

An Advent Lutheran Church Jubilee **2026 Celebration Devotion**

CHRISTMAS – Born to BE the Light

By Pastor Debra Loudin-McCann

(Former Director of Music Ministries at Advent and ministerial daughter of the congregation.)

Leader: *Jesus Christ is the Light of the World;*

All: *the light no darkness can overcome.*

Leader: *Stay with us now, for it is evening,*

All: *and the day is almost over.*

Leader: *Let your light scatter the darkness,*

All: *and shine within your people here.*

***1. Joyous light of heavenly glory, loving glow of God's own face,
you who sing creation's story, shine on every land and race.
Now as evening falls around us, we shall raise our songs to you,
God of daybreak, God of shadows, come and light our hearts anew.***

***2. In the stars that grace the darkness, in the blazing sun of dawn,
of the light of peace and wisdom, we can hear your quiet song.
Love that fills the night with wonder, love that warms the weary
soul,
Love that bursts all chains asunder, set us free and make us whole.***

***3. You who made the heaven's splendor, every dancing star of night,
make us shine with gentle justice, let us each reflect your light.
Mighty God of all creation, gentle Christ who lights our way,
loving spirit of salvation, lead us on to endless day.***

Leader: *Blessed are you, Creator of the universe, from old you have led your people by night and day. May the light of your Christ make our darkness bright, for your Word and your presence are the light of our pathways, and you are the light and life of all creation.*

All: Amen

~ Phos Hilaron ancient text, setting - Holden Evening Prayer



Of all the symbols and images of Christmas, none is more powerful, beautiful, or beloved than the symbol of light in all its many forms. Every year as the Christmas Eve worship draws to a close, we dim the electric lights and wait in darkness to receive the Light of Christ. The acolyte captures the flame from the Christ candle that was lighted at the Biblical announcement of the Savior's birth. That tiny bit of holy fire is passed from candle to candle, from person to person, in the smallest sweet gesture of a bowed head and a face aglow with joy and wonder. Softly the music begins and we sing the welcoming lullaby to the King of Kings, a vulnerable infant sleeping in a lowly manger in a stable far from home. Soon the entire worship space is filled with the brilliance of CHRIST*mas light, and the music swells with joyous *Glorias* and *Alleluias*!



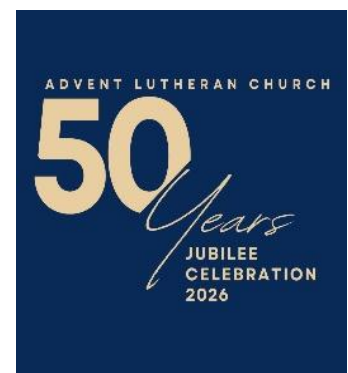
Heavenly Light fills the space - from star to candle to the people who no longer sit in darkness. Christ is born! Emmanuel is here - *God With Us*!

Deepest Mystery and Highest Wonder!

What more can there be to say?

What more can there be to DO?

In the Eastern Orthodox tradition of the Christian Church Mary is greatly revered, and is known as “Τηεοτοκος” (Theo*tokos) meaning “*God*Bearer*” as Mary is the one who *bears* God into the world by giving birth to the Christ Child. It is her courageous faithfulness and humble readiness to let it be with her according to God’s will that is celebrated and given reverence. She is The Light Bringer, the human vessel of the Divine Light. It is our duty and delight that we who have received and celebrated the birth of this Light of the World should now give thanks by continuing to pass it on. We are now the God-Bearers. We have received the most precious gift in all Creation, and we are now the acolytes called to gift more torchbearers with this “*Joyous Light of Heavenly Glory*.” Just as the light from the Christ Candle was passed from one person to the next on Christmas Eve, so the Light of Christ is to be shared, flowing from that humble manger out into the entire world. THIS is what it means to be *Evangelists* - messengers of the Good News of Christmas! Eventually, inevitably, the carols will be stilled, the candles extinguished, the holiday wrappings will be swept away. But The Light still shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not, cannot, WILL NOT overcome it. May we hold onto, cling steadfastly to this promise and this calling given to us in our Baptism, and walk as Children of The Light proclaiming in every aspect and moment of our lives -



“Joy to the World, The Lord has Come!”