



Arise, shine; for your
light has come ...

Isaiah 60:1, NRSV

Trinity Free Lutheran Church

3426 Chestnut Street – Grand Forks, ND 58201

Epiphany Sunday – January 2, 2022 - 10:00 am

Pastor Dan Antal

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Website: trinityfreegf.org

PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION: See pages 14-15 of the **Ambassador Hymnal** as you prepare for worship and Holy Communion.

PRELUDE

Karen Dalager

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

CALL TO WORSHIP

Awake! Rejoice! Our Light has come!

God's glory is pouring all around us, bathing everything in hope and peace.

No more will the darkness claim us!

Because of Christ, we can become children of God's great Light.

God's love is made known, not just to a few, but, to all people.

From near and far, we are drawn to God's light and love.

Let us rejoice and celebrate!

Thank you, God, for the power of Christ, Your light, in our lives!

*HYMN: 53 – *As With Gladness Men of Old*

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 heav'n and earth adore,
so may we with willing feet ever seek Thy mercy seat.

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 heav'nly King.

Holy Jesus, ev'ry 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.

In the heav'nly 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!

CALL TO CONFESSION

Almighty God, to Whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee and worthily magnify Thy holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

Holy and righteous God, merciful Father,
we confess to You that we are by nature sinful and unclean, and that we have sinned against You by thought, word, and deed. We have not loved You above all things, nor our neighbor as ourselves, and are worthy, therefore, to be cast away from Your presence if You should judge us according to our sins. But You have promised, O heavenly Father, to receive with tender mercy all repentant sinners who turn to You and with a living faith seek refuge in Your Fatherly compassion and in the merits of the Savior, Jesus Christ. Our transgressions You will not regard, nor count them against us. Relying upon Your promise, we confidently pray that You would be merciful and gracious to us and forgive us all our sins, to the praise and glory of Your Holy Name. Amen.

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

Create in me in a clean heart, O God: and restore a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence: and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation: and uphold me with Thy free Spirit.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FORGIVENESS

Almighty God, in His mercy, has given His Son to die for us, and, for His sake, forgives us all our sins. May you know, with complete assurance in the promises of Christ, that you have received the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

GREETING

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

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY: O God, as You revealed Your Son to the nations by the leading of a star, lead us now, by faith, to know Your presence in our lives, and bring us, at last, to the full vision of Your glory, through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

INTRODUCTION

Epiphany means "manifestation." On this Sunday we celebrate the revelation of Christ to the Gentiles—that is, to all nations. The Word and Sacraments are for us the great epiphany of God's grace and mercy. We go forth to witness to the light that shines brightly in our midst.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 60:1–6

Jerusalem is assured that nations will make a pilgrimage to her, because the light of God's presence is in her midst. The bountiful food of the sea and the profits of international trade will come streaming to Jerusalem and thereby declare God's praise.

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. ²For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. ³Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. ⁴Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms. ⁵Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. ⁶A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

Psalm 72:1–7, 10–14

¹Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the king's son;

²**that he may rule your people righteously and the poor with justice;**

³that the mountains may bring prosperity to the people, and the hills, in righteousness.

⁴**Let him defend the needy among the people, rescue the poor, and crush the oppressor.**

⁵May he live as long as the sun and moon endure, from one generation to another.

⁶**Let him come down like rain upon the mown field, like showers that water the earth.**

⁷In his time may the righteous flourish; and let there be an abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more.

¹⁰**May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles pay tribute, and the kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts.**

¹¹May all kings bow down before him, and all the nations do him service.

¹²**For the king delivers the poor who cry out in distress, the oppressed, and those who have no helper.**

¹³He has compassion on the lowly and poor, and preserves the lives of the needy.

¹⁴**From oppression and violence he redeems their lives, and precious is their blood in his sight.**

SECOND READING: Ephesians 4:25--5:2

The letter to the Ephesians declares that people are reconciled with God through God's grace, not by doing good works. As these verses indicate, those who experience God's forgiveness are called upon to live as the transformed people they have become.

So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another. ²⁶Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷and do not make room for the devil. ²⁸Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labor and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. ²⁹Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. ³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. ³¹Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, ³²and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. ^{5:1}Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, ²and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

***THE NICENE CREED**

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is the one true Church, apostolic and universal, whose holy faith let us now declare:

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, Begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father, By whom all things were made: Who for us, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, And was made man; And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried; And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, And ascended into heaven, And is seated on the right hand of the Father. And He shall come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead: Whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, The Lord and Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, Who spoke by the Prophets.

And I believe one holy Christian and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the Resurrection of the dead, And the Life of the world to come. Amen.

GLORIA PATRI - *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, World without end. Amen, Amen.

CALL TO PRAYER

Silent Prayer - Pastoral Prayer - Lord's Prayer

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Greetings to one and all, my name is **Mark Brickzin**, and I am your guest pastor for today... I am an ordained member of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC), and recently retired from active ministry. Along with my wife, **Sherry**, we moved to Grand Forks, ND, in late September of this year, and have become part of the faith family of Trinity Free Lutheran Church in Grand Forks. We are the parents of **Laura Fredrickson**, who, along with her husband, **Brian**, and son, **Sawyer**, are members of TFLC in Grand Forks.

Pastor Dan & Alicia Antal, along with **Peter and Lydia** are spending time away visiting with family. In the event of an emergency, you may contact **Pastor Dan** by cell phone or you may also make contact with one of the deacons of this congregation.

TODAY WE ARE CELEBRATING EPIPHANY -- Epiphany, from the Greek word *epiphaneia*, means an appearance or manifestation. Christians celebrate this festival each year on January 6, the 12th day after Christmas. Epiphany ends on Ash Wednesday, when Lent begins. **Epiphany marks the coming of the Magi, or wise men, to worship the baby Jesus.** Because the Magi were Gentiles, Epiphany symbolizes the first recognition of Christ by non-Jews. It's a reminder that Christ came as the light — and Savior — of the whole world. In the life of the church, **Epiphany has become a time to focus on a missionary emphasis, and of reaching out, and letting others know that Jesus can become their Savior and Lord.**

TODAY WE ARE ALSO CELEBRATING HOLY COMMUNION. Those who are part of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations take seriously the Apostle Paul's admonition to self-examination as found in 1 Corinthians 11:28, however, in view of that fact, we do serve an "open table." This means that all who are believers in Jesus Christ, and in His *real presence* in, with, and under, the elements of the bread and wine, are welcome to come and partake of the Lord's Supper regardless of denominational affiliation, or local church membership.

It is our custom to serve only those young persons who have been baptized and confirmed. Children who are yet to be confirmed, are welcome to join their parents in coming to the communion table and will received a blessing from the hand of the pastor.

God's grace is available to all who stand in need of it and our Lord invites one and all to "come and dine."

WE WILL BE RECEIVING COMMUNION AT THE KNEELING RAIL THIS MORNING. The ushers will indicate that you may come forward. When all have arrived, the pastor will ask you to kneel. If you find kneeling difficult, please feel free to stand, the attitude of a bowed heart is all that is necessary. You may eat and drink as you receive the elements. After the pastor gives the dismissal, please return to your seats and meditate while others commune.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Wednesday, January 5:

Confirmation – 6:00 pm
Youth Group – 7:00 pm
Bible Study – 7:00 pm

Sunday, January 9:

“Behold His Glory” KNOX 1310 AM – 7:30 am
Divine Worship – 10:00 am
Sunday school resumes – 11:15 am

Monday, January 17: Annual Reports Due
Special offering for World Missions

Monday, January 24: Quilting begins at church – 1:00 pm

Sunday, February 6: Annual Congregational meeting following worship service

PRAYER FOCUS: Remember to pray for those who are hurting or sick, those who have lost a loved one, young families with children, our nation, the AFLC, members & friends of Trinity,
Pastor Dan and Alicia Antal.

Vital Signs of Trinity Free Lutheran Church

12/24 Attn: - 85 ; **Views:** 24; **Offering:** \$961.40

12/26 Attn: - 48 ; **Views:** 7; **Offering:** \$2,088; **Radio:** \$20

01/09 Texts: Isaiah 43:1-7; Romans 6:1-11; Luke 3:15-22

January Music: Sara Taylor

*Are there additional announcements which need to be before us, this morning?
Then, at this time, I will call upon our ushers, for the blessing of our tithes and offerings.*

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

*Blessing - Offertory - *Response*

We give Thee but Thine own, what e're the gift may be; all that we have is Thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from Thee.

HYMN: *We Three Kings

We three kings of Orient are; bearing gifts we traverse afar,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.
O star of wonder, star of light, star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.

Born a King on Bethlehem's plain,
Gold I bring to crown Him again,
King forever, ceasing never, over us all to reign.
O star of wonder, star of light, star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.

Frankincense to offer have I; incense owns a Deity nigh;
Prayer and praising, all men raising, worship Him, God on high.
O star of wonder, star of light, star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.

Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume,
breathes a life of gathering gloom;
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying, sealed in the stone cold tomb.
O star of wonder, star of light, star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.

Glorious now behold Him arise; King and God and sacrifice;
Alleluia, Alleluia, earth to heaven replies.
O star of wonder, star of light, star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.

MESSAGE:

THE LIGHT STILL SHINES

Text: Matthew 2:1-12

Rev. Dr. Mark E. Brickzin, Guest Pastor

GOSPEL: Matthew 2:1–12

God's promise shines bright in the night as magi follow a star to honor a new king. Strangers from a faraway land, they welcome the long-awaited messiah of Israel.

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ²asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." ³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵They told

him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: ⁶'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'" ⁷Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." ⁹When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

This is the gospel of our Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Let's pray: O God, as we stand on the threshold of a new year -- we find ourselves wondering what on earth can possibly happen next. We wonder where on earth we can hide, when there is no longer any place of refuge, and safety, left on this small planet. And yet, we know that You are our refuge -- a very present help in time of trouble -- and that in you, we are safe for eternity.

Lord, our world has lost its way -- and yet, Your people, come to You today, to be guided, by the clear direction found in Your Word. Open its pages to us today, as we open our hearts, to receive the Word, You have for us, in its pages -- teach us, and guide us by the power of Your Holy Spirit, as we pray this in Jesus' reliable name. Amen.

Dear Friends, Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

An ancient Greek fable tells about a group of people who lived for generations in the darkness of underground caves.

This lifestyle was a result of intolerable living conditions on the surface of the earth.

But there was always a longing within these people for light.

Stories were told, among the people living underground, about the sun, and, how, on the “surface” there was light everywhere, and how everything flourished in the light.

Sitting around the fires, in their underground homes, listening to their elders, the children could only imagine what it would be like to live in the light.

Then stories began to be told about someone who would come and lead these subterranean dwellers to the surface, where light existed.

And so the people dreamed of a journey to “the surface.”

Then, one day, it happened.

A young man began to inspire hope in people’s hearts about life “in the light.”

He said that if people followed him, they would find a way to the surface and to the light.

And, as the good news spread, so also hope spread, and expectation was at an all-time high.

Finally the day came – and the young man announced that people should follow him to the surface.

Their journey was a long one, but, finally, the first few subterranean dwellers emerged into the light of day!

And more followed right behind them.

However, something unexpected happened.

These people, who had lived so long in darkness, didn't like the light!

It was too bright.

It hurt their eyes.

They complained that it really was better down in the shadows of their subterranean caves.

They wanted to go back.

They demanded to go back!

And so was the light rejected!

Their reaction to the light reminds me of a section from John's gospel, chapter 1 and verses 9-

14: The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God — children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

And, we also have these marvelous words from the ancient prophet Isaiah 60:1-6, *"Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn!"*

It is significant that the celebration of Epiphany comes at the darkest time of the year.

The days are short, the nights long.

There are people who are profoundly depressed by the lack of light – and their depression has even been given a name by the medical world – it is called “seasonal affective disorder” – with the acronym, S.A.D.

I recall an occasion, during a time when I was substitute teaching in the Pelican Rapids, MN, school system, that one little girl who was in the 4th grade at that time, brought with her a battery operated “light” to keep at her desk which was designed to help her when she was experiencing the effects of “seasonal affective disorder...”

I remember thinking to myself, at the time, that it might help if the entire school had those special lamps installed in every classroom!

This is also the season for a sort of after-Christmas-let-down.

Preparing for Christmas may have been a chore, but we tend to let out “all the stops” when Christmas comes, and, yet, the time after Christmas, is, for many people, a season of let-down and sadness.

And so, Isaiah’s, enthusiastic, summons: “*Arise, Shine!*” may, well, fall on ears unwilling to join in Isaiah’s enthusiasm.

A few verses further, Isaiah writes, “*A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.*”

The reference is, of course, to the birth of the Messiah and the coming of the wise men, from the East, to worship him.

Epiphany is the celebration of the coming of the magi to Bethlehem where they knelt before the Christ child, and offered their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

These men followed a star to find the Messiah.

I suppose if the wise men were to come today, they would come equipped with OnStar™ or some other Global Positioning System technology.

Then there would be have been no need for them to ask Herod for the location of Christ's birth.

The helpful voice coming from the dash of their car could have told them.

But these were primitive times, and a star was all they had.

But it was enough.

Because, as they were guided by that star, they found the child with his mother, and opened up their gifts, and worshiped him.

In a dark and desperate world, they had seen a star.

So much meaning is conveyed in the simple metaphors of darkness and light.

I would hazard a guess that there may be someone among us, today, who is stumbling about in darkness.

It may have something to do with your marriage, or even your relationship with one of your children.

It may have to do with your job, or your physical health.

It may even have to do with your relationship with God.

Regardless of the reason, however, somehow, the lights are very dim, right now, in your life.

And, you're trying to feel your way along, uncertain of your next step.

It happens to all of us at some time in our lives.

Nicholas Wolterstorff is a professor of Philosophical Theology at Yale University.

He wrote a book sometime back titled *Lament For a Son*.

It is about his grief following the tragic death of his 25-year-old son.

The boy perished in a European climbing accident.

In the book you will find these words, which this grief-stricken professor of theology wrote to

God: "Where are you in this darkness? I have learned to see you in the light, but, here in this darkness I cannot find you. Will my eyes ever adjust? Are there songs for singing, when the light has gone dim?"

What a wonderful and heart-wrenching question: "Are there songs for singing when the light has gone dim?"

I'm guessing those very times were the reason the songs called, "the blues" were written...

They are songs for singing when the light has gone dim...

Do you know about such times?

If not, some day you will.

Life happens.

Hurts, terrible hurts, happen.

The light dims, and we wonder -- how will I ever find my way?

Real estate people have learned that to succeed in the sale of a house, they need to turn on the lights in every room, before an interested customer steps inside.

Even on a bright, sunny, day, even in a home with many windows, the turned-on lights add warmth and cheer, leaving no gloomy corners.

We know about gloomy corners.

Someone in this room is in a gloomy corner right now.

If that is your situation, then the gospel is for you.

Christ came to dispel darkness, darkness that has enveloped the world in which we live, and the darkness that envelops each of us from time to time.

“God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

Everlasting life isn't just about heaven.

It's about light coming into a dark world.

It's about joy breaking into a heart that's depressed.

It's about the presence of God giving comfort and hope – here and now!

In 1958, a U.S. soldier wandered the streets of Berlin to see the sights.

Despite the bustling new life in parts of the city, reminders remained of the destruction of World War 2.

Walking through a residential area, one evening, he saw an open space edged with flowers.

In the center, stood the stone front, of what had, once, been a church.

But, the building was no longer there -- it had been bombed away.

And, the resulting rubble had been cleared away in an attempt to build a little park.

All that was left, was the doorway of the former church, shaped in a Gothic arch, and over it

was carved into the stone in German: *Himmel und Erde werden vergehen; aber meine Worte werden nicht vergehen.*

They were the words of Jesus, words of hope that He spoke to those around Him, and which still bring us hope, today... *“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.”*

As this soldier stepped through the arch where the doors had once been, he found himself in an open space.

What was once a place of worship had since been reduced to a patch of stone pavement and open sky.

But the fact that the church building was no longer there, did not negate God’s promise.

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away!”

Pastor Dick Innes tells about some city workers in Hamilton, Canada, who were trimming trees along a certain street.

In one tree they found a nest with several baby robins in it.

They decided not to trim this tree until the nest was empty.

When it was abandoned, the workers returned.

In that nest they found a piece of paper, along with dried twigs, which the robins had used to build the nest for their babies.

And, on the paper were printed the words, *“We trust in the Lord our God!”*

Those birds had no idea what was on that paper – they simply followed their God given instincts as they built a nest in which to raise their young.

And, yet, not truer words could be found, as the animals of this earth, have no other recourse than to simply trust in the care and keeping of the Lord God.

We humans should follow that example and construct our lives on the basis of that trust – no surer foundation could be found for our lives.

The Psalmist wrote of it when he said, in Psalm 119:105, *“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path!”*

This is what the Gospel is all about.

We do not have to stay in the darkness.

We can come in to the light.

We can make that light our own.

We don't have to give up.

A light is always shining.

It is God's light, and it is available to anyone who would receive it.

But one thing more: **when we open ourselves to the light of Christ, that light shines through us, and we become a beacon to others.**

Have you ever heard the name Karl Downs? Probably not.

Karl Downs was a pastor in Oakland, California, who died of a heart attack at an early age.

Several years before he died, though, he was asked by the Juvenile Court, in that region, to take responsibility for a young man who was always getting into trouble.

Karl Downs accepted that responsibility, and in a very kind, loving way, he became a substitute father for that boy.

You've never heard of Karl Downs, but you may have heard of that boy.

His name was Jackie Robinson.

He was the first person of color to ever play major league baseball.

Robinson was an outstanding athlete and an outstanding man as well.

But, if it hadn't been for a man by the name of Karl Downs, you and I might never have heard of a man by the name of Jackie Robinson...

What did Karl Downs do?

Very simply, he let his little light shine.

That's what the children's song says: "This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine."

And, that's what Isaiah says, as well: *"Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you."*

This is what the Gospel is all about -- the light of God shines into our darkness.

In one of Britain's darkest hours in WW 2, the people listened, by their radios, on New Year's Eve, as their King, George VI, gave his annual greeting to his people over the BBC.

It was truly a fearsome time -- the very existence of the entire nation was at risk, as most of Europe had already fallen to Nazi Germany.

The king quoted some words from a woman named Millie Louise Haskins, which have given hope to many who stumble in darkness: "I said to the man who stands at the Gate of the Year, 'Give me light that I may tread safely into the unknown.' And he replied, 'Step into the darkness, put your hand into the hand of God, and that will be to you better than a light, and safer than a known way.'"

My friends, I invite you to put your hand into the hand of God.

That will be to you, better than a light, and safer than a known way.

Now go into the world, and spread God's light to everyone you meet.

Let's pray: *Lord, help us to allow your light of hope to shine through all of our lives. As people are groping about us to find their way in life, may they find their way through the darkness of this world as they see the light of eternity reflected from our hearts and lives. For we ask all this in the name of Jesus Christ -- light of the world. Amen.*

*HYMN: ***Arise, Your Light Has Come*** (tune of # 458)

Arise, your light has come! The Spirit's call obey;
show forth the glory of your God which shines on you today.

Arise, your light has come! Fling wide the prison door;
proclaim the captive's liberty, good tidings to the poor.

Arise, your light has come! All you in sorrow born,
bind up the brokenhearted ones and comfort those who mourn.

Arise, your light has come! The mountains burst in song!
Rise up like eagles on the wing, God's pow'r will make us strong.

*BENEDICTION

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

WORDS OF INSTITUTION:

On the night that He was betrayed, our Lord Jesus, took bread, and when He had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples saying, *Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.*

In the same way, after supper, He took the cup and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, *Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins; do this, as often as you shall drink it, in remembrance of me.*

PREPARING FOR THE FEAST: Dear friends in Christ, as we come to the Lord's table, today, let us come expecting God to meet us. He is present, among us, in, with, and under, the elements of the bread and the cup. Ask Him to speak to you, today, in your area of greatest need, and then draw the healing strength our Lord offers us through His broken body and shed blood. The door to God's banquet hall is open. Let us enter into the joy of this feast.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE ELEMENTS

COMMENDATION: Our crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ has now given you His holy body and blood, through which He has made full satisfaction for all your sins. May He strengthen and preserve you in true faith unto everlasting life. **Amen.**

*BENEDICTION

***THREE-FOLD AMEN**

*DOXOLOGY

Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow; praise Him, all creatures here below; praise Him above ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

**Stand if you are able to do so, otherwise, feel free to remain seated.*

WELCOME! It is our prayer that Jesus Christ will become your Savior and Lord; and that you will experience God's wonderful presence and the joy of the Holy Spirit as we worship together. We invite you to **worship with us again** and if you have no church home, we invite you to **become part of the Trinity Free Lutheran Church family! You are always welcome!**

Did You Invite Someone To Worship Today?