

God of God, Light of Light



Advent 2023

Dear Friends,

We miss it again and again, year after year. Christmas is well on its way now. Even though the retail sector has been cranked up for weeks with non-stop Christmas tunes in the background, we still miss it.

In the beginning, perhaps the first Christmas, or in the very beginning when everything was made, the glory of God was revealed and we missed it. A late night comedian recently suggested it was high time we got Christ out of Christmas since we've shown over and over, year after year, that we don't really intend to follow him. We love to have the baby Jesus in a manger because he hasn't said anything yet. Once he does begin to speak he causes nothing but upset. Get Christ out of Christmas so we can have the best party ever – the one that we all deserve.

The first chapter of the Gospel of John curiously contains logically contradictory words. "The true light ... was coming ..." (v. 9) John says. "We have seen his glory (v. 14) ... he was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him." (vss. 10, 11) How can this be? How does an intelligent human race miss this? It seems we keep doing it everyday.

This Christmas there are folks who will be reunited with family they haven't seen in months. There will be quiet, cozy Christmas gatherings and celebrations of all that's good about life. Others will take one more step in suffering because of illness or loss, loneliness or misfortune that makes celebration difficult, if not impossible.

Either way, it's important that we not miss this. The gift God once gave, and continues to give to the world, which is Christmas, is "grace upon grace." He is "the one true light." Of all of the other lights in our lives, this light "shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." (v. 5) Whatever our circumstance, the message of Christmas is "from his fullness we have all received grace upon grace," (v. 16) perhaps especially those who need it most. Christmas light shines for all.

For those of us who have somehow come to understand that we own the light, we best be reminded that we miss it regularly. Light shines where it wills. Nothing prevents the littlest candle lighting the darkest dark. If we're in the dark we need to look to the Light. But we need to look. It shines for me. It shines for you. Darkness [will] not overcome it. To those who receive, he gives "power to become children of God." (v. 12)

Join us during the Christmas season to worship the One who is the Light of the World. If you've drifted away from a communal expression of gratitude for grace upon grace, why not make a special effort to return to where others share in celebrating the Eternal? A [schedule of worship](#) is included here. As I pray that we don't miss the Light today or in the days of a coming new year, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

Geoffrey Hall
Dean of Fredericton

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