

**ADVENT 3 B****John 1:6-9****“Bearing Witness to Our Christmas Light”**

*There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a 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 enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.*

Over the years displays of Christmas lights have become more and more elaborate. They have bright colors. They come in various styles. They are arranged in shapes. They adorn houses, hang on bushes, wrap around trees and spell out messages. I fear that some think that more and more lights make for a better Christmas, as if the holiday season were all about having a higher electric bill. One television commercial shows an over-the-top display of lights at one house while the neighboring house has a simple stand of lights that spells the word “ditto” with an arrow pointing to the impressive scene next door.

It is easy for me to be a Christian Scrooge in this matter. “Bah, humbug! Yes, they have nice lights, but will they be in church for worship on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day?” There should be some middle ground between those light-up-the-night displays that make Christmas into a matter of glittering decorations and, on the other hand, a fear that any such adornment distracts from the real meaning of Christmas. For the Christmas lights we see at this time of year should remind us that God’s Son Jesus Christ is born. He is the true Light that brightens our world. Allow me to wax poetic:

We now have shorter days and longer nights. There is more darkness and much less light.

During the middle of the night there is no light. We wander down the hall where we trip and fall.

Being in the dark is no walk in the park. When in the west the sun has set, we need all the help we can get.

During the day things seem to go our way, but at night we fear that nothing goes right.

In the Bible darkness means sin which is the shape we all are born in.

That darkness of sin covers up God's love like a hand that is hidden by a winter glove.

Our sin makes our spirits blind; to both friend and foe we are unkind.

Our sin clouds our sight so that what God tells us is wrong we think to be right.

Our selfishness causes problems of our own making. We feel what belongs to others is ours for the taking.

Our spiritual vision is more than just weak. The one true God we don't want to seek.

We cannot see where we are going. Our faults and failures now truly are showing.

By nature all that is good we do hate. We need to be rescued before it's too late.

"Let there be light" are God's first words of power and might.

God blessed us with His creation that was made in holy perfection.

But no matter how much God gave, Him we again and again disobey.

Yet, in His free grace and favor, our God sends to us His Savior.

He is the eternal Light that is true. He comes into this world to make our lives new.

This is not a light up in the sky, but one that shines with majesty from on high.

When born, God's Son was placed in a manger. But to this fallen world He is a stranger.

Into the darkness of Bethlehem's night, Christ Jesus came as the true Christmas Light.

He lived in this world as one who is perfect, the only human life ever lived without defect.

Those diseased in their bodies He healed by His love with almighty power that is His from above.

Yet the more faith in people He created, the more by earthly powers was He hated.

To prevent their own loss, human leaders nailed Him to a cross.

There Jesus went to His suffering and death, yet He loved us until His very last breath.

As an innocent man Jesus died. As God's sacrifice was He crucified.

That Good Friday His light seemed to flicker; but it shined once again even quicker.  
On Easter Sunday Jesus rose up from the grave. He came to life us lost sinners to save.  
Ascended now into heaven He offers us life; one that is eternal, free from sin, suffering and strife.

Jesus is God's one true holy Light. In Him we have restored spiritual sight.  
Jesus' love for us brightens our days. We now want to live in His loving ways.  
During this holy Christmas season, we show others that Jesus is the reason.

Gadgets and gifts are what we buy, but John the Baptist came to testify.  
"The Savior is coming," is what John told. He did so loud, clear and oh so bold.  
John spoke for all people to hear, "Behold, Jesus, the Lamb of God, it is clear."

John wanted all to believe and faith in Jesus to receive.

This Savior whom John said was near is the One whom we now hold very dear.  
But we can't keep the Lord Jesus to ourselves. He is a far better gift than what's on store shelves.

"Jesus is the true Light" to others we tell. He frees us from sin, from death and from hell.

We say, "Jesus is the true Light. His goodness to us is out of sight."

We share with all who need to hear these words of our Christmas cheer:

"Jesus is the true Light, His love for us shines very bright."

All around us the world is full of Christmas light. There are those of many colors, but some are plain white.

We can look at them and admire, as long as they don't start a fire.

But these lights can only reflect God's gift to us who is perfect.

For the true Light of Christmas is Jesus, our Savior and Lord who is God with us. AMEN