

LIGHT
FOR
OUR
DARKNESS



The Fourth Week of Advent

Children's Christmas Service



Light for Our Darkness

**A Children's Christmas Service
concerning Jesus, the Light of the World**

Opening Hymn (Congregation): "Creator of the Stars of Night"

- 1 Creator of the stars of night,
your people's everlasting light,
O Christ, Redeemer of us all,
we pray you hear us when we call.

- 3 When earth drew on to darkest night,
you came, but not in splendor bright,
not as a king, but as a child
of Mary, Virgin mother mild.

- 5 To God the Father, God the Son,
and God the Spirit, Three in One,
praise, honor, might, and glory be
from age to age eternally. Amen.

Psalm 89 (selected verses, read responsively)

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

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

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

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

Leader: 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.'"

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

Congregation: love and faithfulness go before you.

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

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

Prayer:

Leader: Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to prepare the way for your only Son. By his coming, give us strength in our conflicts and shed light on our path through the darkness of this world; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

All: Amen.

Song by Children: "On Christmas Night All Christians Sing" (CW 52)

PreK &
Grades K-1

1 On Christmas night all Christians sing
To hear the news the angels bring;
On Christmas night all Christians sing
To hear the news the angels bring,
News of great joy, news of great mirth,
News of our merciful King's birth.

Grades 2-4

2 When sin departs before your grace,
Then life and health come in its place.
When sin departs before your grace,
Then life and health come in its place.
Angels and saints with joy may sing
All for to see the newborn King.

Grades 5-8

3 From out of darkness we have light
Which made the angels sing this night.
From out of darkness we have light
Which made the angels sing this night:
“Glory to God and peace to men
Now and forevermore. Amen.”

1. WE ARE LOST IN DARKNESS

Narration (John):

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:

Recitation (Emalyn):

We hope for light, but look, there is only darkness. We hope for bright light, but we walk around in the darkest gloom. We grope along a wall like blind men. We grope like people with no eyes. (Isaiah 59:9-10).

Recitation (Landen):

Yes, our rebellious deeds are many before you, and our sins testify against us. Our rebellious deeds are with us, and as for our guilty deeds, we are aware of them. Those deeds are rebellion and treachery against the Lord. We turn back from following our God. (Isaiah 59:12-13).

Narration (Ben):

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:

Recitation (Jane):

Every one of them has turned away. Altogether they have become rotten. There is no one who does good. There is not even one. (Psalm 14:3).

Recitation (Dominic):

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (1 John 1:8).

Narration (Mariah):

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

Recitation (Brielle):

This is the basis for the judgment: The light has come into the world, yet people loved the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds were evil. In fact, everyone who practices wicked things hates the light and does not come toward the light, or else his deeds would be exposed. (John 3:19-20).

Leader:

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***All:**

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***Leader:**

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!

Hymn by Congregation: “Now Sing We, Now Rejoice” (CW 34)

1 Now sing we, now rejoice, Now raise to heav’n our voice;
He from whom joy streameth Poor in a manger lies;
Not so brightly beameth The sun in yonder skies.
Thou my Savior art! Thou my Savior art!

2 Come from on high to me; I cannot rise to thee.
Cheer my wearied spirit, O pure and holy Child;
Through thy grace and merit, Blest Jesus, Lord most mild,
Draw me unto thee! Draw me unto thee!

3 Now through his Son doth shine The Father’s grace divine.
Death o’er us had reigned Through sin and vanity;
He for us obtained Eternal joy on high.
May we praise him there! May we praise him there!

4 Oh, where shall joy be found? Where but on heav’nly ground?
Where the angels singing With all his saints unite,
Sweetest praises bringing In heav’nly joy and light.
Oh, that we were there! Oh, that we were there!

2. THE LIGHT COMES INTO THE DARKNESS

Narration (Anica):

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:

4K Recitation:

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.
For those living in the land of the shadow of death, the light has dawned.
(Isaiah 9:2).

K-1 Recitation:

For to us a child is born. To us a son is given. The authority to rule will rest on his shoulders.

He will be named: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6).

Narration (Barrett):

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

...the Rising Sun from on high will visit us, to shine on those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. (Luke 1:78-79).

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

Grades 2-4 Recitation: In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governing Syria. And everyone went to register, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the town of Nazareth, into Judea, to the town of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was from the house and family line of David. He went to be registered with Mary, his wife, who was pledged to him in marriage and was expecting a child. And so it was that while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son, wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Song by Children: “Your Little Ones, Dear Lord, Are We” (CW 46)

1 Your little ones, dear Lord, are we
And come your lowly bed to see;
Enlighten ev’ry soul and mind
That we the way to you may find.

3 Oh, draw us wholly to you, Lord,
And to us all your grace accord;
True faith and love to us impart
That we may hold you in our heart,

4 Until at last we, too, proclaim,
With all your saints, your glorious name;
In paradise our songs renew
And praise you as the angels do.

3. GOD SENT CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Narration (Lyla):

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.

Recitation (Landen):

There were in the same country shepherds staying out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock 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)

Congregation:

But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. For behold, I bring you good news of great joy, which will be for all people: Today in the town of David, a Savior was born for you. He is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” (Luke 2:10-12).

K-1 Recitation:

Suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude from the heavenly army, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward mankind.” (Luke 2:13-14).

2-4 Recitation:

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Now let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. (Luke 2:15-16).

Narration (Daisy):

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 angel messengers. But he still adorns the world with light—the light of his precious Word of Truth in the Bible. The writer of Psalm 119, the longest psalm in the Bible, puts it this way:

Congregation:

Your words are a lamp for my feet and a light on my path. The doorway to your words lets in light. It gives understanding to the inexperienced. (Psalm 119:105,130).

Narration (Mariah):

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: “Silent Night” (CW 60)

PreK (ASL)

1 Silent night! Holy night!
 All is calm, all is bright,
 Round yon virgin mother and child.
 Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
 Sleep in heavenly peace,
 Sleep in heavenly peace.

Grades K-1 (German)

1 Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht
 Alles schläft; einsam wacht
 Nur das traute hochheilige Paar.
 Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar,
 Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh!
 Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh!

Grades 2-4 (Spanish)

1 Noche de paz, noche de amor,
 Todo duerme en derredor.
 Entre sus astros que esparcen su luz
 Bella anunciando al niño Jesús
 Brilla la estrella de paz
 Brilla la estrella de paz

Grades 5-8 (English)

3 Silent night! Holy night!
 Son of God, love’s pure light
 Radiant beams from thy holy face
 With the dawn of redeeming grace,
 Jesus, Lord, at thy birth,
 Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

Preschool Recitation:

Glory beaming from above—	(put arms up high)
Angels singing of God’s love;	(put thumbs together, fingers out like wings)
Come and see the baby small	(cradle arms like holding a baby)
Who has come to save us all.	(make a cross with forefingers)
Worship here this Christmas night—	(fold hands in prayer)
Baby Jesus is the light.	(hold forefinger up like a candle)

Song by Children: (Preschool) “Away in a Manger” (CW 68)

1 Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
 The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
 The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
 The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

2 The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
 But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
 I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,
 And stay by my side until morning is nigh.

3 Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay
 Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
 Bless all the dear children in your tender care,
 And take us to heaven to live with you there.

4. WE TOO ARE LIGHTS

Narration (Asher):

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.

Recitation (Ben):

When they had seen him, they told others the message they had been told about this child. And all who heard it were amazed by what the shepherds said to them. (Luke 2:17-18).

Narration (Emalyn):

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:

Recitation (Daisy):

When Jesus spoke to them again, 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).

Recitation (John):

I have come into the world as a light, so that everyone who believes in me would not remain in darkness. (John 12:46).

Narration (Landen):

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:

K-8:

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

Narration (Jane):

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:

Recitation (Barrett):

You are the light of the world. A city located on a hill cannot be hidden. People do not light a lamp and put it under a basket. No, they put it on a stand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. (Matthew 5:14-15).

Congregation: In the same way let your light shine in people’s presence, so that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:16).

Narration (Anica):

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.

Song by Children: “See in Yonder Manger Low” (CW 58)

- Grades 2-4: 1 See in yonder manger low, Born for us on earth below,
 See—the gentle Lamb appears, Promised from eternal
 years.
 Refrain:
 Hail the ever blessed morn; Hail redemption’s happy dawn;
 Sing through all Jerusalem, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
- Grades 2-4 2 Lo, within a stable lies He who built the starry skies,
 He who, throned in height sublime, Sits amid the cherubim.
 Refrain
- Grades 5-8 3 Sacred Infant, all divine, What a tender love was thine,
 Thus to come from highest bliss Down to such a world as
 this.
 Refrain
- Grades 5-8 4 Teach, oh, teach us, holy Child, By thy face so meek and
 mild, Teach us to resemble thee In thy sweet humility.
 Refrain

Responsive reading from John chapter 1:

Leader: 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.

Leader: 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.

Leader: The light shines in the darkness,

Congregation: and the darkness has not overcome it.

Leader: 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.

Leader: 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.

Prayer:

Shine forth, dear Jesus, Light of the world, on all who walk in darkness. Grant us your grace to be your torchbearers telling the world of your love. Open the eyes of all to see your light and follow you to eternal glory. We ask this for your love's sake, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Benediction:

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

(ALL) Closing Hymn: "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" (CW 61)

1 Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"

Joyful, all you nations rise, Join the triumph of the skies;
With th' angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain:

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

3 Hail, the heav'nly Prince of Peace! Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, Ris'n with healing in his wings.

Mild he lays his glory by, Born that we no more may die,
Born to raise us from the earth, Born to give us second birth.

Refrain