

# Sermon

## 'Darkness is a monster that lies'

Year A 2020, Christmas 1



As is our custom here at St Peter's, on this second Sunday after Christmas, we share in the Christmas Day sermon of an Archbishop – this year it is Archbishop Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury. This is an extract of his Christmas Day sermon at Canterbury Cathedral. The text is the prologue to the Gospel of John.

'Darkness is a monster that lies. Its growling claims seem to call out with a louder volume than the love filled whispers of light. We see the shadows out of the corner of our eyes.

The darkness sometimes seems to threaten our certainty and hope. It is the reality with which we live.

By contrast we do not *see* light, but we do see *truth* in light. The light that overcame the dark.

St John calls Christians to receive the light of Christ; to point to the light because it is life and love, and brings hope. In the presence of the Light of Jesus Christ, dark is ultimately powerless.

Light is all around us, invisible, untouchable. Dark presses in on our deep fears. Its reality is manipulated by those who stir fear for their own purposes.

The true light that is Jesus Christ brings hope.

Light liberates. Light inspires. Light reveals truth. Jesus is light, life and love.

As Christians, we are called to be the hope-creating witnesses to light, life and love.

We are witnesses to the hope given by the light of Christ, who came into the world in such a way as to shine like a distant light in the middle of nowhere.

In December 1942, during the Battle for Stalingrad, a pastor and doctor with the German army Lieutenant Kurt Reuber drew a charcoal picture of Mary holding Jesus.

It was Christmas, Christmas Day, all was grey and terrible; he was in a hole in the frozen mud. His Mary was a barefoot woman, cradling her child.

Around her were the words light, life, love: *Licht, Leben, Liebe*. He needed to bear witness even there that the dark could not win.

Witnessing to the light, life and love of Jesus, every Christian becomes a Lieutenant Reuber, one who gives hope amidst the deepest darkness.

In our country, in our world light, life and love, bearing hope on their wings, are the gift we are given by Jesus Christ; they are gifts to be opened to all the world.

John starts his gospel with a prose poem of light, life and love. Catch hold afresh of the gift offered by the Christ child. Let us catch it afresh.

Receive his light; it is there to be received. Feast on life and love, even when all else is dark.

And so, being filled with the hope of Christ, let us as God's people show the dark that its pretensions are vain. That the true light has come into the world.

