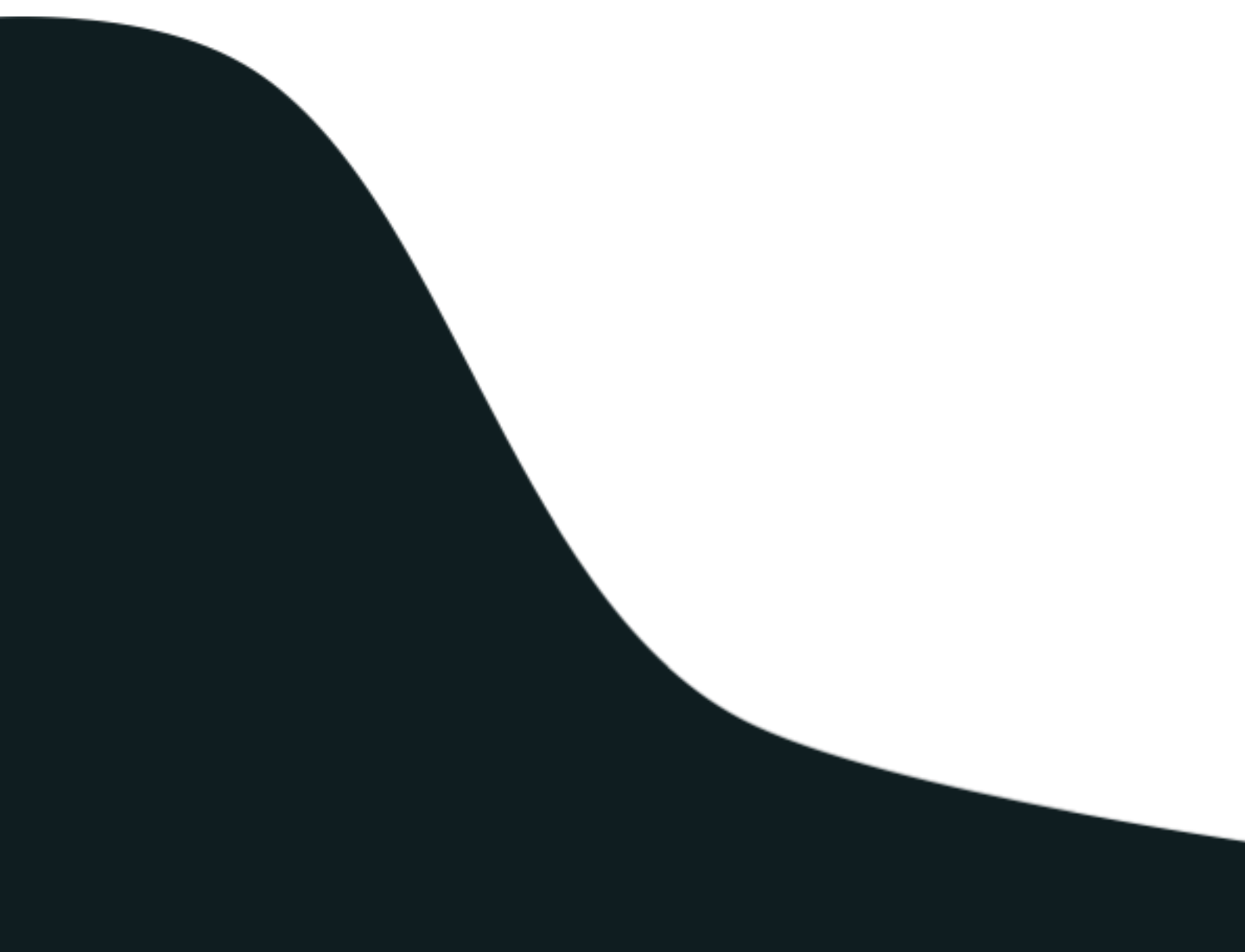
Welcome

In today's Service we will be looking at: **John 1 v. 1—13;**
8 v. 12; 9 v. 5

The theme for our service today is: **Jesus Said: 'I Am
The Light Of The World'**

Our service today also includes: **Communion**

We hope that you will be able to engage with
everything that has been produced for today's
service and that you would be able to **Find This
Advent & Christmas, The Light That Shines In The
Darkness!**



Call To Worship

Isaiah 9 v. 2 - 7 NLT

The people who walk in darkness will see a great light.
For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine.

You will enlarge the nation of Israel, and its people will rejoice.

They will rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest and like warriors dividing the plunder.

For you will break the yoke of their slavery and lift the heavy burden from their shoulders.

You will break the oppressor's rod, just as you did when you destroyed the army of Midian.

The boots of the warrior and the uniforms bloodstained by war will all be burned.

They will be fuel for the fire.

For a child is born to us, a son is given to us.

The government will rest on his shoulders and he will be called:

Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,

Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

His government and its peace will never end.

He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity.

The passionate commitment of the Lord of Heaven's Armies will make this happen!

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, we come to worship you today on this first Sunday in Advent. Today we begin our preparations to celebrate your coming into our world. Be with us now we pray, and help us to know your nearness not only in the time spent here in church but at every time and moment of our lives.

Over many long years your people prepared for your coming; they looked for a king and a conqueror and when you came as a baby they missed seeing you; when you came with the conquering power of love they rejected you.

Let us today heavenly Father, not miss your coming among us now. Be here in our worship and out in the world that we are part of.

We ask these things in Jesus' name.

Amen

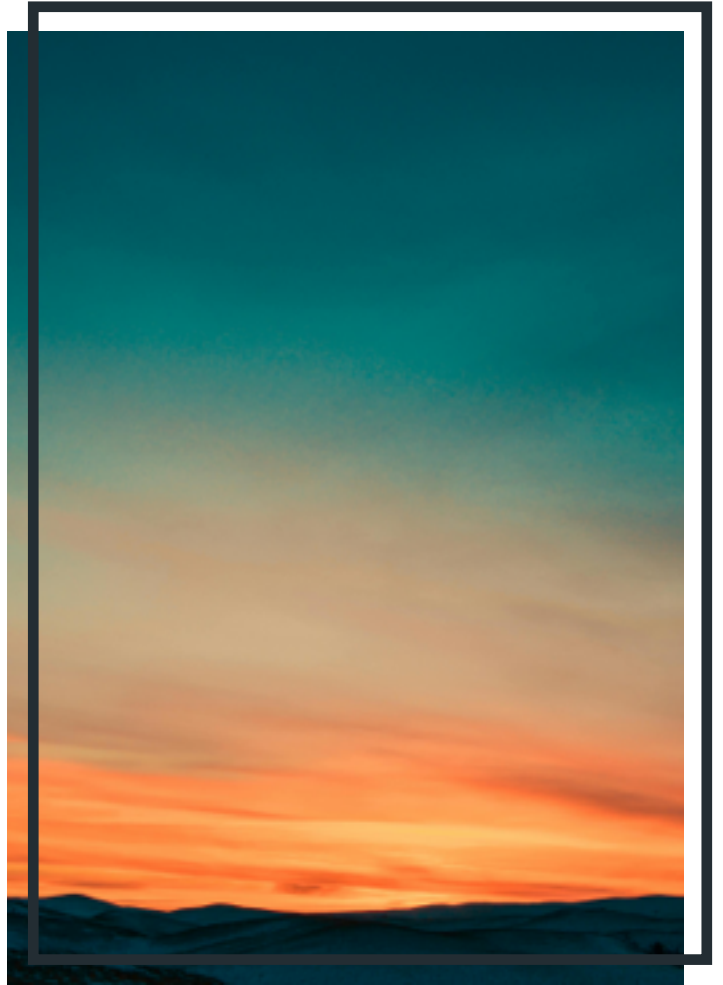
PREPARING FOR *Jesus*

The birth of that baby in Bethlehem prepares us for His death on the cross at Easter. That God would come to earth and put on flesh reveals God's loving preparation for the salvation of men.

His Name is Jesus.

Song Suggestion

At The Name Of Jesus Every
Knee Shall Bow



Tithes, Gifts & Offerings

No matter wherever you are, whatever you do, whoever you are, together we can grow as Church Together here at Salendine Nook.

If you feel that your are able to, then please keep on giving with a cheerful and grateful heart, praising God for all that he has given to you and share in the finances of the church.



Bible Reading

John 1 v. 1 – 13 NIV

The Word Became Flesh

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. 8 He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

John 8 v. 12 NIV

12 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 9 v. 5 NIV

5 While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

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."

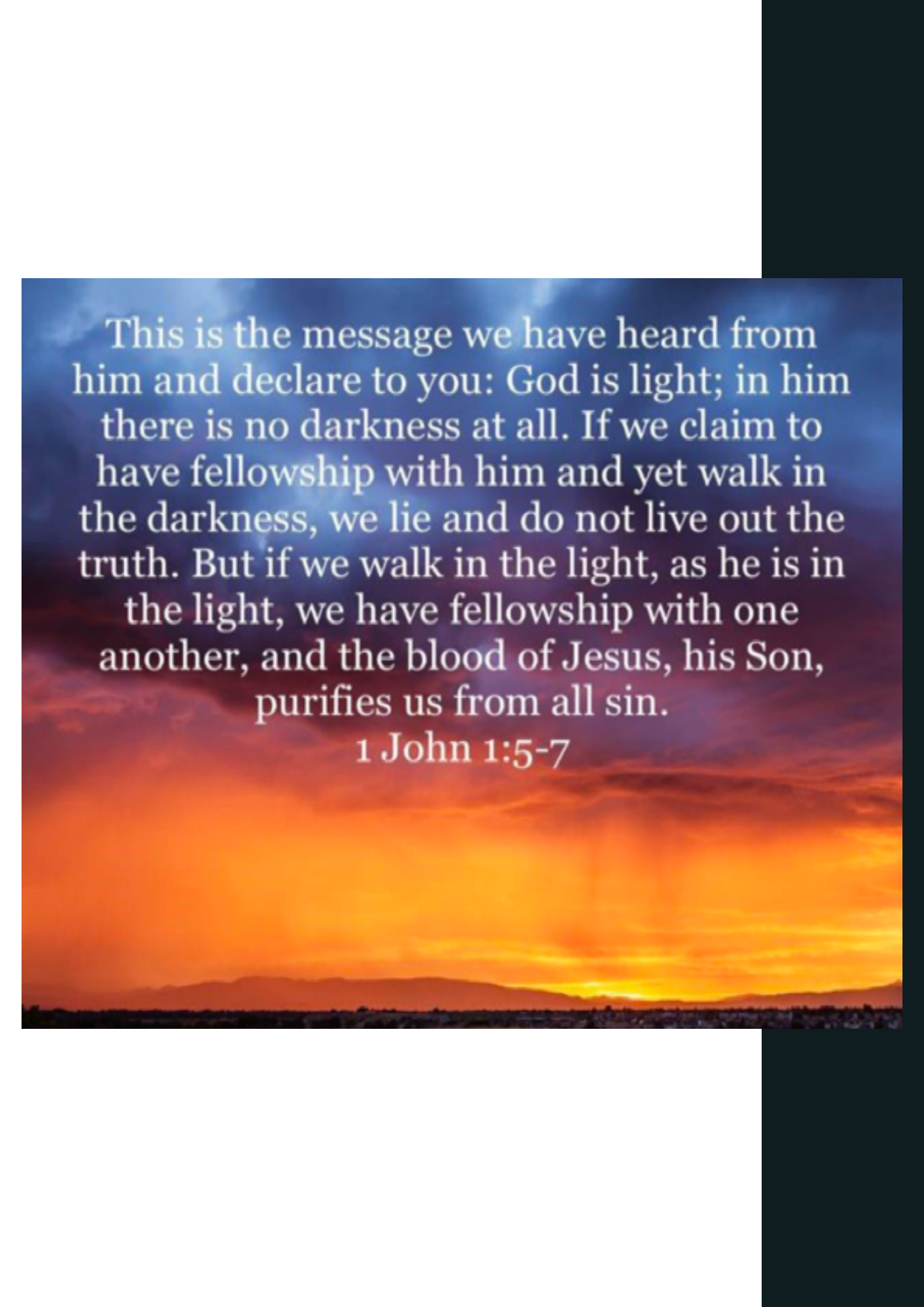
John 8:12



Song Suggestion

As The Deer Pants For The Water





This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

1 John 1:5-7

A Prayer For The First Sunday In Advent

God of light and life, give us hope as we wait for your coming again. When we are tempted to be grateful to have found you while others are lost, send us out into the darkness in search of those who need you most.

Amen

Advent Wreath

Prayer Week 1

Hope / Jesus Is Coming Again

On this First Sunday in Advent, we come and pray together:

Heavenly Father, Advent is a time for us to remember and reflect on the birth of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus. Help us today to turn our hearts toward you as Christmas approaches. Let us not get caught up in the hustle and bustle of the season and miss the chance to celebrate the gifts of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love, that you sent to us on that first Christmas.

Every word in scripture points to the gift of hope that we have because of Jesus. You showed us a glimmer of that hope as you chose to send your son into this world through a simple, ordinary family. That hope can be seen when we recognize that you didn't send your Son to be birthed in a splendid palace among the wealthy and the elite, but that Jesus, who is, our King of Kings and Lord of Lords was born among the everyday ordinary things of life.

Help us today to see that you are with us, that nothing is too difficult, too messy, or too dirty for you. Jesus came to give us the gift of Eternal Life through the salvation that only you, our Heavenly Father, can give when we believe in your Son, repent of our sins, and confess Jesus as our Lord and Saviour.

That first Christmas Loving Lord, you gave us the wonderful gift of hope wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. Thank you, Father, for your immeasurable gift. In Jesus' precious name, we pray.

Amen

Song Suggestion

Be Still For The Presence Of The
Lord



Communion

As we gather today we come to share in this act of Communion together, remembering the love and sacrifice that Jesus made for us on the Cross. We remember the price that he paid for our sins and for our forgiveness. We gather together here in Church as the body of Christ in order to share the bread and the cup together. We come in faith, conscious of our weakness, seeking to renounce our sin, humbly putting our trust in Christ, and seeking his grace, as we look forward to the day when he will come again.

A prayer of Thanksgiving:

Heavenly Father, we offer you this day our praise and thanksgiving; we thank you for raising Jesus to life again and exalting him so that we might call him 'Lord', as we offer our faithfulness to him and seek to share in his ways. Loving Lord, we thank you for the gift of your Holy Spirit, powerfully present in your people and your world, for the fellowship of your church, and for all the means of grace and the hope of glory. Living God, fill us with your Spirit, that as we share this bread and this cup we may feed on the body and blood of Christ, and be empowered for service in your world. Heavenly Father, accept our prayers and thanksgiving in the name of Jesus, the light of the world and the life of your people.

Our normal practice is to say these words:

For I received from the Lord what I also pass on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.' In

the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

1 Corinthians 11 v. 22 - 26

After all have received the bread and the cup and after a period of silence, we end with these words in a Prayer of Thanksgiving for the blessings received at the Table:

Leader: Your death, O Lord, we commemorate. Your resurrection we celebrate. Your final coming we await. May the glory be to you, O Lord.

Response: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Loving Gracious God, we praise you for what you have given and for what you have promised us here. You have made us one with all who know you as Lord and Saviour. You have fed us with the bread of life and renewed us for your service. Now we give ourselves to you and we ask that our daily living may be part of the life of your eternal kingdom, and that our love may be your love in the world where we find ourselves., through Jesus Christ our Lord, we pray these things.

Amen

Church Together

Thought

Traffic lights issue instructions for the waiting motorist, a lighthouse warns of danger, a torch helps us find things in the dark. If you hold up a grubby shirt in the light, you'll see just how dirty it is. When we understand something new, we talk about having 'seen the light'. Light guides us, produces energy and reveals things to us. So, what did Jesus mean when he said he was the 'light of the world'? Perhaps there are parallels we can draw from each of the above images. However, the pictures of Jesus in John's Gospel speak to us especially of LIFE, as seen in passages such as: **John 6 v. 35; 10 v. 10; 15 v. 5**. The light of the world, that is Jesus, promises that those who follow him will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life, as we are told in **John 1 v. 4; 8 v. 12**, and in an age when we have light and warmth at the flick of a switch, it's hard to imagine just how significant the link between light and life would have been for people years ago.

Consider, too, the imagery of new birth, as focussed on in **John 1 v. 12 – 13** which says: 'Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God' and a baby's entry into the light from the darkness of the womb. The unborn child is familiar with the womb and lives in innocence, yet at the same time the baby is entirely ignorant of the world around. To come

into the light means leaving your 'comfort zone' and facing an unfamiliar world. Not to do so is tragic!

In our self - centred modern society it's tempting to ignore the needs of others and pursue lives of comfort. It's equally tempting for Christians to protect themselves from an unfriendly world and to cherish little havens of calm along with others who are 'in the light'. Ironically, to do so may mean we remain in darkness and ignorance. Christ's call to those who claim to be 'born again' and who live in his light, is to shine for him amid everyday life, as recorded in **Matthew 5 v. 14 – 16** which says: 'You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 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. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven'. Only when we obey do we really learn to depend on God and discover what it means to be fully alive in him.

The picture of 'Jesus being the light' reminds us of several things which we can find because of him.

FIRSTLY, WE CAN FIND THE WAY FORWARD BECAUSE OF HIM

Just like a lighthouse exposes the hidden dangers of what is around them to those out at sea and therefore gives them a safe passage to land so it is that as the light of the world, Jesus, exposes what has been hidden and guides us through the path of life. To live in the light is to be honest and vulnerable with others and in fellowship with God, as referenced to in **1 John 1 v. 5 – 7** which tells us: 'This is the message we have heard from him and

declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin'. As we express our needs and feelings, our sins and our struggles, with the people we trust, light will fall on our failures and strengths. This will give us the direction we need, to make significant spiritual progress. (ref: **John 1 v. 4 – 9; 3 v. 19 – 21; 12 v. 35, 46**)

There are times when we need light to show us the way. As the Old Testament shows us, in the wilderness God provided a pillar of smoke and fire to guide his travelling people. Christ gives light to show us the way to the Father, and the way through life, as we read in **John 1 v. 9** which says: 'The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world'.

SECONDLY, WE CAN FIND JOY THROUGH KNOWING HIM

A fireworks party not only gives light, but also joy. Jesus and his friends went to the temple to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. One night of the festival commemorated the giving of light in the wilderness. The next day Jesus made a startling claim, which is found in **John 8 v. 12** and says: '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'. Therefore, is he our light to the extent that our worship is equally joy-filled?

IIUSTRATION

The Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated in the temple's 'court of women' like this: Three balconies were erected from which women and children could watch. Four

golden seven-branched candlesticks were set on bases [23 metres] high. They terminated in huge cups into which oil was poured. Ladders were placed on each base, and priests mounted them and poured in enough oil to last until daybreak.

The light was of such intensity that all Jerusalem was lit up. As the light flared higher, men danced, waving torches, throwing them high in the air, and catching them again. On the fifteen steps leading to the court of laymen stood Levites with lyres, cymbals, flutes and trumpets, singing the Hallel psalms. It was said that 'he who has not seen the rejoicing at this ceremony has never seen rejoicing in his life.'

FINALLY, WE CAN FIND LIFE IN HIM

Without light, plant - life would disappear and thus all life would die out. This would be the destiny of humankind were it not for Jesus the eternal and invincible Light, that we read about in **John 1 v. 4, 5**. The same God who created the universe, that we read in **John 1 v. 3** is able to create new life in us. The light of life that exposes and drives away the darkness of humanity, found in **John 1 v. 4 - 5** is the same light that brightens the dark corners of our world. This true Light of the World and source of all life is also the source of our spiritual renewal.

The words of **Laurence Housman**, in his writing **The Little Plays of St Francis** maybe sums up all that we have said when he writes: 'Light looked down and beheld darkness; 'Thither will I go,' said Light. Peace looked down and beheld war; 'Thither will I go,' said Peace. Love looked down and beheld hatred; 'Thither will I go,' said Love. So came Light and shone; so, came Peace and gave rest; so, came Love and brought life. And the Word was made

flesh and dwelt among us.

Throughout this Advent period and over Christmas this year, we will be focusing on the thought that the Light Shines In The Darkness. We will be looking at Mary, Joseph, The Shepherds, Us, The Wise Men and Jesus himself. The true light of the world became a human being, Jesus Christ. Through Jesus, who was born both fully God and fully human, we can know what God is like and can enjoy a relationship with him. Jesus came to bring us God's forgiveness and to reveal God's truth to us. God's forgiving mercy says: 'I forgive you for your wrongs; I love you and accept you freely for the person you are'. His truth also says: 'I will show you what is true about me, about life and above all else what is true about yourself and others'.

So, we invite you to come and meet with Jesus, The Light of The World, this Advent and Christmas, and to let the Light of Him shine in the Darkness of your world!

Prayers Of Intercession

God of Hope and Light be the Good News that we need during this season of Advent. Be with us in our gatherings and in our travelling together, be with us in our worship and in our praying together, be with us as we seek to hear the Good News of Jesus, the Light of The World, this Advent.

Lord in this season when every heart should be happy and light, many are struggling with the heaviness of life, with burdens that steal their joy; we pray that you would bring Good News into their lives. Fill us, we pray, with your light instead of our darkness, help us clear the way in our hearts and minds to concentrate on the true meaning of Christ's coming and not on the worldly things, which so often block out our thoughts and worship of you.

Loving Lord, we live in disturbing days across the world; a world filled with doubt and conflict, inequality and justice. Make this time of waiting we pray, the time of a new awakening of thought, consideration, endeavour and action, by all leaders and all nations, to bring about health, peace, freedom and understanding. May the light of Jesus be the Good News that they hear.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for all those we know and love, those who are unwell and those who need comfort and strength. May you be the Good News that they need this day. Loving Lord Jesus, we pray you surround all those who mourn,

with your continuing compassion. In the stillness of our hearts we lift them up to you this day.

We pray for our government – all governments and those in authority; help them we pray as they all struggle to seek to do what is right and fair in these modern days.

We pray for all those in our fellowship who work especially in Education and the Health Service. May they know your loving presence over this Advent period, as they seek to serve others around them and be the light of your presence wherever they may be.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

God of light, who brought your light into this world, be the light that dwells between us.

God of light, that brought peace into this world, be the peace that dwells between us.


God of light, that brought joy into this world, be the joy that dwells between us.

God of light, the rock we stand upon, be the centre, the focus of our lives.

Always, and particularly during this Advent time, be the Light of the Good News to all.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Amen



**“I have come into the world as a light,
so that no one who believes in me
should stay in darkness.”**

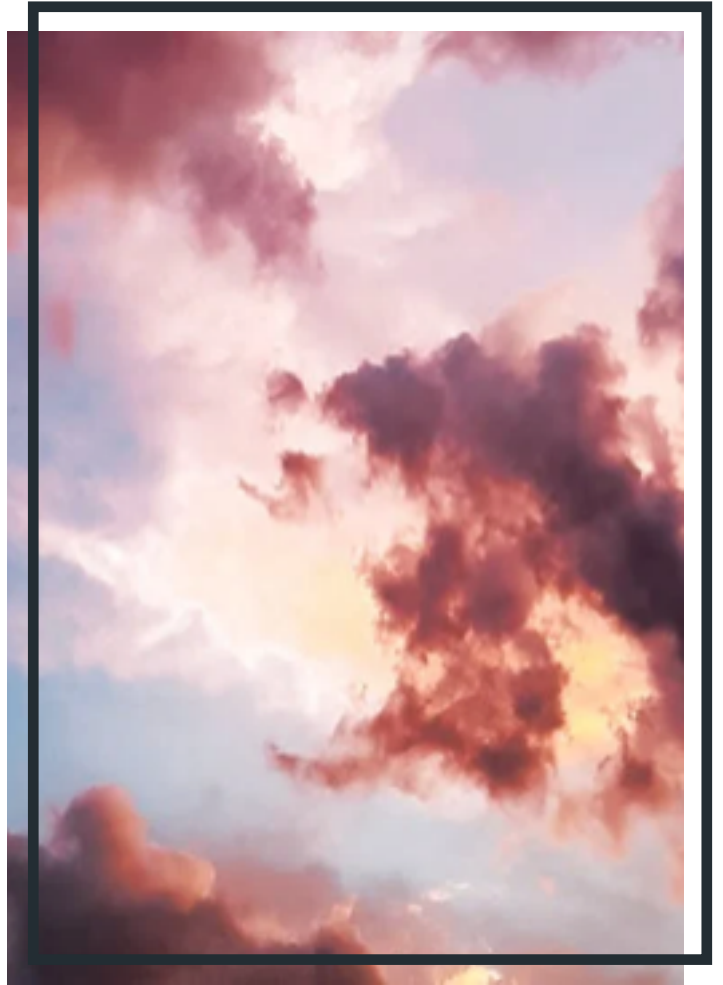
— John 12:46

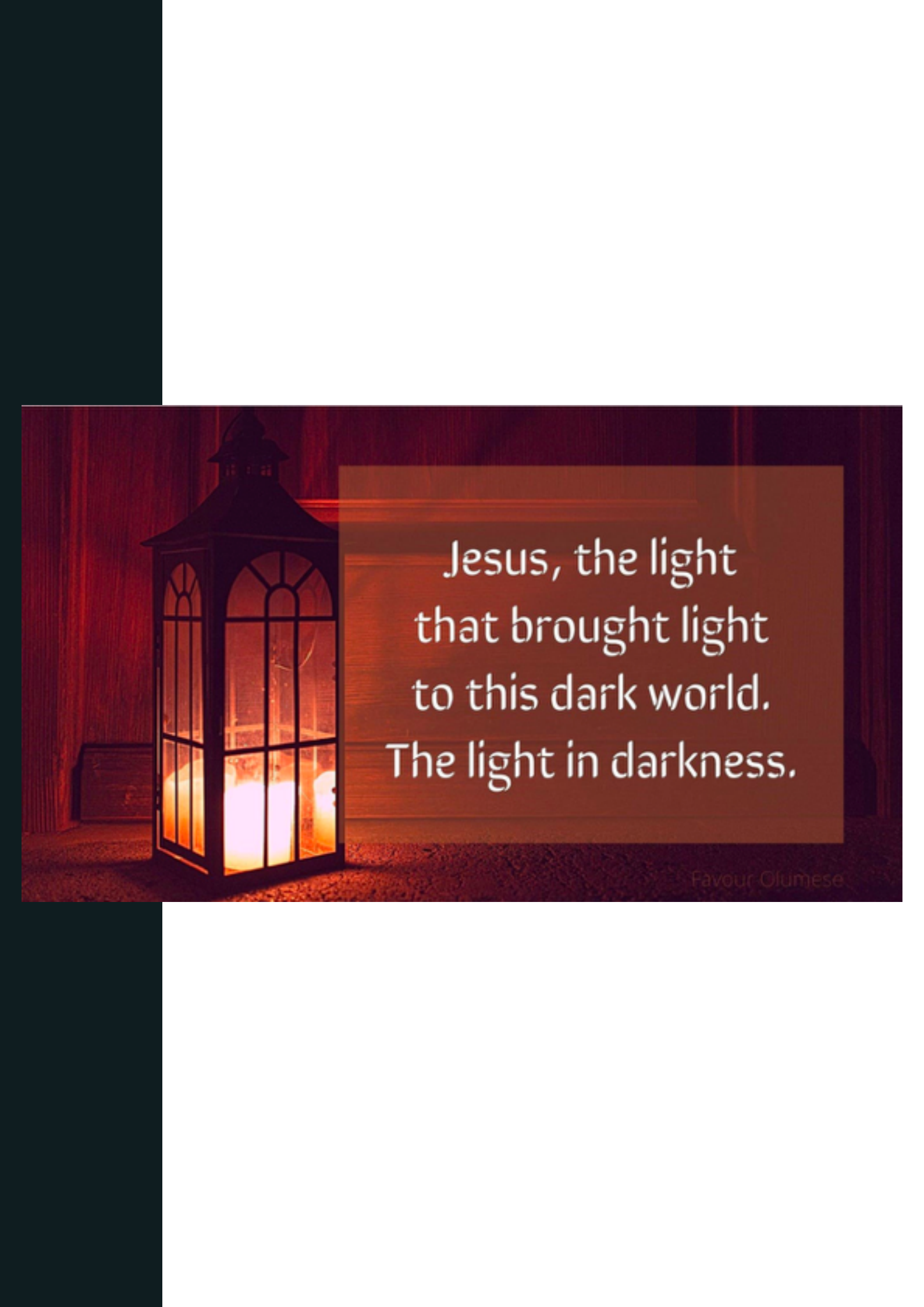
The Lord's Prayer

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.
Lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power
And the glory, forever and ever.
Amen

Song Suggestion

Joy To The World, The Lord Has
Come!



A glowing lantern in a dark room with text overlay. The lantern is on the left, casting a warm light. The text is on the right, in a white serif font, set against a semi-transparent dark background. The overall mood is contemplative and spiritual.

Jesus, the light
that brought light
to this dark world.
The light in darkness.

Favour Olumese

Blessing

May the God who gives us peace
Make us holy in every way
And keep our whole being—
Spirit, soul and body—
Free from every fault
At the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ
Who is The Light Of The World!
Amen