

Luke 2:1-14, John 1:1-2, 9-14, 18

In our family Janny and I have followed the tradition of lighting Advent Candles. We light One each Sunday in 4 weeks leading to Christmas then the 5th candle on Christmas day.

The idea behind this tradition is to remind us that God was revealing more and more of Himself to Abraham and his family over the generations.

The growing light of the knowledge of God was coming into the world the final light coming with Jesus. It is Jesus who really shows us what God is like.

In the Bible light is seen as a symbol of the presence of God.

God Himself is called the light of Israel.

The symbolism of light & darkness is at the heart of Christmas. - Jesus the light of the world, He is the living word of God, Immanuel - God with us - coming into the world - He brought light into the Darkness and the darkness of evil and hatred, corruption and selfishness could not overcome it.

For the Jewish people in 1st century Palestine light symbolized the presence of God.

750 yrs before Isaiah (2:5) urge his generation;

“Let us walk in the light of the Lord.”

It was an invitation to walk with God - Trust God and live up to their calling as the people of God; loyal and obedient.

We all know that when light comes into a dark place the darkness has to leave. It is dispelled.

But why is there still so much evil, pain, sin, hatred, selfishness, war. Why is there still so much darkness and suffering in our world?

St John explains:

**“Light has come into the world
but men loved darkness instead of light
because their deeds were evil.” Jn 3:19**

And yet the light shines on - not overwhelmed. Our lives are like a house with shutters. If we open the shutters & let the light in our whole house has light. God does not force himself upon us.

This offer of life is the Good news Jesus came to bring & make possible. When the light comes we have to choose. Do we want to receive, do we want to welcome the light or do we want to live in the shadows. Y' doesn't make it difficult. The same loving & generous God who sent His son to be the light of the world warms our hearts with the light of His love. He offers us a place in His family -

"To those who believed in His name he gave the right to become Children of God." V12

You may have been offered lots of choices as you have prepared for Christmas.

What to eat and who to share with.

The most significant choice we make will be,
How do we respond to Jesus'?

We have a vocation to live out; a calling from God.

**As the Old Testament taught us, we should
Act Justly, love mercy and
walk humbly with your God.**

Jesus taught the same thing;

**Love the Lord your God with your whole being
and love your neighbour as yourself.**

Jeremiah looked forward to the day when God would make a new covenant with His people and take out their hard hearts of stone and give them new hearts, responsive to God.

It is not something we can do from our own will power. We need to be transformed from within. We need to be "born again." Jesus said.

I can't develop each of those metaphors on a Christmas morning but help is at hand.

There are lots of ways that The Lord God has chosen to make us aware of our need for Him. I'm really pleased that Jo'an and Hsiangling are organizing an online Alpha course in the New Year

If you are looking to understand and experience the reality of Christian Faith the Alpha Course is a friendly, open way in. It is a golden opportunity to taste and see what it is all about.

You can find the details on the website under events.