

# Festival of Christmas - Christ: The Universal Light

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Date: 05 December 2021

Preacher: William Philip

[ 0 : 00 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Well, welcome everybody to our evening of our festival of Christmas here at the Tron Church this evening. There's a chair downstairs for little ones, so do make use of that. Enjoy a break for yourselves, parents.

There's also a very exciting kids program for our primary school children downstairs, so don't miss out on that either. And afterwards, there'll be refreshments front and back, plenty of good things and an opportunity to stay behind and to chat.

Well, we have ahead of us this evening Christmas music and poetry, song being performed for us. And, of course, a focus on the Christmas message and the light that it brings to our darkness in this world.

[ 1 : 46 ] Of course, we're going to sing some carols together as well. But sometimes just hearing a carol read out loud helps us to savor the words of the poetry in a fresh way.

So before we sing together a very well-known carol, we're going to listen to the words of a lovely one by Timothy Dudley Smith, perhaps the finest of contemporary hymn writers, a real poet who combines deep theological truth with the most beautifully crafted words.

So listen to Nathan reading for us, *Chill of the Nightfall*, and then we're going to sing together, *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*.  
*Chill of the Nightfall*  
Lamps in the windows  
Letting their light fall  
Clear on the snow  
Bitter December  
Bids us remember  
Christ Christ  
In the stable  
Long, long ago  
Silence of midnight  
Voices of angels  
Singing to bed  
Night Yield to the dawn  
Darkness is ended  
Sinners befriended  
Where in the stable  
Jesus is born  
Splendor of starlight  
High on the hillside  
High on the hillside  
Faint as the far light  
Burning below  
Kneeling before him  
Shepherds adore him  
Christ In the stable  
Long, long, long ago  
Glory of daybreak  
Sorrows and shadows  
Suddenly they break  
Forth into morn  
Sing out and tell now  
All shall be well now  
For in the stable  
Jesus Is born  
Amen artic■

CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS

[ 5 : 22 ] CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS  
SINGS chosen heaven.

The heavenly O angels sing  
Glory to the new God King  
There never ever is some peace  
Where the Son of Christ was blessed  
Light and light glory reigns  
Praise with Him in His peace  
How deep is His glory high  
For the blood that knew over the night

O to praise His Son's Father  
O to Him and Savior  
O the earth of angels sing  
Glory to the new God King  
Well, perhaps we're very conscious that we meet this Christmas with a sense of gathering darkness and gloom.

But this world has always been a dark place  
Ever since human beings first rebelled against their Maker  
And brought the darkness of decay and of death into their lives  
But the prophets of Israel constantly pointed people to the promise of God to intervene, to bring His light  
Into the darkness of human sin and mess  
And at last to transform this whole world forever  
In fact, so certain were they of God's promise  
That they almost spoke as though it had already been accomplished  
The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light  
They that dwell in the land of the shadow of death upon them  
Has the light shined?

That was Isaiah the prophet speaking hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus Christ  
And indeed it was no vain hope that he spoke of  
Because in the fullness of time God did send His own Son  
Born of a virgin  
To be the light of this world  
We're going to listen now to Joel Tay  
Singing these words of Isaiah  
Set so magnificently by Handel  
In the Messiah  
Followed by another one of Dudley

Smith's poems That speaks of the fulfillment of Isaiah's words Light to the world, a child is born  
Then our little chorus is going to sing to us The lovely Sussex Carol Which proclaims that in the  
coming of Jesus All out of darkness We have light Check in the monthly chime  
[ 9 : 37 ] And I'll see you next time.

The eyes upon thee And his glory Shall be seen upon thee And his glory Shall be seen upon thee  
And the Gentiles Shall come to thy light And kings to the bright  
Venice of thy rising The people that walk it In darkness That walk it in darkness The people that  
walk it That walk it in darkness Have seen a great light Have seen a great light The people that walk  
it That walk it in darkness

Have seen a great light The people that walk it That walk it in darkness That walk it in darkness The  
people that walk it in darkness Have seen a great light Have seen a great light A great light Have  
seen a great light And they And they

That dwell That dwell In the land Of the Shed And of death And they That dwell That dwell In the  
land That dwell In the land Of the shadow Of death A whole That dwell Than listening ■■ Or While  
Light to the world

[ 14 : 29 ] A child is born Dark is the night before the dawn Day is upon us Darkness is dying With  
Mary's child in slumber lying Christ has come Our life to share Sorrows and sins and griefs to bear  
See where above us the heavens are clear The angels are singing For Christ is here Light for a  
world Gone far astray Dawn of the hope of God's new day Songs for our sighing Joy for our  
weeping With Mary's child So softly sleeping Christ has come Our life to share Sorrows and sins  
And griefs to bear See where above us The heavens are clear The angels are singing For Christ is  
here

Light of the world God's only son Now is the day of grace begun Love is among us Love beyond  
dreaming With Mary's child For our redeeming Christ has come Our life to share Sorrows and sins  
And griefs to bear See where above us The heavens are clear The angels are singing For Christ is  
here Refere ■

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 18 : 02 ] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. I'm Katie and I'm a fourth year student at the  
University of Glasgow.

If I could sum up Christmas in one word, it would be joy. Because it's a time we can take some time  
out and spend time with people we love, doing things that we love, eating good food and thinking  
about all the good things that God has promised us both now and to come.

At Christmas, I enjoy spending time with my friends and my family. In the midst of all the uncertainty  
and fear of the last year, I've had confidence in a certain and unchanging God.

At Christmas, I have hope in knowing that despite my brokenness and the brokenness of the world,  
God loved me so much that he gave me his most precious and costly gift so that I can be certain in  
my future with him.

[ 19 : 42 ] Well, Katie's testimony there about joy and hope is real.

Because when the light of Jesus Christ, to reveal God's truth, to reveal God himself to them, it really  
does change people's lives.

We Christians, we can't persuade people by ourselves about the truth of God and Jesus Christ. But  
God himself can and he can and does shine his light into people's lives all the time.

And we rejoice, of course, when we see that happening. In a moment, we're going to join in  
together singing again another Dudley Smith carol. And then some of our instrumentalists are going  
to play for us before we turn to focus on this message of light, light in a dark world from the  
beginning of John's gospel.

With Bible readings, with more from our choirs and some time to meditate on John's sublime words  
about the incarnation. While the musicians are playing after we sing, do have a look at the  
presentation on the screens.

[ 20 : 56 ] It's about our Tron Church Christmas offering this year. We're supporting a ministry of the  
Slavic Gospel Association. They train and equip people for ministry in Eastern Europe and in  
Central Asia.

They also have a lot of important relief work projects to provide refuge for those who are in need, distributing food and medical supplies and helping with schooling and so on.

And so we're very glad to have this opportunity at Christmas to give to them. And the great reminder of what Jesus said to us, that it's better indeed to give than to receive.

So have a look at that presentation as the musicians are playing shortly. But first, let's join together again in singing. In our darkness, light has shone.

In our darkness, light has shone.

[ 21 : 58 ] The light of light has shone. While the hammer is shone. Pink has shone in the Dáil, for 7-ese.

I will always stand to thee. In our darkness for us shine, With all grace and Spirit divine, On you are me winning, Everlasting life we see, For our Lord dabbled in razlines CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS

CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS guitar solo guitar solo guitar solo guitar solo

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made.

[ 27 : 23 ] In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not mastered it.

There was a man sent from God, and the light was the light. He came for witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him.

He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which lightens everyone, was coming into the world.

The higher end did St. Ted and the heart are become a stone.

Amen. Amen.

[ 29 : 18 ] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

He gave the right to become children of God, who were born not of blood, not of the will of the flesh, not of the will of man, but of God.

And the word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Amen. John bore witness about him and cried out, This was he of whom I said, He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.

[ 32 : 04 ] For from his fullness we have all received grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

No one has ever seen God, but the one and only one, himself God, who is at the Father's side.

He has made him known. Amen. He has made him known. Amen. I'm not so confident to str quinz Can a people band.

It's done. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie.

[ 33 : 23 ] Above I dream and dreamlessly, the silent stars go on.

Yet in thy dark streets shinin' the everlasting light.

The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

Are met in thee tonight. For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above.

While mortals sing the angels' key, their watch of wondrous love.

[ 34 : 43 ] O morning stars together, proclaim the holy birth.

And praise and sing to God the King. And peace to men on earth.

And peace to men on earth. O silently, O silently, the wondrous gilders came.

So bold in us, the human hearts, the blessings of his heaven.

The Lord, O Lord, O Lord, O Lord. Though we are may hear this coming, but in this world don't sing.

[ 36 : 05 ] Where me souls will receive him. Still the dear Christ enters in.

The dear Christ enters in. The dear Jesus' name. Thine R The dear Christ enters in.

us today. We hear the Christmas angels, the great blood-lighting spell.

O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.

Our Lord Emmanuel. Well, I'd like to turn our attention to these words that are in our programs this evening from the beginning of John's Gospel.

[ 38 : 01 ] Later on in John's Gospel, in chapter 8, Jesus Christ says this, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

And that's why so many of the words that we've heard, read, and sung this evening already, focus so much on light. Because Jesus Christ is the light who brings light into our dark world.

And tonight and next Sunday morning and Sunday evening at our lessons and carols, we're going to be looking at this opening prologue of John's Gospel. Unlike Matthew and Luke, John gives us none of the story of Bethlehem.

There's no angels or shepherds or wise men here. But what he does give us sublimely is an account of the significance of the incarnation, the enfleshment of God, the eternal Son.

The coming of one who in every way imaginable really is the light of the world. John, in his Gospel, takes us right back beyond Bethlehem to the very beginning of the world. Indeed, into the mists of eternity, before time itself, in the beginning, he says, is where this story must begin for us.

[ 39 : 26 ] Before all worlds, in the one who is the very source of all light and all life that there is. And so tonight, for a little time, just amid all the beauty of the music and the song, I want us to plumb the beauty of John's message about Christ, the universal light of life.

Because what these opening verses of John's Gospel tell us so clearly is that Jesus Christ imparts the defining light about the meaning of human life.

Just reading these words on your programs, you're surely struck, I'm sure, by the majesty that they convey. And yet, in another way, John's Gospel is wonderfully simple.

It's been called a pool in which an elephant can paddle or a child, a child can paddle or an elephant can swim. In other words, it's very accessible, but it is profoundly deep at the same time.

And this prologue is like the overture of the unfolding opera, which is the rest of the Gospel. And so it encapsulates everything in that message and the purpose.

[ 40 : 35 ] And by the way, we don't have to guess as to what John's purpose is in writing, because he tells us very plainly at the end of his Gospel. Let me read to you some verses from John 20 and verse 30.

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book, he says, but these are written so that you may believe that the Christ, that is the Messiah, is the Son of God, and that he is this Jesus.

And that by believing, you may have life in his name. You see, John is not just a historian. He's certainly not just an academic.

He's an evangelist. He's writing with a purpose, and his purpose is that you may have life in Jesus Christ's name. And by the way, when John talks about life, he always means eternal life.

How can such life be found? Well, John tells us there through belief that God's Savior King, that God's Messiah is this Jesus, the real Jesus of history that he and the other evangelists present for us.

[ 41 : 47 ] But that belief is based upon clear and verifiable witness, the testimony to the signs and sayings of this unique man in history, which were seen, which were heard, he says, in the presence of many witnesses, and which were written down in the Gospels so that there would be evidence testified by honest people from verifiable sources for us to read.

So important, isn't it, just to be clear about that. When the Bible speaks about faith, it does not mean ever the abandonment of all of our faculties to believe something unknown and unknowable not at all.

rather, what it does mean is a deadly serious reckoning with the truth, with the evidence, with things that were witnessed by honest men and women like John, like many others, who wrote these testimonies down so that you and I also would be able to assess these things that they saw, that they heard, that they touched with their own eyes and ears and hands.

that virtually everything that we know in life is based on that same process, isn't it? Trusting the testimony of others. What you read in books and scientific papers or news reports, although these days I'm afraid many people are far too credulous, believing far too much of what the media tell them.

In fact, I believe there are some people who even believe what politicians tell them. That really is a leap into the dark. But the gospel writer's testimony, you see, is not like that. It's open.

[ 43 : 28 ] It's honest. It invites close scrutiny, engagement, so that we can examine firsthand for ourselves and see if it really does ring true.

And don't forget, these people had nothing to gain, did they, in human terms, in bringing their testimony to the world? Because their evidence, their testimony, was absolutely against the mainstream narrative of the day.

They were not fettered in the media. They were not given jobs on the government gravy train. They were cancelled by the culture. They were abused. They were silenced, just like people who very often try and speak the truth today against the popular grain.

They were called deniers, conspiracists, people to be opposed, people to be locked up, even murdered by the state. Many of them were, in the end, martyred by the state.

But their testimony lives on for us because they knew that what they had witnessed was true. And that because it was true, the world must hear that truth.

[ 44 : 38 ] And that's what John's gospel is all about. And as I said, the prologue is like an overture, introduces all these key themes. And John's clear purpose in writing is very evident here if you look at it.

Verse 4, in him was life. It's full of life. It's full of belief and unbelief. Verse 7, he came that all might believe through him.

Verse 12, talks about all who believed in his name. And it's full of evidence. It's full of testimony. The revelation about the God upon whom this belief must be founded.

Verse 14, see the word became flesh and we have seen his glory. And we'll see this week and next week, I hope you will come back to hear more next week.

We'll see how all of these themes are dealt with by John in terms of his favorite image of all and that is the image of light. The prologue, the whole gospel is full of talk about light.

[ 45 : 44 ] And John explains how Christ himself is the universal light of life. He is the source of eternal life. And he'll tell us how Jesus is the unique light of judgment.

He forces either belief or unbelief when confronted with his light. And Jesus also is the ultimate light of revelation.

He himself is the definitive evidence of God to mankind so that we might believe, so that we might have life eternal. And everything points us to the person of Jesus Christ as the answer to all of life's great questions and mysteries and enigmas.

That is how important the incarnation of the word, the coming into the world of God the Son really is. I mean, to be clear, very clear, what John is claiming, what he's saying to us.

He's not saying, look, I'm presenting to you Jesus of Nazareth, a historical figure. I want to persuade you that Jesus, that he's a bit more special, a bit more impressive than all the other great prophets and religious leaders and so on.

[ 47 : 03 ] He's not saying that. What he is saying is something far greater. He is saying, I have the answers, the answers to all the great questions of life, about the universe, about everything.

I have the unique revelation of the almighty God to pass on to you and it is found in Jesus Christ and him alone.

He is the answer to every great question in the world of nature and in the world of humanity. that's what he's saying. In this world of darkness and confusion, Jesus Christ alone is the great light.

He answers all the questions because he himself is the answer to all the questions. That's John's message. It's not that he's saying as many people I think want to say nowadays that Jesus gives some light just like the Buddha gives some light and Muhammad gives some light and Confucius may give some light and others may give light and we can put it all together and perhaps we can make something together out of it.

That's not where we go searching for answers according to John. It's not that we go searching for answers at all from philosophy or science or religion of different kinds or through artificial intelligence or through delving into outer space like Elon Musk wants to or Jeff Bezos and all these people.

[ 48 : 43 ] If God was out there somewhere the secret of eternal life was to be found in our galaxy or in another galaxy. When you think about it that that whole approach really is preposterous isn't it?

As a way of seeking the ultimate how can the earthly how can the temporal seek out something that by definition is eternal is infinite is heavenly transcendent.

Now says John John says it must be the other way around entirely. We can't go searching for the infinite God the eternal God the light of God where to know him he must actually come down to us. he must come into our limited world. That's the only way that we could ever hope to see the light of God's true glory. But that says John is what the incarnation was all about.

Look at verse 5 the light shines in the darkness it comes into our darkness. Verse 14 the word became flesh and dwelt among us. And verse 18 the invisible God whom none has seen has been made known to us in the revelation of God in the flesh of Jesus Christ.

[ 50 : 06 ] See if we as finite creatures made of dust and returning to dust if we're to know anything of the God who made us who made the whole universe then when you think about it he is the one who must proclaim himself to us.

And that is what the incarnation is all about. Light the light of God's eternal glory shining into our world of finitude of transience of darkness.

In Jesus Christ the absolute eternal reality of God is proclaimed to this world definitively universally and forever.

Jesus Christ says John is the universal light of life itself. His is the light that defines our whole world and everything in it and therefore he imparts defining light on the very meaning of our human lives. It's in the light of Jesus Christ and him alone that we can find out what our lives are actually all about. What they're for. Where they're going.

[ 51 : 23 ] Jesus Christ really is the answer to every question of the human heart. That's what John is claiming in these majestic verses. He's the center of everything forever and in his incarnation now is the moment God in flesh appears down from the splendor of his throne sovereign.

High King of Kings Lord of all the years God everlasting stoops in space and time. Before we just think a little more about some of these great questions that Jesus answers we're going to pause and sing together these words from Timothy Dudley Smith's great carol.

Here is the center. the other Titan Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[ 54 : 26 ] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. And that means that he is the universal defining light of life itself.

[ 56 : 40 ] That is, he is the answer to every great question about life itself. Look at the first three verses there. Jesus, he's saying, is the answer to the why question, the question about why there is anything.

He tells us that everything in this world exists because of Jesus Christ. Verse 1, he is the beginning of everything.

And verse 3 says he's the maker of everything. All things were made through him. Now Richard Dawkins, the famous atheist, he admits that he's got no answer at all to the question why there is life at all.

But what he says is, well, it's a non-question. We don't need that question and we shouldn't ask that question. Try that next time you're stopped by the police for speeding, by the way.

And the officer stops you and stands by the car and says, now, what speed were you doing, sir?

He'll say, well, I'm sorry, officer, but that's a non-question. We don't need that question at all. No need to ask it.

[ 57 : 52 ] The problem is that the officer is asking the question, isn't he? And it's just the same, isn't it, with human beings. All human beings do ask that question.

Why? All the time. Why is life as it is? Why do bad things happen to good people? Why is there a world at all?

Why am I here? What's my life all about, really? Why? That's what makes us different, isn't it, from dogs, from frogs, from cattle. We do ask why.

No use saying, don't ask. And here is the answer to that question. In the beginning, verse 1, was the word. Now, that word beginning can mean the temporal beginning in time, or it can mean the

root cause.

And what he's saying is that the root cause and the beginning of everything is the word, says John. Maybe it seems a strange phrase to us until we realize what that word means in the Bible.

[ 59 : 01 ] The word. The word is the agent of creation. Psalm 36 says, By the word of the Lord, the heavens were made. And the word is the personification of wisdom.

In Proverbs chapter 8, for example. And the word is God's deliverer, God's savior. Psalm 107 says, He sent forth his word and healed them.

He rescued them from the grave by his word. And John's saying that in the beginning is the source of all things, all creation, all wisdom, all salvation.

Was the word. Was the word. The one who he goes on to say became flesh and dwelled among us in the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

And look again at verse 1. This word who became flesh in Jesus is himself God. The word was with God and the word was God. Now at a stroke, that single verse banishes all the pretensions of those who would seek to deny that the Bible speaks of the divinity of Jesus Christ.

[ 60 : 15 ] Make no mistake. It is an astounding claim. It's a unique claim being made there. Of course, that is a claim that clashes, doesn't it, today with our very pluralistic culture.

We talk a lot about tolerance, but our culture won't tolerate that kind of exclusive claim about Jesus Christ. And sadly, even some Christians today, even some Christian leaders seem to be embarrassed about it.

I want to play it down, the exclusivity of Jesus. But John, look at verse 1. He won't play it down, will he? It's very, very clear. Jesus is the unique and only God, the creator of all things.

And he alone, therefore, is the universal answer to everything. He's the answer to the great why question. Why is there anything at all? It is a real question.

And it has a real answer. All things exist because he is the beginning, the source of everything. He's the creator of everything.

[ 61 : 28 ] All things were created through him and for him, says the Apostle Paul. Just the same in Colossians chapter 1. This is the Bible's truth about God, about Jesus Christ.

And if we take the Bible's claim seriously, we take John's words here seriously, it's a staggering thing. Jesus Christ is the reason for everything.

He is God eternal. He's the source of everything. He's the creator of all things. And therefore, it must follow, mustn't it, that nothing in our human world, all our experience of life, nothing can be explained then without reference to Jesus Christ.

Look at verse 4. In him was life, and that life was the light of man, of humanity. Jesus is also the answer to all the how questions.

How has humankind achieved so much, learned so much, gained so much, experienced so much of life, become everything that we are? And the answer is that all the light that human beings have comes from the eternal Son of God.

[ 62 : 47 ] Whether they see it, whether they acknowledge it or not, that's the truth. With you is the fountain of life, says the psalmist. In your light, we see light.

Now, he saw it clearly. Many people refuse to see that, don't they? And that's the great irony, you see. I think about Richard Dawkins and others like it.

He can only be the clever scientist that he is, with all the gifts and the intelligences he has, because those things come from God, from Jesus Christ. And so all his literary artistry, and he's a very fine writer, everything he uses to castigate what he calls the delusional God, is actually gifts that comes from God himself, from Jesus Christ.

And so the truth is that if John is speaking right, then it's Richard Dawkins who's the deluded one, not God. Because all the light he has, all his very giftedness, comes from Jesus Christ.

He is the very light of life, the light that animates all human existence. And yet so many, like Professor Dawkins, just refuse to see it.

[ 64 : 09 ] But it's true. Verse 4, in him was life. That life was the light of humanity. And therefore, you see, look at verse 5.

Nothing in this world can ever displace Jesus Christ as the source and the center of everything that matters in this world. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not mastered it.

One scholar says that this sentence is a masterpiece of planned ambiguity. Some Bible versions translate it, darkness has not overcome it. And others, the darkness has not understood it.

Because both those senses are included. The darkness has not and never will master the light in any way whatsoever. It's true.

Many people have failed to understand Christ. They've rejected his light. Verse 10 to 12, there is plain. Many of his own refuse to come to the light.

[ 65 : 12 ] And that was because, as Jesus says later in John chapter 3, people love the darkness because their deeds are evil. They don't want to be exposed by his light.

But Paul puts it this way in Romans chapter 1, therefore they suppress the truth. I'm afraid that rejection is dishonest.

That's cancel culture, isn't it? Suppress the truth. We don't like it, suppress it. Kill it. Kill it. But none can ever overcome the light of Jesus Christ.

No power on earth has ever or will ever extinguish the church of Jesus Christ. Not even the gates of hell, said Jesus, will prevail against my church.

So don't be mistaken. And if you're a Christian, never be fearful about that. We're not in some kind of eco-cosmic battle like in Star Wars.

[ 66 : 14 ] Good versus evil, light and dark. And you never quite know, are we going to win? No, no, no, no. Never, says John. The light has shined. Darkness is banished.

It will never be overcome. The light of Jesus Christ will never ever be overcome in this world or for all eternity. Because he's the beginning of all things.

And he's the end of all things. He's the goal of all things. He is the Alpha and he is the Omega. And let that certainly put the Omicron well into perspective.

That's why we're here today. Not to prattle about Omicron, but to proclaim the Alpha and the Omega, who is himself the light of life. Who alone brings light into a dark world.

With all its fears, with all its folly. To banish fear. And to bring hope and to bring joy. And that's why there's a message, a gospel.

[ 67 : 13 ] That's why John the Baptist came back then, as verse 7 said. To bear witness to the light that all might believe through him. That's what Christmas is about.

It's about the light that has shined in our darkness. It's about the light of life eternal. And it's about finding that life. And having that life beginning even now in this dark world.

Let me sum up John's message. Three things. First, everything in this world is here because of Jesus Christ and for Jesus Christ.

Verse 3. All things were made through him. Without him was not anything made that was made. He is the reason why. Second, all the light and understanding that you have comes from him.

It's he alone who enables you even to think and ask these questions. Why and how. Verse 4. In him was life. And that life was the light of men. And third, nothing in the world can ever displace Jesus Christ as the center of all things.

[ 68 : 27 ] His light shines and darkness has not overcome it. And so John says, friends, to you and to me, you must listen to him.

You must. And you must learn from him because he alone can tell you the answers to all the things that really matter about life. Why there is life at all.

How to find the real life that you were created for. The life of God. The life that is eternal. Jesus said later in John chapter 10, I have come that they might have life and have it abundantly.

But to find it, you've got to listen to him. You've got to come to him. Because he alone is the universal light of life.

The light that both defines true life and the light that can deliver you into that true life. None but the Lord can give the shadows light.

[ 69 : 35 ] None but the Lord makes blinded eyes to see. But it is the Lord Jesus Christ who says, I am the light of the world.

Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness. But will have the light of life. Jesus Christ is the light in our dark world.

Amen. Amen. O come, thou bright and morn, morning star, And bring us comfort from afar.

Dispel the shadows of the night. And turn our darkness into light.

Two, within and morn, now entail with us. Do we worship you, my son ? Who but the Lord Can give a shadow of silence At our sight Can break into the dark Draw morning from the night Who does the Lord Will hear our cry and answer Here and all Who but the Lord



[ 72 : 05 ] Makes blinded eyes to see Brings music to the deaf Sets the lonely captive free Who but the Lord Will by His glory Show that that's your peace Who but the Lord Who but the Lord Who but the Lord Who but the Lord O shine on us The brightness of your face To its remotest end

Every people, every grace O shine on us Until true revelation O shine on us O shine on us O shine on us O shine on us O shine on us O shine O shine O shine Who but the Lord

Can give the shadows light Nam Bata Lord I'm originally from Colombia.

Four years ago, we came as a family with Andrea Daniela and Alejandro to Glasgow. I'm working for the University of Glasgow Adam Smith Business School as the MBA Director and Senior Lecturer in Supply Chain Management.

When I was at school, about 13 years old, I was when a classmate invited me to a series of talks at church.

[ 75 : 28 ] And at the last talk, the priest asked all of us who were attending if we would like to have a personal relationship with Jesus. And from that point on, I started that journey of walking with Jesus.

Certainly, later on in that journey, by reading the scripture, I understood much better what does it mean to have Jesus as my Lord and my King and my Savior.

I look forward for Christmas to really be with the family and friends.

the church became certainly my family, my extended family. Jesus is the head of that body. And I look forward for all those opportunities that take place during Christmas when we come together and share and we are able to give thanks and glorify God for what He had done.

When I was a child, I was looking for the Christmas Eve celebration.

[ 76 : 50 ] And because everything is around the Nativity scene, baby Jesus is the main character. So it's the tenderness, the kindness, it's little, it's joyful.

It's, it's, yes, it's almost like a character that I can manage. When I became a Christian, certainly the whole character of Jesus changed.

He is the Lord of Lords, the King of Kings. He is the Creator. He is the Word incarnated. So it's not just a baby that I can manage.

On the contrary, it is the King to whom I submit myself. And I really abandoned myself to Him.

Last year has been a year of lockdown. We were not, and I was not able really to go every day to, to the university. So I would say during the, this year, given the panic around in colleagues, even in some students, my faith in Jesus supported me.

[ 78 : 07 ] And my prayer time, I would say become richer and was intensified in order to intercede for those around me.

Last year, for the first time, I came across an image in which the Christmas crown that is green and fresh was together with Jesus Christ's crown of thorns.

And that, that, that communicates to me really a very strong message. The whole purpose of Jesus being born in Bethlehem was for Him to die on the cross.

And because He died on the cross, I have the hope of eternal life. So if tomorrow I am called, or someone in my family is called to, to God's presence, well, I know where I am going.

And I know where my immediate family is going. And despite sadness, there is hope and joy because we are in the presence of Jesus forever and have heard.

[ 79 : 31 ] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Well, in Christ, the Word did become flesh and dwelled among us to bring us light and life so that we can see the salvation of God and know his peace both in life and in facing death with sure and certain hope.

[ 83 : 21 ] And that is why our greatest desire as a church at Christmas and every other time of year is to be sharing that wonderful message with others and of each of you here this evening.

And we find that today very few people have, as an adult, seriously engaged with the Bible, with one of the Gospels, as we've been looking at this evening, in John's Gospel, which tells the story of the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ and tells us what it means.

And from the standpoint of the eyewitnesses of all that Jesus said and did. And we would love all of you, each one of us here tonight, to have the opportunity to engage with God's words for

yourselves.

And so if you don't have a Bible or if you haven't read one of the Gospels, then we'd love to share that with you. And we have copies of John's Gospels available for you at the back. Just ask one of the welcome team.

They'll gladly give you a copy of that to read over Christmas in those rare quiet moments. I'd encourage you to do that. And I think you will be amazed at what you read in the pages of John's Gospel.

[ 84 : 27 ] But do come back next Sunday. We have our morning services at all our venues at 10 o'clock. And we'll be looking more at John's Gospel then and also at our candlelit carols, 5 o'clock here next Sunday.

And we'll be singing many well-known carols and reading some God's word. So do come and join us again next week. We'd love to have you along. And beyond that, into January, we have our life course.

It's an opportunity for you to further consider the claims of Christianity, to think about what life is really all about. And whether you're new to Christianity or whether you're coming back to church after some time.

I would love to offer you the opportunity to come with many others to our life course in January. You'll see details on the little flyers on your seats. It gives you a link to the website. And you can see there the dates and how to book in.

But we'd love you to come to the life course in January. But do stay around after we finish tonight. There's mince pies to enjoy and tea and coffee. So don't rush away. But we're now going to finish singing our final carol together about the God of God, the light of light made known in Jesus Christ.

[ 85 : 40 ] Honorable plan Sport.

Tim Deky 2 My ■■ colour is high, My hand σε ■χεται a di Monday, O come here, come here to heaven.

Come and behold it, Lord, and be all ages. O come and behold it, O come and behold it, Christ the Lord.

O come and behold it, Christ the Lord.

O come and behold it, O come and behold it, Christ the Lord. O come and behold it, O come and behold it, Christ the Lord.

[ 87 : 22 ] O come and behold it, O come and behold it, Christ the Lord.

Sing, Christ the angels, sing in exclamation.

Sing, O beacons, on earth and earth and earth. Sing, Christ the Lord.

Sing, Christ the Lord. Sing, Christ the Lord. Sing, Christ the Lord. O come and behold it, Christ the Lord.

Sing, Christ the Lord.

[ 88 : 33 ] Sing, Christ the Lord. Sing, Christ the Lord. One more our salvation leads us to be in glory.

One more our salvation leads us to be in glory.

One more our salvation leads us to be in glory.

By turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just. That at thy second coming to judge the world. We may be found an acceptable people in thy sight.

Who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Ever one God. World without end. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 90 : 21 ] And the love of God. And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Be with you all.