

Sermons at All Saints Anglican Church of Luxembourg

Preached by Rev Alison Heal at Carols by Candlelight on Sunday 14th December 2025

Readings: Genesis 3:8-14, Isaiah 9.2, 6-7, Luke 1.26-38, John 1.1-14

Before I even arrived in Luxembourg, I was in a few Luxembourg social media groups. So I noticed when an event started being flagged up, an event called Darkness into Light. I didn't have any information other than the name, but I had a really strong feeling of: "I don't know what this is, but I want to be a part of it."

Doing a bit more research, I discovered that, as most of you probably know, Darkness into Light is a dawn walk which symbolises hope, as communities come together to support mental health and prevent suicide. So I signed up, turned up on May 10th this year, and joined many others, including lots of people here this evening, to raise money and to raise hope. Our walk funded helplines, counselling and awareness raising. On that morning we walked together, from darkness into the light of dawn, knowing that everyone had their own reasons for being there, that for many, the darkness inside was a regular companion, and that for some, the chance of a glimpse of light might be enough to save a life.

The symbolism of these dawn walks, this longing for light, draws our human hearts. Frederick Beuchner says: "Only the hope for (light) has come, only the longing for it. In the meantime we are in the dark, and the dark, God knows, is also in us."

That first reading we heard, about Adam and Eve, shows how darkness is a constant part of human life – that desire to hide, to lie, to blame, to act on the spur of the moment in ways we'll come to regret.

The second reading spells it out. For all the good, all the light, there is in humanity, we also find ourselves walking in darkness, living in a land of deep darkness. I've lived long enough now to see periods of light and periods of darkness in global politics and in my own life. None of us can deny we're going through, or going into, a period now where it's hard to see the light, among the wars, the climate crisis and the hatred and mistrust.

So when we hear of Light coming, the light that will establish justice and put things right, it's natural we find ourselves drawn to it. We may find ourselves thinking as I did, "I don't know what this is, but I want to be a part of it."

PAUSE

The third reading you heard tells how extraordinary physical it was, when God came into the world as its light. The story we're here to celebrate this evening, is the physical entry of God into our world. God doesn't enter in a blaze of glory and power but he comes as the helpless child of a powerless family. This turns the world's expectations upside down. This true Light comes secretly, humbly, without force, coming only where invited: "Here I am, the servant of the Lord," said Mary, "Let it be with me according to your word". God's light became a part of Mary. We could paraphrase her acceptance in line with that thought of mine: She said to God:

"I don't know what this is, but I want it to be a *part - of- me*."

PAUSE

We're going to hear our final reading shortly, and you'll hear the mystical promise: '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.'

And your instinctive reaction may well be:

“I don’t know what this is, but I want it to be a part of me.”

Because we’re drawn to this promise of Light. Some of us may know the light of God, the light of Jesus, quite well, but the instinctive draw is still there: we need *more*. God’s light isn’t a one-off gift but a promise of ongoing relationship, growing deeper or fading into the distance dependent on many different circumstances of our challenging lives. So, in that sense, we continue to yearn: “I know what this is, *and* I want it to be a part of me.”

For some, the offer of Light may feel new, or have new resonance this Christmas. “I don’t know what this is, but I want it to be a part of me.” When you hear the reading from John, you’ll hear that: “To *all* who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.”

“I don’t know what this is, but I want it to be a part of me.”

If that’s you, it can be. Talk with the clergy or another Christian you trust if you want this light of Christ to be a part of you, a part of your life.

And I know there’s another way you could respond to this yearning for light. “I wish it was true, I wish it could be a part of me.” That’s a very understandable way to experience it. The harshness of life, the events of our individual lives, but also the culture we live in, where we’ve separated spirituality from the other aspects of life, puts us out of touch with the fullness of reality. We’re not encouraged to recognise the reality of a world where material and spiritual aren’t separated, but are part of the nature of the cosmos, *and* of its creator God, united as one in the birth of Jesus. Walking down the street in Luxembourg, I get hit by this weird dichotomy too: we’re living in a continent where what we can see and study and measure is the only accepted reality.

And yet, there’s still this call, in the interior darkness and in the darkness outside us: “I don’t know what this is, but I want it to be a part of me.”

That call is to each of us, from the true Light, who has come into the world.

How do I, how do you, respond to that call of the Light, this Christmas?