

A stylized sunburst logo composed of concentric, semi-circular segments in various shades of gray, radiating from a central point. The segments are arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth and movement, resembling a sunburst or a stylized globe.

**LIGHT
FOR
OUR
DARKNESS**

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

**Abiding Word Evangelical Lutheran Church
Maineville, Ohio**

December 20, 2020

Opening Hymn: 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.

2 In sorrow that the ancient curse
should doom to death a universe,
you came to save a ruined race
with healing gifts of heav'nly grace.

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.

4 At your great name, majestic now,
all knees must bend, all hearts must bow;
all things on earth with one accord
join those in heav'n to call you Lord.

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, Minister and Congregation read responsively)

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

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

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

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

M: You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one,

C: **I have sworn to David my servant, 'I will establish your line forever and make your throne firm through all generations.'"**

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

C: **love and faithfulness go before you.**

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

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

Prayer:

M: Almighty God, you made the holy night of Jesus birth 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.

C: Amen.

Hymn: On Christmas Night All Christians Sing (CW 52)

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.

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.

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: (Elizabeth)

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 1: (Rachel)

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).

Recitation 2: (Catelyn)

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).

Narration: (Elizabeth)

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 3: (Sebastian)

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

Recitation 4:

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

Narration: (Elizabeth)

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

Recitation 5: (Rachel)

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).

M: 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

C: 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

M: 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: 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: (Karl)

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:

Recitation 6: (Cathrine)

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).

Recitation 7: (Eleanor)

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).

Narration: (Karl)

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

Recitation 8:

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).

Narration: (Karl)

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

Recitation 8b: (Cathrine and Eleanor)

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register. 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. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

Recitation 8b: (Titus)

While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

Hymn: Behold, a Branch Is Growing (CW 47 st. 1,2,4)

1 Behold, a Branch is growing Of loveliest form and grace,
As prophets sang, foreknowing; It springs from Jesse's race
And bears one little flow'r In midst of coldest winter,
At deepest midnight hour.

2 Isaiah had foretold it In words of promise sure,
And Mary's arms enfold it, A virgin meek and pure.
Through God's eternal will This child to her is given
At midnight calm and still.

4 This flow'r, so small and tender, With fragrance fills the air;
His brightness ends the darkness That kept the earth in fear.
True God and yet true man, He came to save his people
From earth's dark night of sin.

3. GOD SENT CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Narration: (Hannah)

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 9:

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).

Recitation 10: (Amelia)

But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, 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).

Recitation 11: (Titus)

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying (Luke 2:13),

Recitation 11: (Harry)

“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests” (Luke 2:14).

Recitation 12: (Shelby)

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).

Narration: (Hannah)

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:

Recitation 13: (Catelyn)

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).

Narration: (Hannah)

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)

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.

2 Silent night! Holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar; Heav’nly hosts sing, Alleluia;
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!

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.

Recitation 14: (Shelby, Harry, Travis)

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)

Hymn: 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: (Karl)

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 15: (Sebastian)

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

Narration: (Karl)

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 16:

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).

Recitation 17: (Jude)

I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness (John 12:46).

Narration: (Hannah)

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:

Recitation 17b: (Joe)

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).

Narration: (Elizabeth)

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 18: (Amelia)

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).

Narration: (Elizabeth)

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: See in Yonder Manger Low (CW 58)

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!"**

2 Lo, within a stable lies He who built the starry skies,
He who, throned in height sublime, Sits amid the cherubim.

Refrain

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

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:

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

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

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

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

M: The light shines in the darkness,

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

M: 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.

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

M: The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.
C: We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Prayer:

M: 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:

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

Recessional 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!"

2 Christ, by highest heav'n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold him come, Offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, Hail th' incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with us to dwell, Jesus, our Immanuel!

Refrain

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