

Notices

Good Morning, and welcome to Tyndale on this second Sunday of January. If you are a visitor, I extend a special warm welcome and hope you feel at home with us.

Our worship today is being conducted by our minister Michael Docker. I would like to thank him for leading us, and look forward to hearing God's message through his teaching and preaching.

On Tuesday, our in-person Coffee Shop re-starts after its Christmas break and will take place here in the Sanctuary from 10am until 12 noon. Please do come and join us for a cup of tea or coffee and conversation.

On Tuesday evening we will be holding our first members church meeting of the New Year on Zoom, and I would ask all members to try and attend as we will be considering our budget for next year, and there will be an important announcement in respect to the pastoral vacancy.

On Wednesday our *time @tyndale* re-starts with a communion service being held in the Sanctuary.

Refreshments are served from 7.30pm with the communion starting at 8pm. Please do join us.

On Thursday our Zoom coffee shop takes place at 11.00am, with the sign in details being able to be obtained through the Tyndale web site. Thank you.

Welcome

Welcome one and all to the worship of Tyndale Baptist Church, in the building, or on-line; we come together, as the season of Christmas continues, on the Sunday of Epiphany when we celebrate the coming of the light of God that shines all around – that the wise ones saw, that brought the shepherds to their knees, that comforted Anna and Simeon after all their waiting.

We live in a world that still waits, and in such a world, that is always running after bright, shiny, new things and finding itself unsatisfied, we proclaim the Light of the World – we who have seen the light of God's love shining in the face of Jesus Christ – but we gather in solidarity with a waiting world – as we sing:

LP 263 'Come light of the world'

Paul Inwood

Call to worship

In the light of a new day we come, still seeking, and we gather in the midst of the darkness of our lives and the world, before the Light of the World – Jesus Christ; and in His name we worship God

First in our hearts, we would praise as the wise ones

Praised as they saw all your glory around;

First of the ones who are born into freedom,

Through you we offer the love we have found.

First of the days when the world found its freedom

We come to worship on this day of all;

First in creation, the first-born called Jesus

Came to the waters of John for us all.

First as the Church takes its lead from the shepherds,

Wondering at all that the angel had told;

First to the living and first to the suffering

All so that earth might discover its gold.

First like the witness of Anna and Simeon,

Waiting to see what the Lord had revealed;

First with our praises and first with our serving -

This is the way that God's world shall be healed.

First with the trusting, the faith and the following,

As down the ages the faithful have been;

First to the life lived in simple obedience

To God's new freedom on this day first seen.

11 10 11 10 Epiphany Hymn (BPW190)

Michael Docker

Opening Prayer

Lord our God, we have worshipped you at Christmas, in a baby born and the mystery of your coming to us, and now we worship you, as we come to see your light shining in the world – it is the light that lightens everyone; it is the light of hope and love; it is the light by which we seek to live – and in these early days of a New Year, when spring seems a long way off and every day seems dark, we're glad to be able to reflect on the coming of the light; on what it means – indeed, on what *you* mean, in our world.

Lord, forgive us when we have allowed darkness to rule in us and around us, when we have failed to look forward in hope, when we have *preferred* the darkness – forgive us and restore us, we ask, so that not just

for today, but for all times, every day, we might come to rejoice at your glory spread all around, in and through Christ our Lord -

And as we worship you, as we trust in His Spirit, so we pray his prayer:

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen

'The light of the world'

Stuart Townend

Readings - Isaiah 60:1-7
John 8:12-20

Sermon

'I am the light of the world', on this Epiphany Sunday – the light of God shining all around

'I am the light of the world' – one of the great 'I am' sayings in John, that frame so much of our picture of Jesus – the bread of life (last week); the light of the world (today); the gate for the sheep & the good shepherd; the Way, the Truth & the Life; the Resurrection & the life'

I am the light of the world – the famous Holman Hunt painting 'the light of the world' – a blond, bearded, Jesus, holding a lamp, standing outside a door that can only be opened from the inside, *'Behold, I stand at the door & knock; if anyone hear my voice, & open the door, I will come in to them, & will sup with them, and they with me...'*

Jesus, haloed with light; bright lamplight by his side, dawn breaking behind him.. *the light shines in the darkness & the darkness did not overcome it...*

It's a sermon picture and it's become part of popular culture – the light of the world -

...all those red candles in advent; white on Christmas Day – Xmas lights on the streets...

Darkness, and light...it's the way of the world, isn't it? Winter- we're all hunkered down, waiting for Spring.. *the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light*

Can't imagine religion without light, can you?: Jyot, Prakasa, the divine light of Hinduism; An Noor - Islam; Ein Sof – Judaism; Nimitta - Buddhism; Inner light – a Christian idea that's especially emphasised by the Quakers

But I can't help thinking about the man my aunt married - who'd been blind from birth.

When we first went round to meet him (he'd lived alone for years, with a guide dog; held down a full time job as a probation officer)..

When we arrived his house was in complete darkness. It was a bit awkward. We wanted to put the lights on but he had no idea where the switches were; he'd never used them; he had no eyes; they'd been removed, diseased, when he was young. He'd never seen anything.

Darkness....and light.

I listened to a Thought for the Day sometime in Advent. Can't remember who it was but she was talking about being partially sighted. Darkness and light didn't mean much to her at all – *careful with the metaphor*, was what she was saying.

Careful with the metaphor. We have to be careful, I think, with whatever we say about God...especially today, with so many ideas about God up for grabs. What *darkness is* is up for grabs...; what *light is* is up for grabs as well – careful with the metaphor....careful with what you say about God...

Mormons call themselves 'children of the light'; lots of religious groups do: they have the light, everyone else is in darkness. I guess Trump's supporters see things like that as well

Though the way some people behave what might look like light to them to the rest of us can seem very dark indeed.

Careful with the metaphor; careful with what you say about God. 'Let there be light', but remember, light needs darkness to shine; you need shadows for contrast & depth, otherwise light washes everything out –

and what did Leonard Cohen, that great philosopher/poet/songwriter (mostly Jewish, but probably a bit Buddhist as well) say? *'we're all cracked – that's how the light gets in'*

Difficult though, isn't it? It's so obvious, darkness & light, it's so obvious, Jesus is 'the light of the world' - It's so obvious – except...careful with the metaphor

With all these *I am* sayings we'd better look at *who* is saying them; Jesus didn't say 'I am the light of the world' like the Holman Hunt Jesus, all holy & shiny & supernatural. He didn't say 'I am the Way the Truth & the Life' as if he was a superhero swooping through the world,

I am...I am...and I am an ordinary human being who will be opposed and persecuted and I will suffer and die in weakness like the worst kind of criminal you can imagine,

and you'll think of shed blood and torn flesh when you think of me, and you'll see me when you look into the eyes of the poor and you won't be able to be like me unless you carry your own cross - whatever that may mean for you..

& *I am the bread of life..& I am the Way the Truth & the Life..& I am the Light of the world.*

And do you see? The people who walked in darkness have *seen a great light*; they haven't been filled with light or made into pure light; they have seen the light

They have *seen the light*... & the light is Jesus, & he is the one who comes from God and he is leading the way to a promised Kingdom that shines for ever with the light of God's love—

And every time they look at Jesus they see the light...the light of the world..

Perhaps one of the most profound, powerful moments recently on TV was when Rose Ayling-Ellis, the deaf actress, danced with Giovanni Pernice (to Symphony) & for a few moments all sound stopped —

for those moments we entered Rose's world — complete silence; she didn't miss a step & when the music came back she & Giovanni were dancing as perfectly as before

See - silence *and* sound; she didn't *need to hear* in order to know what was needed; she danced in silence *and heard the music*

Like darkness and light, see — the people who walked in darkness — *in darkness* we saw the light; like Rose; *in silence* she heard the music

John — the light that was the light of all people was coming into the world — *of all people*, see

Not of a few people who found the light inside; not of a religion that thinks it's got the light only for its own faithful few — *for all people; the Word of God, the Bread of Heaven, the Way, the Truth and the Life, the Light of the World.*

the people who walked in darkness have seen the light — have seen Jesus..

7 sermons to go — not long now! Can't come soon enough, you're thinking! and soon enough it will be Easter Day and I'll preach for the final time here at Tyndale, in this ministry — hopefully not for the final time altogether, but we'll have to see..

I've been thinking 'what shall I preach about?' — all those texts I haven't preached on yet.!

But really I know — you know - what I need to preach about — I need to preach about Jesus;

it's not about me — it was never about me — it's all about him — all about seeing him, *pointing* to him; calling us to follow him, but perhaps most of all, calling us to look to him..while being careful with the metaphors - darkness and light *together*...human and divine *together*....

And the wise ones came looking for light and found Jesus, shining with the light of God's love — a baby in a manger.

And the shepherds came and found him just as they had been told when the glory of the Lord shone all around; in the squalor of a borrowed stable..

and Anna and Simeon? - *a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel* - they knew that their searching was done when they saw a baby brought to the temple

and when Jesus came to John to be baptised John said to anyone *who was looking* that he saw the Holy Spirit descending on him like a dove — human and divine *together*...

Will you look to Jesus? As you walk in darkness, as you continue to be careful about what you say about God in this world — *on you light has shined* — darkness and light *together*..

the light of the love of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ, the human being who is the Word of God; the Bread of Heaven; the Way, the Truth and the Life; the *Light of the World*.

Offering Prayer

Lord, we come to you; we walk in darkness but we have seen your light; forgive us when still we prefer the dark; restore us so that we will be ready to walk in the light; help us to be careful with what we say and courageous with what we do so that others also might come to see the light — so accept what we have to offer, in these and all our gifts, and in the giving and in the continuing to serve, lead us from darkness towards your marvellous light — for Christ's sake, Amen

The grace

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us evermore, Amen

We will give thanks for the light we've received;

For we have found Christ who said if we believed -

Then we would see greater than yet we have seen -

The things of God's Kingdom and all that they mean.

We are beginning to turn from the past;

For we have seen Christ's life show death cannot last:

The things that for ages have held us in fear

Shall fade like the dew as God's love draws us near.

We shall by faith set our feet on God's way;

For we have believed in Christ's dawning new Day

When things that for ages were lost or concealed

Shall come to the Light and at last be revealed.

We claim God's promise, a Kingdom of peace.
For we have learnt Christ, who said 'if you love these,'
Then things that were broken, divided, defiled
Shall be by the power of His Cross reconciled

Tune: Slane 10 11 11 11 Michael Docker

Prayers

As the New Year gets under way we pray for;

Those who live in darkness and see no light

Under dictatorships; on dangerous journeys; at tense borders, in corrupt institutions, in trouble spots, where abuse, exploitation, fear and death come close.

God, shine in such places, by your Spirit and through the courage of those who go –

Lord Hear Us **Lord Graciously Hear Us**

Those who live in darkness and are seduced by false lights

Who struggle with addiction; who live for themselves only; who are caught up in a world of conspiracy theories; who give their lives for lost causes

God change the hearts of such as these, by your Spirit and through the dedication of those who serve – in hospitals & care homes and in the media

Lord Hear Us **Lord Graciously Hear Us**

Those who live in darkness and see and share the light of God's love

Who gather in churches; who serve in charities and aid and mission organisations; who think and write and preach good news; who help and organise and plan; who inspire – we give thanks for the inspirational life of Archbishop Desmond Tutu and for all he has come to mean for so many all around the world.

Who, in the *Bristol Churches Winter Nightshelter*, are spreading the light of Christ in real ways to a group of homeless people who are finding warmth, welcome and companionship – the comforts of home – for some 5 months through this winter

Volunteers – from Tyndale in the current phase – are cooking meals and serving them; providing presence and opportunities for conversation; offering care and support.

Guests are finding a stability they could never find on the streets, 'sorting out their lives'; making friendships and enjoying hospitality.

God thank you for this initiative and all who are making it happen; we pray that those who receive from this project will discover the light of your love and those who serve through this project will see the light of Christ shining through all that they give – and receive.

Lord Hear Us **Lord Graciously Hear Us**

We offer these and all our prayers in the name of Jesus, Amen.

CG 12 'Christ be our light'

Benediction

May the blessing of God almighty, Father, son and Holy Spirit, be with us and remain with us always, amen.

Thanks to everyone who has made today's service possible. As the New year continues our prayer is that the hope of the Christmas message will settle deep into our hearts so that we will be able to look forward with a clear-eyed faith –

and in the words of Minnie Haskins, that will always be close to our hearts at Tyndale, '*And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year: "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown". And he replied: "Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way"*'.