



audio & digital  
versions

*welcome to the Christmas walk!*

Our prayer is that your time here would be meaningful...full of laughter and memories with those you love. But even more so, we pray that your time here would be flooded with light...and not just from all the twinkling LEDs...but that you would encounter the Light of the world, the Hope in the darkness, the Prince of Peace. The One born in a manger who sees you and loves you and wants to shine his light into your dark places!



## John 1:1-5

In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. He existed in the beginning with God. God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.

When John sets out to write the story of Jesus...he curiously doesn't start at the obvious place most biographies start. Why? Because Jesus' story doesn't start in a manger in Bethlehem. It begins a bit further back...

### *In the beginning...*

John believed (rightfully so) that we needed a bit of context in order to grasp the earth-shattering, world-altering Good News that descended into that lowly manger one silent night.

John took the story back to its true origin...the moment of creation because the story he was about to tell was going to completely rewrite EVERYTHING! He was telling the story of re-creation.

The truth of the matter is, when John set out to account for the life of Jesus in his Gospel...he didn't set out to merely tell the story of one man's life. Because the story of Jesus is the story of EVERY human soul. It is the start of my story. Your story too.

Eternity is written on every human heart. We are a part of the story that started at the beginning...and has no end.

We are being re-created.

If you're familiar with the story of Narnia, you may remember the lamppost that also goes back to the story of creation. It's light never goes out, requires no fuel, and shines continually...even in the dark of winter.

How can this eternal light...this light that has always existed, bring you hope today...even if you find yourself in a long season of winter?

### *pray*

Jesus,  
Light from the very beginning, Word who spoke creation into being—we pause before You in awe.  
You are a Light that shines in the darkness,  
a Light that gives life, a Light no shadow can overcome.  
Lord, let that Light shine again in us today.  
Rewrite what has been broken. Re-create what has been lost.  
Speak Your “let there be” over the places in us  
that still feel formless or void.  
Remind us that Your story is our story—  
that Your coming is the beginning of our becoming.

*amen.*

## Luke 2:8-14

<sup>8</sup>Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. <sup>10</sup>Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. <sup>11</sup>For unto you born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup>And this will be the sign unto you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."

<sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

<sup>14</sup>"Glory to God in the highest,  
And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

If you're like me, there's nothing quite as nostalgic as Charlie Brown Christmas. Just hearing the first few notes of the Vince Guaraldi Trio and I am immersed in Christmas Spirit. I didn't grow up going to church, so realistically when Linus shared the true meaning of Christmas with Charlie Brown, he was also sharing the Good News of the Gospel with me as well. As a child, there was something in me that innately knew Linus was telling the truth. I know this is God's grace in my life.

The truth is, when Linus (Luke) says, "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people," he was speaking to you, and to me.

Jesus, who was there at the beginning, who gave life to everything in creation, humbled himself, wrapped himself in human flesh (and swaddling clothes), in order to dwell with the people he loves.

The Gospel is the stunning news that when we could not reach God, God came to us—entering our darkness with light, our brokenness

with healing, and our death with life. Jesus makes a way for us to be forgiven, renewed, and welcomed home.

And THAT is what Christmas is all about, Charlie Brown.

*pray*

Jesus,

Thank You for the good news that first broke into a dark field under a quiet sky—news announced to ordinary shepherds.

Thank You that the Gospel is still that same good news today:

that You have come near,

that peace has arrived in a Person,

that grace has entered our world


and invites us home.

Christ our Savior, we receive Your peace,

Your presence, and Your saving love.

*amen.*





Your word is a lamp to guide my feet  
and a light for my path.

*psalm 119:105*

Send out your light and your truth; let them guide me. Let them lead me to your holy mountain, to the place where you live. There I will go to the altar of God, to God—the source of all my joy.

*psalm 43:3-4*

How precious is your unfailing love, O God!  
All humanity finds shelter in the shadow of your wings. For you are the fountain of life, the light by which we see.

*psalm 36:7,9*

Why light?

Why does God choose so often the imagery of light to showcase his character and nature? Well, if you've ever woken in the middle of the night and stumbled toward the bathroom, only to bang your shin into the bed frame...you know the importance of light. If you've ever experienced a power outage, yet found a candle, you know the importance of light. If you've ever found yourself in a dark and desolate parking garage alone and late at night, you understand the importance of light. And if you've ever experienced the joy of a sunrise after a long, hard night...you know the power of light.

Light expels darkness. Our experience shows us that light always wins. When you light a candle, the darkness subsides...yet darkness alone cannot snuff out light.

Light brings safety. When we turn on the light we can see the dangers that encroach.

Light helps us see and guides our path, like the one you see here. One of the greatest modern conveniences is the ability to have a flashlight as part of a phone, in your pocket at all times. Without light, we are lost to fumble and guess our way through.

Light brings new-ness. Like the sunrise, light promises a new beginning, a do-over, an assurance that the night doesn't get the final say.

*pray*

Lord of Light,  
You know how easily we stumble in the dark—  
how we lose our bearings in uncertainty,  
and feel the weight of shadows that stretch long across our lives.

Jesus, Light of the World,  
shine on the path before us.  
Where we are unsure, guide our steps.  
Where we are afraid, illuminate what is true.  
Where we are weary, lift our eyes to the promise of morning.  
Drive back the shadows that cloud our judgment  
and quiet the fears that whisper in the dark.  
Show us the dangers that hide at the edges,  
and lead us in the safe and steady way.

*Amen.*





## Matthew 2: 1-2, 9-11

<sup>1</sup> Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About that time some wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking, <sup>2</sup> “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we have come to worship him.” <sup>9</sup> And the star they had seen in the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! <sup>11</sup> They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him.

The "Star of Bethlehem" and the story of the wise men perhaps provides one of the greatest mysteries of the Christmas story. Scientists and scholars have tried to explain the celestial phenomenon that occurred in those first century skies...and while it's interesting to wonder upon God's timing of stars' alignment...the simple truth is that the radiance of this star drew these outsiders in.

While we call them "wise men" the term Magi refers to astrologers, likely from Babylon or Persia. They were certainly not Jewish and are the least likely of characters to be found bowing at the feet of the Jewish Messiah.

And yet...they traversed miles and rearranged their whole lives because the promise of that star beckoned them, "come."

When the wise men so famously followed that star, they were naively unaware that the light they were seeking wasn't shining from a cosmic body or even a sign of an earthly king... but from a God-become-human-body that was about to bring the true LIGHT into the world. A light that would shine in the darkness. A light that would bring life to everyone. A light so profoundly bright that no depth of darkness would ever be able to extinguish it!

That same light that drew those first outsiders in is calling to you as well...drawing you in to himself.

Jeremiah 31:3 says, "I have loved you, my people, with an everlasting love. With unfailing love I have drawn you to myself."

How will you respond? Will you seek his light and let it guide you? Will you allow it to fill you with joy? Will you bend your knee and offer him gifts of worship?

*pray*

Lord of everlasting love,  
You are the God who calls out to wandering hearts.  
Thank you that You have set Your heart on me long before I knew how to look for You.  
Draw me again, God.  
May I follow Your leading with wonder.  
May I seek Your presence with joy.  
And when I find myself before You, Jesus—true Light of the world—  
teach me to bow low in worship and offer all that I am.  
Let my life become a testimony  
to the God who still calls outsiders in,  
still reaches into shadows, and still says, "Come."

*amen.*



## Luke 2: 13- 14

<sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

<sup>14</sup> “Glory to God in the highest,  
And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”



## 2 Corinthians 4: 6- 7

<sup>6</sup>For God, who said, “Let there be light in the darkness,” has made this light shine in our hearts so we could know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. We now have this light shining in our hearts, <sup>7</sup>but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure.



So we could know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ.  
HARK! The herald angels sing. GLORY to the newborn king!  
GLORY to God! GLORY in the highest! O Come let us adore him.

Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love’s pure light. Radiant beams from Thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace.

As the angles announced to the shepherds, Christmas is about God’s glory unleashed on the earth! The fullness of God’s glory contained in the tiny vessel of a newborn baby. What a wonder!

Glory. This is a “churchy” word that we throw around sometimes without really considering the implications. Literally, “glory” means “weight”...the heaviness of something, the power of it’s gravity. God’s glory is God’s God-ness... and up until the point of Jesus’ birth, witnessing God’s glory came with a serious health warning. Even more so than looking directly at the sun, looking at the glory of God can damage more than just your eyes.


And yet...WE now have this light shining in OUR hearts. WE are fragile clay jars containing a great treasure. You are a carrier of God’s heavy, radiant, substantial, unwieldy light...and without the power of Jesus in us, it would be too much to bear. What an honor to carry such a treasure.

*pray*

Glorious God,  
How can we grasp the wonder of Your glory?  
The angels cried it out on that holy night...And still their song echoes through every age, stirring our hearts to wonder and worship.  
In mercy, You wrapped that blazing glory in swaddling clothes. You made Yourself see-able, touchable, knowable. O come, let us adore You—  
And now, astonishingly, You have placed that same light within us.  
Your glory in us. Your radiance through us.  
Lord, make us faithful stewards of this gift.  
Let Your heavy, holy presence anchor our lives.  
May our lives become a quiet chorus to the angels’ song—  
Glory to God in the highest!

*amen.*





Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, “I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won’t have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.”

*John 8:12*

What a promise!

When John started his gospel, he claimed that Jesus’ life brought light to everyone and that light brought LIFE. Here we have, Jesus himself, in his own words, saying the same thing.

This is quite the claim (and you better believe it raised a few eyebrows). If you follow Jesus, you no longer have to walk in darkness. While darkness is an unavoidable reality until the day Jesus arrives again (oh how we long for that day!), you are no longer defined by the darkness. That is NOT who you are anymore.

This is the beauty of the Christmas story.

You have the LIGHT that leads to *Life*.

This is what Jesus wants for you...and not just you...THE WHOLE WORLD! And he doesn't just want ANY life for us all... When Jesus says his light leads to life, he doesn’t simply mean a beating heart and air in your lungs. No, mere survival is not the life Jesus intends to give. In fact, a little later Jesus says, “I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of.” (John 10:10) Other translations say a “rich and satisfying life”.

This is the whole point of Christmas! The reason Jesus, who was there at creation, full of divinity, elected to

take on flesh and be born to a human mother. Jesus came so that YOU can live FULLY ALIVE in him! So that you no longer have to walk in darkness or sleepwalk through life. So LIVE as a person of the light. It’s time to shake off some of that residual darkness. Awake, O sleeper. Rise up! Christ wants to give you his light. It’s yours for the taking! He longs to see you thriving, living into the fullness of who he created you to be. Will you reach out and take hold of this life?

*pray*

Jesus, Light of the world,  
I stand in awe before Your promise—  
that whoever follows You will never walk in darkness  
but will have the light that leads to life.  
What a gift. What a rescue. What a Savior.  
Lord, I confess how easily I forget who I am:  
a person of the light, redeemed, awakened, set free.  
Darkness still presses in at times—  
fear, confusion, weariness, old habits—  
but darkness is no longer my identity.  
You have spoken a truer word over me.  
Today, I reach out for the life You offer.  
I open my hands to receive Your fullness.  
Make me a person who walks wide awake—  
someone who reflects Your light,  
who lives with joy, courage, and purpose  
because You dwell within me.

*amen.*





## Matthew 5:14-16

<sup>14</sup>“You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup>No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. <sup>16</sup>In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

We started this journey with Jesus being called the “Light of the World” and we finish it by Jesus naming US the very same thing! WHAT?!

Because we now carry God’s eternal light within our fragile clay jars, Jesus has entrusted us with the task of world-illumination.

The light entered the world when Jesus carried God’s glory into the body of a human baby. However, the light didn’t leave after his resurrection and ascension to heaven. God isn’t finished yet!

During the advent season, we look with anticipation to the day of Jesus’ second arrival...when he will flood our whole world with his light, once and for all. When he will wipe away every tear and make all things new.

However, until that day, right now, in the in-between-times, WE are the carriers of the light. We are the signposts, illuminating the places where God’s power is at work. We get the amazing responsibility to show glimpses of heaven’s glory to a world in desperate need of God’s light and love.

Moreover, we are not called to this task alone. One candle can diminish the darkness...but fill a room with a thousand candles and the darkness ceases to exist. May we, in this divided and broken world, find oneness with each other, united by the common purpose of igniting our world with God’s love!

*carry the light from this place.*

Grab a lantern to remind you of your calling to be a world-illuminator and also take a Christmas Eve invitation to someone God is beckoning into his light.

*pray*

Lord Jesus, Light of the world,  
You came as a fragile child, carrying the glory of God into our darkness.  
And now You call us, Your followers, to carry that same light—to be reflections of Your love, hope, and life in the places that need it most.  
Holy Spirit, empower us in this in-between time.  
Help us not to shrink back from the task You’ve entrusted to us, but to shine boldly where fear, sadness, and brokenness linger.  
Let our lives be signposts of heaven’s glory, glimpses of Your kingdom for a world in desperate need.  
Unite us, Lord, as Your people.  
Let our hearts burn with shared purpose, so that together we can flood every corner with Your light.  
Lord, help us to shine faithfully, to carry Your light with courage, joy, and love, and grace, so that others may see You and give glory to God in the highest.

*amen.*