Rev. Beth Anderson  
Bermuda Hundred UMC  
Christmas Eve  
December 24, 2013  
Simply Christmas Sermon Series  
“Less Darkness, More Light”  
Isaiah 9: 2-7; Luke 2: 1-20  

This story may sound familiar but it’s amazing how it becomes born anew in us each year.

In the dark of night, shepherds in the fields became surrounded in the glory of God and the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.”

In the dark of night, these shepherds were surrounded in brilliant light and news of great joy.

In the dark of night, a star shone bright.

In a dark night, lonely, and unfamiliar place, where there was no room.

In the dark of a cave stable – the light of the world came to shine.

We are a people who have walked in darkness.

We know what it is to traverse stumbling, blind, seeking and looking for something we can hold onto that is steady and real.

We know what the unknown looks like.

We understand what it is to be uncomfortable and fearful.

And--- We are ready for light!

After waiting, after walking on in darkness, we come to this day, this moment when the light shines and we know we no longer walk alone.
Christmas tells us that our time of struggle, our fears, worries, and sorrows – this can be ended, because a Savior has been born who is for ALL of us!

The angels announce a universal joy for that Jesus is a sign for you and for everyone!

For ALL the People!

There is no one and not one place of darkness, where the light of Christ and his Saving grace cannot and will not reach.
What is the darkest place you have ever been?

It may be a real place, or figurative one of emotion....

The darkest place I have ever been was in a cave about thirty feet below the ground.
I was a fifteen and I went caving or spelunking as some would call it.
Down, and down we went....
First taking a ladder, then repelling slowly, then crawling on our bellies.
It felt as if we were descending into the unknown—a black hole.

Hard hats and head lights revealing mud, and wet, and cold around us.

You may wonder- why would anyone willingly go down this deep into a cave to crawl on their bellies in the dirt?

As we crawled through a tunnel, we came into a little room of a cave.

There were a little over ten of us and we all fit sitting with our backs leaning against the wall of this little round cave room.

And then--we turned off our lights. And we sat in stillness.

This was the deepest, coldest, darkness I have ever experienced.

Even though there were people surrounding me, I could not see them, I could not even hear them.

I don’t think we breathed.... There just seemed to be nothing.
Nothininess…
Darknesss.
Alone.

And then.

After what felt like an eternity of waiting.

The sound of a match striking ricocheted against our hearts.
And light came pouring over each of us.

Every face shone brilliantly.

And these words poured forth, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.”

Why would anyone willingly come into darkness? Christ is. Our Savoir is willing. God willingly sent his Son- so that we would no longer walk in darkness.

Christ is the light that was spoken into the world in the beginning when nothing existed but darkness and chaos.

This is the light of Christ that has become real- incarnate- and born this day in Bethlehem for ALL of us!

A light that cannot only surround us, but a Light that can be born into our hearts!

A light that can be born into all our dark places.
A light that will shine out and our sin and shine forth joy!

A light that can transform all darkness to light!

That dark night in a dark cave in an unknown place---
After stillness and dark and waiting--
Holy Spirit fire struck to light and brought alive our Savior to shine brilliantly.

Will there still be darkness?
Yes.

There is still unknown and cold and fear.
There are moments where we feel we are descending into nothing.

Where we have no idea what will come or what will be.
And yet we know, “The Light Shines in the darkness.”

The light does not obliterate the darkness, it just takes away its power.
The light has more power.
The light is real.
The light is here.
The light will never cease.

Christmas tells us that “God refuses to dwell in the heavens above and from a safe distance watching the drama of human life play out. Instead, God climbs right into the darkest places to be with us.”

Christ comes to fully be present, to be beside us and before us, and within us.

In this holy and luminous action, we find reason enough to hope, to believe, to live in this good news of great joy, and to reflect this light that is for ALL of us.

Come- Live in this light!
The Lord has come!
The light outshines the darkness and the darkness has not, will not, and will never overcome it!
Thanks be to God! Amen.

\[1\] http://day1.org/1022-luminarias