

You Are a Light for the World

There is a Christmas Eve custom in our church. As the service nears its conclusion the sanctuary lights are turned off and the candles on the altar are extinguished, except for one. Only the Christ candle remains lit. The congregation sits in darkness as the choir begins to sing "Silent Night" with the congregation immediately joining in. During Silent Night the flame from Christ candle is used to light another candle, and then, another. One by one, the flame illuminates the candle at the end of each row and they, in turn, illuminate the candle of the person next to them. Once everyone's candle is burning a soft, bright, beautiful glow fills the sanctuary.

Before the birth of Jesus Christ, the world was covered in darkness and the world was desperately in need of a Savior. Jesus' birth brought light to the world and He spread His light to all who would listen. Fast forward to 2018, our world is cloaked in darkness, as evil threatens us all. People who believe in Jesus as their Savior have hope. Jesus' light illuminates our path to a relationship with Him. Those who don't have a relationship with Jesus are living in the deep, dark shadows of a fallen world, much like they did at the time of Jesus' birth. People without a relationship are in need of a Savior. The flame from the Christ candle that illuminated ours on Christmas Eve can be what ignites others to see His light. People can see the light of Christ through you.

When we shine Christ's love, it is not all about us. The source of our light was from the Christ candle. Whenever we share God's word and love with others is because Jesus first loved us. Jesus is the source of our hope. We share God with others so that people will also come to realize the source of our light is Jesus Christ. It is our goal that others will feel the warmth and want to also worship and glorify Jesus, too. If that happens our light will have changed a life!

On Christmas Eve we celebrate the birth of Jesus. His flame shines brightly through us. He came to show us the way *so that* we can show others. Because of Him everyone in the sanctuary also have the opportunity to illuminate the flame in others. We become the "light of the world." Our role is to share our faith as we encourage others. The more people who see and welcome God's light, the more people who may also share with those *they* know. Our sanctuary started in darkness but ended full of a bright, glowing light – because God's light was multiplied by everyone in the sanctuary. Anytime we light the candle of another, our flame never decreases its brightness. On the contrary, the two candles together actually burn even brighter. As you leave the church on Christmas Eve, inspired by the celebration that the Savior is born, light the candle of a neighbor, co-worker or family member. We can make the world a better, brighter place as we shine Christ's love through us.

The Bible Says: *You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:14-16).*

Question: Who have you shared God's light with recently?

Silent Night is a traditional hymn that focuses on the birth of Christ, that He was born into calmness and peace, and that He is the Savior. He came to bring us calmness, peace to our life and redeeming grace. It was first sung in Salzburg, Austria in 1818, making this the 200th anniversary of one of our most well-known hymns.

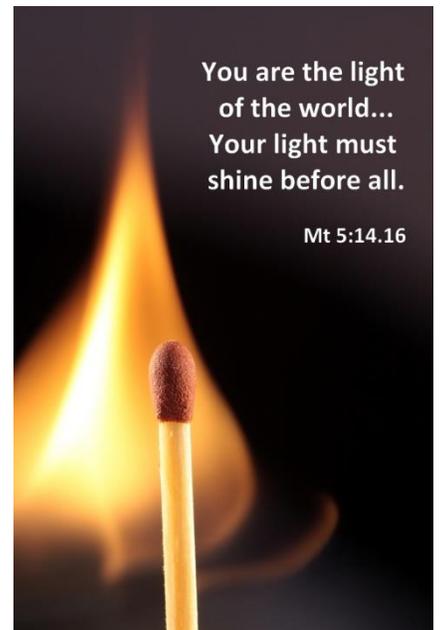
*Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright. Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child
Holy Infant so tender and mild; Sleep in heavenly peace; Sleep in heavenly peace*

[Verse 2]

*Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight; Glories stream from heaven afar
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia! Christ the Savior is born; Christ the Savior is born*

[Verse 3]

*Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light; Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace; Jesus Lord, at Thy birth; Jesus Lord, at Thy birth.*



You are the light
of the world...
Your light must
shine before all.

Mt 5:14.16