

## “All Other Light Is Insufficient”

Isaiah 9:2-7

Earlier this evening, the children presented the Christmas story with the light of the Star of Bethlehem announcing the birth of Jesus Christ-- the Light of the world. We also heard from the prophet Isaiah. God spoke through him and promised to give His people a sign that He would save them from their enemies. The sign that He gave them was that the virgin will give birth to a son, and will call Him Immanuel.

Tonight, we hear from the prophet Isaiah once again. “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light...For to us a child is born, to us a son is given . . . And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

We have seen a great light: Jesus Christ is the light of the world. The sharing of light, as we are going to do tonight, is a long-standing Christian tradition. Light is so important in the Christmas celebration, because it is so important in the history of God’s relationship with His people.

From the beginning, when God created the world, the first thing that He created was light. God said, "Let there be light, and there was light." In the New Testament, the presence of Christ and the love of God is often referred to as light in a dark world. Jesus says, "You are the light of the world . . . Let your light shine before men that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

St. Paul says, "if anyone is in Christ, He is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." You are a creation of God to whom God has said, "Let there be light." When you were called to faith in Baptism, God said to you, "Let there be light in your heart."

Light has very unique qualities. Except for the light of the Sun, most of the time we can't feel it. But it has energy. It has heat. Light can fill a room, or it can shine down and illuminate just one place. When those who were walking in darkness see a great light, what happens to the darkness that was around them? It disappears. Where there is light, there can be no darkness. When you are in the light, darkness ceases to exist. Yet, a child of God can stand in the light, and it can be very clear that darkness is all around us.

On that glorious night in Bethlehem, Jesus Christ, the light of the world,

entered into a dark world. His birth was announced with the visible, yet insufficient light of the Bethlehem Star. But since that day, in this sinful world, the people who were walking in darkness have seen a great light.

There is nothing insufficient about the light which Christ has brought into the world. We are simply reminded far too often that those without Christ wander in deep darkness and remain in the darkness, and very often love the darkness because they don't know anything else. They don't realize what it means to live in the light of Christ. They have not experienced the forgiveness of sins, "the yoke of [their] burden" being lifted, as Isaiah says.

In a little while, we will gather in the darkness of this night, and share the light of Christ symbolized in the passing of the flame from the Christ candle to each one of your candles, and greeting one another with the words, "Merry Christmas."

Where Christ is present, darkness disappears. When Christ is not present, there is only darkness.

We are the children of light. God has said to each one of you, "Let there be light, in your heart." Let the light of Christ shine in you and through you for all the world to see. As Jesus says, "Let your light shine before men

that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

Tonight, we greet one another with the light of the Christ candle, just as Christians have done for centuries. Like the Star of Bethlehem, it is a visible, yet insufficient light.

We are filled with a great light – the light of Christ. May the light of Christ shine in you, and may all who see that light praise our Father in heaven. And have a Merry Christmas. Amen.