

Today's Message: **JESUS: CHRISTMAS LIGHT**
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Pastor Gary Stump

Don't we all love Xmas lights? In fact, aren't we fascinated by light?

Genesis 1:3 (NLT) God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

Light Facts

- Light travels so fast it would circle the earth 7.5 times in one second.
- Light contains all colors mixed together. . . Water droplets in the air can divide the light into colors so we see a rainbow
- Sun is 91 million miles from us so it takes 8 minutes for the light to reach us
- Plants turn light into food
- The sun produces light. The moon reflects the sun's light.

But the brightest light ever was Jesus!

*Acts 26:13, 15 (NLT) About noon, Your Majesty, as I was on the road, a light from heaven **brighter than the sun** shone down on me and my companions. . . ¹⁵ "Who are you, lord?" I asked. And the Lord replied, 'I am Jesus!'"*

Jesus was called the Light hundreds of years before He was born.

Isaiah spoke of the coming Light

*Isaiah 9:1–2 (NLT) Nevertheless, that time of darkness and despair will not go on forever. . . there will be a time in the future when Galilee of the Gentiles. . . will be filled with glory. ² The people who walk in darkness will see a great **light**. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a **light** will shine.*

*Isaiah 60:1 (NIV84) Arise, shine, for your **light** has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.*

Zechariah prophesied about the Light

*Luke 1:78–79 (NLT) Because of God's tender mercy, the morning **light** from heaven is about to break upon us, ⁷⁹ to give **light** to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace."*

Angels announced the Light

Luke 2:9 (NLT) Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified,

Simeon praised the Light

*Luke 2:32 (NLT) "He is a **light** to reveal God to the nations, and he is the glory of your people Israel!"*

What does Light mean?

Darkness = the absence of light; darkness exists because light exists

Darkness is evil, ignorance, rebellion, deceit, wickedness

Light is goodness, knowledge, obedience, truth, righteousness

Our culture is calling evil good, and light darkness

Isaiah 5:20a (ESV) Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness!

But always remember darkness cannot overpower the Light

John 1:5 (TLV) The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overpowered it.

Jesus said...

*John 8:12b (NLT) "I am the **light** of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the **light** that leads to life."*

Light shines in the face of Jesus

2 Corinthians 4:6 (NLT) For God, who said, "Let there be light in the darkness," has made this light shine in our hearts so we could know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ.

Hank Williams wrote *I Saw the Light* in 1946

Just like a blind man, I wandered along
Worries and fears I claimed for my own
Then like the blind man that God gave back his sight
Praise the Lord, I saw the light

I saw the light, I saw the light
No more darkness, no more night
Now I'm so happy, no sorrow in sight
Praise the Lord, I saw the light

What if followers of Jesus truly have seen the Light? Have you seen the Light this Christmas?

Just as we can't see infrared light without a special lens, we can't see the Light of Jesus without a special lens: FAITH!

"Seeing is believing, but sometimes the most real things in the world are the things we can't see." Polar Express

SO WHAT? When you turn on a light the cockroaches flee, and the moths are drawn. When you see the light of Jesus, are you a like a cockroach or a moth?

*John 12:46 (NLT) "I have come as a **light** to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer remain in the dark."*

*John 3:16–21 (NLT) "For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸ There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God's one and only Son. ¹⁹ And the judgment is based on this fact: God's **light** came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the **light**, for their actions were evil. ²⁰ All who do evil hate the **light** and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. ²¹ But those who do what is right come to the **light** so others can see that they are doing what God wants."*

*John 12:36 (NLT) "Put your trust in the **light** while there is still time; then you will become children of the **light**."*



13095 PUBLISHERS DRIVE • FISHERS, IN 46038 • www.onwardchurch.org
PASTOR GARY L. STUMP • gary@garystump.org • 317.513.0227

ONWARD CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2023

1. NO SERVICE SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 24 (Christmas Eve)

2. WORSHIP ON NEW YEAR'S EVE AT 10:30AM

3. YEAR-END GIVING—Be sure your gifts are received or postmarked by December 31st for 2023 tax credit.

4. ONWARD MARRIAGE RETREAT 2024—February 24-25 at the Brown County Inn, Nashville, Indiana. Speaker: Matthew A. Vander Wiele, Ed.D. 40 rooms available for limited time. Double Queen Rooms @ \$130 + tax; King Rooms @ \$140 + tax; Rooms will be held until 1/24/24. Please call to reserve rooms at the Inn at 1-800-772-5249 or online ~ www.browncountyinn.com. Must give **Promo Code 0973**.

5. SERVE ON HOST TEAM— We are recruiting new members to our Host Team who provide the loving welcome of people who gather for service each Sunday. Show up 15 minutes early to pass out prayer cards and bulletins as you greet people, then pass the collection baskets during the offering time. Note on your Prayer Card if you are willing to serve. Thank you.



6. YOUTH GROUP RESUMES JANUARY 7

7. LADIES BIBLE STUDIES RESUME AFTER FIRST OF YEAR

8. MEN'S BIBLE STUDY CONTINUES EACH FRIDAY AT 7AM

9. PAL ("PARENTS OF ADDICTED LOVED ONES") MEETING—This is for families of adult children dealing with substance addiction. Every Tuesday night, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. Free weekly meetings. Dr. Nancy Smith, facilitator. For more information, contact nancy1108smith@gmail.com or 317-508-8149.

10. GIVE BIBLES IN HONOR OF OR IN MEMORY OF A LOVED ONE—The Gideons have provided a display on the counter in the foyer for you to give God's word in honor or in memory of a loved one.

ONWARD CHURCH GIVING	ONWARD PRAYER CARD ONLINE
 Giving QR Code	 Prayer Card QR Code