

Mt. Pisgah Lutheran Church

Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

March 15, 2023

Midweek Lenten Vespers



Light Shining in the Darkness

“Let there be light,” God said (Genesis 1:3). And there was light. Through the promised treasure of His Word, God keeps speaking to us. And because He does, there is light. Light from above! Light never-ending! Light that enlightens our way to life everlasting! Jesus Christ is this “light of the world” (John 8:12), the light no darkness can overcome. By His Word and Spirit, this light breaks through again today, enters our lives, and enables us to shine brightly for Him.

2606 Chimney Rock Road—Hendersonville, NC 28792

Church Phone 692-7027

Preschool Phone 698-5900

Church E-mail: mtpisgahlcms@gmail.com

Website: www.mtpisgahlutheran.com

**Church Office Hours 9:00 AM—3:00 PM M-TH
9:00 AM—1:00 PM on Friday**

*Stand***Invocation**

- P** In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

Opening Sentences*2 Corinthians 5:21, alt.; Isaiah 53:5*

- P** For our sake God made Jesus to be sin who knew no sin,
C so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.
P But He was wounded for our transgressions;
C He was crushed for our iniquities;
P upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
C and with His stripes we are healed.

Confession and Absolution*Based on Philippians 2:1–11*

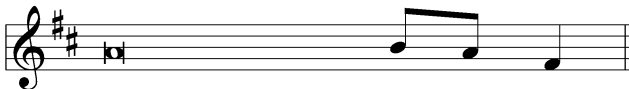
- P** Lord Jesus, search our hearts and minds that we may receive Your Word, share in Your Spirit, and be renewed in our relationships with You and with one another.

We observe a moment of silence for personal prayers of confession.

- P** With humble hearts, let us pray together:
C Lord Jesus, the Father's only Son, the King of kings and Lord of lords, hear us as we pray.
P Darkness seeks to overtake us and rob us of the light, distracting us from Your never-failing presence in our lives.
C Our rebellion against You in thought, word, and action is why You died for us—
P to forgive our sins, to redeem our lives, and to cancel the debt we owe to God.
C With hearts that are humble and lives ever grateful, help us to receive Your grace, bow before You in worship, and confess that You alone are Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
Amen.
P Almighty God our heavenly Father shows His mercy to us in the sending of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, the true light of the world who scatters the darkness of our sin and shines upon us the bright beams of His mercy. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.



L O Lord, o - pen my lips,



C and my mouth will de - clare Your praise.



Make haste, O God, to de - liv - er me;
 make haste to help me, O Lord.
 Glo-ry be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spir - it;
 as it was in the be - gin - ning, is now, and will be for-ev-er. A - men.
 Praise to You, O Christ, Lamb of our sal - va - tion.

Psalmody

Psalm

Psalm 27:1–4, 13–14 Tone C



¹The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom | shall I fear? *
 The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I | be afraid?

²When evildoers assail me to eat | up my flesh, *
 my adversaries and foes, it is they who stum- | ble and fall.

³Though an army encamp against me, my heart | shall not fear; *
 though war arise against me, yet I will be | confident.

⁴One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek | after: *
 that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life,
 to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his | temple.

¹³I believe that I shall look upon the goodness | of the LORD *
 in the land of the | living!

¹⁴Wait | for the LORD; *
 be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait | for the LORD!

Collect of the Day

- P** Let us pray... Lord Jesus Christ, You are the light of the world, and no amount of darkness in our world can overcome Your presence shining in our lives.
- C** **Renew our hearts and minds during this Lenten season as we receive the promised treasures of Your Word;**
- P** for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** **Amen.**

Sit

Hymn

427 In the Cross of Christ I Glory



1 In the cross of Christ I glo - ry, Tow'r - ing
2 When the woes of life o'er - take me, Hopes de -
3 When the sun of bliss is beam - ing Light and
4 Bane and bless - ing, pain and plea - sure By the

o'er the wrecks of time. All the light of sa - cred
ceive, and fears an - noy, Nev - er shall the cross for -
love up - on my way, From the cross the ra - diance
cross are sanc - ti - fied; Peace is there that knows no

sto - ry Gath - ers round its head sub - lime.
sake me; Lo, it glows with peace and joy.
stream - ing Adds more lus - ter to the day.
mea - sure, Joys that through all time a - bide.

Readings

Old Testament Reading

Genesis 1:1–5

- P** A reading from Genesis, the first chapter.

¹In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. ³And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

- P** O Lord, have mercy on us.
- C** **Thanks be to God.**

Epistle Reading

Ephesians 5:1–2, 8–14

P A reading from Ephesians, the fifth chapter.

¹Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ²And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

⁸for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹(for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), ¹⁰and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹²For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. ¹³But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, ¹⁴for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, “Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

P O Lord, have mercy on us.

G Thanks be to God.

Stand

Gospel Reading

John 8:12–18

P A reading from St. John, the eighth chapter.

¹²Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” ¹³So the Pharisees said to him, “You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true.” ¹⁴Jesus answered, “Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. ¹⁵You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. ¹⁶Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. ¹⁷In your Law it is written that the testimony of two men is true. ¹⁸I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me.”

P O Lord, have mercy on us.

G Thanks be to God.

Responsory (Lent)

LSB 231



L 1 Deliver me, O Lord, my God, for You are
the God of my sal - va - tion.
2 In You, O Lord, do I put my trust, leave me not, O Lord, my God.
3 Deliver me, O Lord, my God, for You are
the God of my sal - va - tion.



G Rescue me from my en - e - mies, protect me
from those who rise a - gainst me.

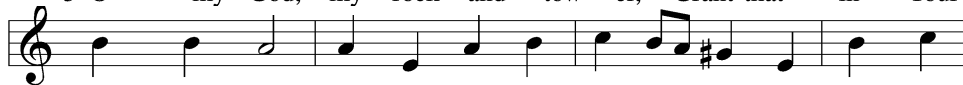
Sit

Hymn

421 Jesus, Grant That Balm and Healing



1 Je - sus, grant that balm and heal - ing In Your ho - ly
 2 Should some lust or sharp temp - ta - tion Fas - ci - nate my
 3 If the world my heart en - tic - es With the broad and
 4 Ev - 'ry wound that pains or grieves me By Your wounds, Lord,
 5 O my God, my rock and tow - er, Grant that in Your



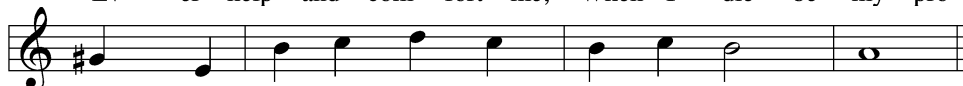
wounds I find, Ev - 'ry hour that I am feel - ing Pains of
 sin - ful mind, Draw me to Your cross and pas - sion, And new
 eas - y road, With se - duc - tive, sin - ful vi - ces, Let me
 is made whole; When I'm faint, Your cross re - vives me, Grant - ing
 death I trust, Know - ing death has lost its pow - er Since You



bod - y and of mind. Should some e - vil thought with - in
 cour - age I shall find. Or should Sa - tan press me hard,
 weigh the aw - ful load You were will - ing to en - dure.
 new life to my soul. Yes, Your com - fort ren - ders sweet
 crushed it in the dust. Sav - ior, let Your ag - o - ny



Tempt my treach - 'rous heart to sin, Show the per - il, and from
 Let me then be on my guard, Say - ing, "Christ for me was
 Help me flee all thoughts im - pure And to mas - ter each temp -
 Ev - 'ry bit - ter cup I meet; For Your all - a - ton - ing
 Ev - er help and com - fort me; When I die be my pro -

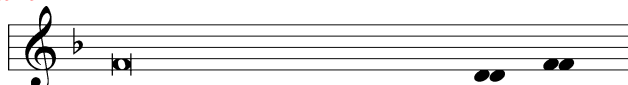


sin - ning Keep me from its first be - gin - ning.
 wound - ed," That the tempt - er flee con - found - ed.
 ta - tion, Calm in prayer and med - i - ta - tion.
 pas - sion Has pro - cured my soul's sal - va - tion.
 tec - tion, Light and life and res - ur - rec - tion.

Sermon

Canticle

Stand



L Let my prayer rise before You as in - cense,



C and the lifting up of my hands as the eve - ning sac - ri - fice.

Hymn

934 My Soul Now Magnifies the Lord



1 My soul now mag - ni - fies the Lord; My spir - it
2 For He a - lone who shows such might Has done a -
3 His arm is strong; His strength is great. He scat - ters
4 He feeds the hun - gry as His own; The wealth - y



leaps for joy in Him. He keeps me in His kind re -
maz - ing things to me. His mer - cy flows; His name like
those of proud in - tent And casts them down from high es -
leave with emp - ty hands. He gives His help to Is - ra -



gard, And I am blest for time to come.
light Re - mains in time per - pet - ual - ly.
tate, Then gives the low His nour - ish - ment.
el; His gra - cious prom - ise al - ways stands.

Sit

Offering

Abide With Me

Andrew Moore

Prayer

Stand

Kyrie

LSB 233



C Lord, have mer-cy; Christ, have mer-cy; Lord, have mer-cy.

Lord's Prayer

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.

Collects



L O Lord, hear my prayer.



C And let my cry come to You.

Prayer

- P** Gracious God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we thank You for blessing us with the opportunity to meditate again on the cross of Christ and receive Your promised treasures.
- C** **Grant that the message of the Lamb of God slain for our salvation bring us the riches of Your pardon and peace.**
- P** Lead us to see that our sins caused Jesus' great agony in the garden, that our sins nailed Him to the cross of Calvary,
- C** **that He was forsaken by His Father so that we might never be forsaken, and that He died so that we may live.**
- P** Lord Jesus, grant that especially during this sacred season the treasured story of Your wondrous love for us would draw us closer to You.
- C** **Enable us to walk in the light of Your grace, knowing that You are truly the light of the world that darkness can never overcome.**
- P** Holy Spirit, lift up troubled souls everywhere. Grant wholeness to those hurting in heart, body, and mind. Work Your healing power in the lives of those in need.
- C** **All glory, honor, and praise be to You, with the Father and the Son, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

Collect for Peace and Luther's Evening Prayer

- L** O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey Your commandments and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness.
- C** **I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.**

Stand

Benedicamus



L Let us bless the Lord.



C Thanks be to God.

Benediction

LSB 234



P The grace of our Lord Je - sus Christ and the love of God



and the communion of the Holy Spir - it be with you all.



C A - men.

Hymn

878 Abide with Me



1 A - bide with me, fast falls the e - ven - tide.
2 I need Thy pres - ence ev - 'ry pass - ing hour;
3 Come not in ter - rors, as the King of kings,
4 Swift to its close ebbs out life's lit - tle day;



The dark - ness deep - ens; Lord, with me a - bide.
What but Thy grace can foil the tempt - er's pow'r?
But kind and good, with heal - ing in Thy wings;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glo - ries pass a - way;



When oth - er help - ers fail and com - forts flee,
Who like Thy - self my guide and stay can be?
Tears for all woes, a heart for ev - 'ry plea.
Change and de - cay in all a - round I see;



Help of the help - less, O a - bide with me.
Through cloud and sun - shine, O a - bide with me.
Come, Friend of sin - ners, thus a - bide with me.
O Thou who chang - est not, a - bide with me.

- 5 I fear no foe with Thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still if Thou abide with me!
- 6 Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies.
Heav'n's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

Postlude

My Soul Now Magnifies the Lord

Johann Pachelbel

Home Devotional: Salt Sweetens and Preserves

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." John 8:12

INTRODUCTION

The contrasting themes of light and darkness are one of the strongest in all of Scripture, beginning at creation when God creates light and then separates light from darkness (see Genesis 1:1–5). Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity and the Word made flesh (see John 1:1–2), said at creation, "Let there be light" (Genesis 1:3). In the New Testament, Jesus identifies Himself as the light of the world (see John 8:12), and He calls His people the light of the world (see Matthew 5:14). Jesus enlightens all who believe in Him. His light dispels sin and darkness, filling you with so much light and joy that you truly reflect His light to the world.

Although God's Word, first, exposes all my sin (see Hebrews 4:12), it also tells me, second, that in Jesus Christ I am forgiven. As His baptized child, I am empowered to walk as a child of the light (see Ephesians 5:8), reflecting His light to others. When darkness encases people, it presses them down, depresses them, and fills them with little or no hope. Sin loves to lurk in the dark, unexposed places. Jesus indicates that sin exists within all our hearts, where murder, greed, lust, and covetousness lie (see Matthew 15:19–20). However, all it takes is one candle to shatter the darkness and bring light. Jesus transparently and lovingly exposes our darkest deeds so that sin may be identified for what it is, be nailed down, and be honestly confessed. This is what Lent is all about, having your sin openly exposed by the light so that it may be washed away, again and again.

The true Light, who gives light to every man, faced the greatest darkness of betrayal, death, and loneliness on the cross. Completely forsaken by God and rejected by man, He endured death for you. Yet, because He rose from the dead, His cross shines, filling you with warmth and joy every day of life. Candles and lamps were always lit throughout the Old Testament, even placed inside the tabernacle and the Holy Place (see Exodus 37:17). Lamps and light are also mentioned in the Gospels, such as the ten virgins with lamps and oil in Matthew 25. In the Revelation to John, the seven lampstands correlate with the seven churches (see chapters 1–3). Often in our sanctuaries, naves, and chancels, candles are numerous—often found in sevenfold lampstands, along with two

sacramental candles on the altar (identifying the two natures of Christ and His body and blood given in the Sacrament of the Altar). Additionally, a paschal candle can be found in many congregations and is used at Baptisms and for the season of Lent and Easter. The origins of the paschal candle date back to the fourth century.

Questions (Answers at the End)

- Q1. Is light a natural phenomena in our world that has always existed?
- Q2. Why does Jesus call Himself the light of the world? Doesn't that seem to be an arrogant statement to many today who believe that light and truth exist in many places?
- Q3. When we live in the darkness of our sinful thoughts and world, our perspective on life often looks depressing and oppressing. It even dismays us when more people seem to reject the truth and the light of Christ. How do we best cope with such feelings?
- Q4. Since St. Paul calls Christians "children of the light" (see Ephesians 5:1–2, 8–14), what does that mean for us as the baptized children of God? How do we remain loving and compassionate and also speak the truth about sin and death with others?
- Q5. Why is it useful to light candles in the church? Further, when are candles lit on the altar? Why do we call the altar candles sacramental lights?

Conclusion

Lent exposes our old life in order to bury it in Christ's tomb. It is buried there so that we may be joyful and arise with Him again in the light of His resurrection. Jesus Christ is the true light, who gives light to everyone. Although His life was extinguished on the cross amid total darkness, Jesus bore the full weight of this world's sin and darkness in order to bring light to us and all the world. That's why the cross always brightly reflects joy, love, and mercy—because Jesus suffered there to bring light and love. From His cross now shines a new Gospel beam! Even though your sins are like scarlet, they are now as white as snow (see Isaiah 1:18). The Gospel light pierces through your darkest and most depressive thoughts and fills you with peace and joy. The light of Jesus shines like the sun and like the moon, you reflect His light to others. Every day, Christ's light continues to shine through you and your words so receive Christ's light again!

Closing

Prayer: Jesus Christ, the light of the world, in Your light, we see light. We have no light in this world without Your power and grace. Expose the darkness of sin that lies within our hearts and minds so that we might not die but rather rise with new life and joy, knowing that You died and rose to forgive all our sin and give us eternal life. As Your baptized and enlightened children, let our lives reflect Your light and love wherever we go so that those who are sitting in darkness may know that there is light and salvation in You alone. In Your precious name, we pray. Amen.

Answers

- A1. No, absolutely not. During creation's first day, God is the One who brought light out of darkness, and then He separated the two. He said, "Let there be light" (Genesis 1:3)! Light is not a natural phenomenon in this world. God brought it forth, ex nihilo ("out of nothing"), and His light is always pure and good. God also made the greatest object of light for our world to be the sun on day four of creation.
- A2. Jesus, the Creator of the world (John 1:1), who called light out of darkness, calls Himself the light of the world. Whoever listens to His Word and follows Him is no longer in the dark. To have Jesus as your light is to have it all, including eternal life. Today, many in our world think that truth and light are found in numerous places and even within other religions. However, they are only found in Jesus; outside of Him, everything is darkness (John 1:4–5).
- A3. Psalm 27, a psalm of David, is so full of comfort, strength, and peace: "The LORD is my light and my salvation" (v. 1). Thankfully, God shields us from all harm and lifts us high upon a rock (v. 5). If I cry aloud in pain or travail, He is open to hear my voice (v. 7). The Psalms are a great resource for wisdom, comfort, and prayer. When we do not know how or what to pray, we can read/pray such psalms as prayers, knowing that God hears us when we pray back to Him what He has already said to us.
- A4. At one time, without God and new life in Christ, our life was dark and lifeless. But since Christ loved you and gave Himself as an offering for sin on the cross, all your sin is washed away. Now baptized into Christ by His light, you are now light in the world (see Matthew 5:14). As children of the light, we do not participate in the deeds of darkness; rather, we expose them. The fruit of the Spirit is kindness, gentleness, and self-control (see Galatians 5:22–23). When we exhibit this to others and lovingly share with them the truth, we pray that the Holy Spirit fills them with new light and understanding so that they receive it and do not reject it.
- A5. Candles and lamps were always lit throughout the Old Testament, even placed inside the tabernacle, the Holy Place (see Exodus 37:17), and later the temple. Lamps and light are also mentioned in the Gospels, such as the ten virgins with lamps and oil in Matthew 25. In the Revelation to John, the seven lampstands correlate with the seven churches (see chapters 1–3). Often in our sanctuaries, naves, and chancels, candles are numerous—often found in sevenfold lampstands, along with two sacramental candles on the altar. The two sacramental candles are lit on the altar only when Holy Communion is served, and these two candles symbolize Jesus and His two natures, true God and true man. Additionally, an even larger paschal candle is used in many congregations and lit at Baptisms. It may have a cross on it and five nails, representing the wounds of Christ. The paschal candle is present during the entire season of Easter and extinguished on Ascension Day. The origins of its use date back to the fourth century.