

# Jesus Christ: The Light of Our Christmas



## An Advent Vespers Service of the Word

Note to visitors: TLH is the red hymnbook, WS is the tan hymnbook

Preservice Devotion: Psalm 27 (forepart of TLH p.127)

### OPENING PRAYER

### OPENING HYMN

**TLH 68** (red hymnal)

*The Advent of Our King*

### INVOCATION

Minister (M) In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Congreg. (C) Amen.**

### CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

*Selected Passages with TLH 88*

M God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

**C And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world,**

M and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

**C For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.**

M But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.

**C Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light."**

♪ Sing    **This night a wondrous revelation  
Makes known to me God's love and grace;  
The Child that merits adoration  
Brings light to our benighted race;  
And though a thousand suns did shine,  
Still brighter were that Light divine.**

M The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light,

**C And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death  
Light has dawned.**

M ... the Dayspring from on high has visited us;

**C To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death,  
To guide our feet into the way of peace.**

M In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

**C That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.**

♪ Sing    **The Sun of Grace for thee is beaming;  
Rejoice, my soul, in Jesus' birth!**

**The light from yonder manger streaming  
Sends forth its rays o'er all the earth.  
It drives the night of sin away  
And turns our darkness into day.**

M Jesus said: "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

**C ... I did not come to judge the world but to save the world."**

M ... if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, ...

**C and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.**

M Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness,

**C and let us put on the armor of light.**

M For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness,

**C who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.**

♪ Sing    **This light, which all thy gloom can banish,  
The bliss of heaven glorifies;  
When sun and moon and stars shall vanish,  
Its rays shall still illumine the skies.  
This light through all eternity  
Thy heaven and all to thee shall be.**

M ... you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation,

**C His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;**

M For you were once darkness,

**C but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.**

M Let your light so shine before men,

**C that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.**

♪ Sing    **Jesus, precious Sun of Gladness,  
Fill Thou my soul with light, I pray.  
Dispel the gloomy night of sadness  
And teach Thou me this Christmas Day  
How I a child of light may be,  
Aglow with light that comes from Thee.**

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Luke 1:26-38

### CONFESSION OF FAITH

*Luther's Explanation to the Second Article of Apostles' Creed*

**I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord.**

**He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sin, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and His innocent suffering and death.**

He did this that I should be His very own, live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in eternal righteousness, innocence, and joy; just as He is risen from death, lives and reigns in eternity.

This is most certainly true.

HYMN OF THE DAY

**TLH 359** (red hymnal)

*Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies*

SERMON

John 8:12

Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying,  
“I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”

## **The Enlightenment of the World**

M The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen. *Philippians 4:7*

♪ Sing    **As with gladness men of old  
Did the guiding star behold;  
As with joy they hailed its light,  
Leading onward, beaming bright,  
So, most gracious Lord, may we  
Evermore be led by Thee!**

**As with joyful steps they sped,  
Savior, to Thy lowly bed,  
There to bend the knee before  
Thee whom heaven and earth adore,  
So may we with willing feet  
Ever seek Thy mercy-seat!**

## OFFERING OF HUMBLE HEARTS

♪ Sing    (after collection of the offering)  
**As they offered gifts most rare  
At Thy cradle, rude and bare,  
So may we with holy joy,  
Pure and free from sin's alloy,  
All our costliest treasures bring,  
Christ, to Thee, our heavenly King!**

## PRAYERS

M    Let my prayer rise before You as incense,

**C    And the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.**

M    Lord, have mercy;

**C    Christ, have mercy;**

M    Lord have mercy.

**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!**

♪ Sing    **Holy Jesus, every day  
Keep us in the narrow way;  
And when earthly things are past.  
Bring our ransomed souls at last  
Where they need no star to guide,  
Where no clouds Thy glory hide.**

M    O Lord, hear my prayer.

**C And let my cry come to You.**

**M** Let us pray,

O Lord God, from You comes all light and life. Illumine our hearts with Your Holy Spirit. Cause what we have heard tonight to grow within us that it may give light to our whole being leading us to walk in truth. Let the knowledge of our Savior's death and resurrection shine through us that the world may come to know you and Jesus Christ whom you have sent; through the same Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C Amen.**

♪ Sing    **In the heavenly country bright  
Need they no created light;  
Thou its Light, its Joy, its Crown,  
Thou its Sun which goes not down.  
There forever may we sing  
Alleluias to our King!**

**M** Let us bless the Lord

**C Thanks be to God**

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

**C Amen.**

#### CLOSING HYMN

**WS 714** (tan hymnal)

*Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light*

