



Shine

Monday 23rd December



Photo by Nick de Partee on Unsplash

Scripture: Luke 1.57-66

Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. Her neighbours and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her.

On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. But his mother said, 'No; he is to be called John.' They said to her, 'None of your relatives has this name.' Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. He asked for a writing-tablet and wrote, 'His name is John.' And all of them were amazed. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. Fear came over all their neighbours, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. All who heard them pondered them and said, 'What then will this child become?' For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him.

To reflect

Walking around houses at this time of year, you can notice lights shining in the darkness. Lights of Christmas trees, lights on the outside of houses, light shining to guide the way home.

To shine can mean to give out a bright light or to direct (a torch or another source of light) somewhere in order to see something in the dark. We refer to Jesus as light of the world, but we are still waiting for the Saviour of all people to come. However, there is one who pointed the way, directed the way – shone a light so people could see the way ahead – John the Baptist.

Today's Daily Eucharist Gospel Reading speaks of the birth of John the Baptist, in yesterday's Gospel reading for the Fourth Sunday of Advent we heard the visitation of Elizabeth and Mary. We are walking towards the day we celebrate Christ's birth – Emmanuel. Today's poem speaks of the Advent moon shining, what light have you seen shone this Advent?

Advent Antiphon: O Emmanuel

O God*

our King and lawgiver, for whom the nations wait,

O Saviour of all people:

Come, Lord our God, and save us.

Advent by Christina Rossetti

This Advent moon shines cold and clear,

These Advent nights are long;

Our lamps have burned year after year,

And still their flame is strong.

"Watchman, what of the night?" we cry,

Heart-sick with hope deferred:

"No speaking signs are in the sky,"

Is still the watchman's word.

The Porter watches at the gate,

The servants watch within;

The watch is long betimes and late,

The prize is slow to win.

"Watchman, what of the night?" but still

His answer sounds the same:

"No daybreak tops the utmost hill,

Nor pale our lamps of flame."

One to another hear them speak,

The patient virgins wise:

"Surely He is not far to seek,"--

"All night we watch and rise."

"The days are evil looking back,

The coming days are dim;

Yet count we not His promise slack,

But watch and wait for Him."

One with another, soul with soul,

They kindle fire from fire:

"Friends watch us who have touched the goal."

"They urge us, come up higher."

"With them shall rest our waysore feet,

With them is built our home,

With Christ." "They sweet, but He most sweet,

Sweeter than honeycomb."

There no more parting, no more pain,

The distant ones brought near,

The lost so long are found again,

Long lost but longer dear:

Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard,

Nor heart conceived that rest,

With them our good things long deferred,

With Jesus Christ our Best.

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

We weep because the night is long,
We laugh, for day shall rise,
We sing a slow contented song
And knock at Paradise.
Weeping we hold Him fast Who wept
For us,--we hold Him fast;
And will not let Him go except
He bless us first or last.

Weeping we hold Him fast to-night;
We will not let Him go
Till daybreak smite our wearied sight,
And summer smite the snow:
Then figs shall bud, and dove with dove
Shall coo the livelong day;
Then He shall say, "Arise, My love,
My fair one, come away."

*To Listen (these and other suggestions can be found on a Spotify playlist at
<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0F5bU2sf4OiOtQY3q78Rf2?si=a99cbbf61e7d4587>)*

- Two settings of today's Antiphon are 'O Antiphons: VII. O Emmanuel' by Pavel Łukaszewski (one version is by The Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge) and 'O Emmanuel' by Ēriks Ešenvālds (one version is by the Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge).

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