



Wednesday 8th April 2020 – Light in the darkness

Video can be accessed here: <https://youtu.be/2xroAd6aDnk>

The Welcome

Welcome this Holy Week to Wild Church. Today we are focussing on the light of God and hope in the darkness. We will be looking at the beauty and importance of both darkness and light. We will be reflecting this Holy week on Jesus light of the world going into the dark tomb but then on Easter day Jesus breaking out of the tomb. We will be planting seeds and lighting a fire as our reflection activities this week.

Please join in with me the parts in **Bold**.

Opening prayer

God of wonder, go with us into this new day. Speak to us, refresh us, astound us, that we may grow to love you, and your world, more deeply. Amen.

Activity ~ Planting some seeds

Reading

I have picked a couple of readings to focus our reflection on today.

Genesis 1: 3-5, 14-19

³Then God said, “**Let there be light**”; and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

¹⁴And God said, “**Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, ¹⁵and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.**” And it was so. ¹⁶God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. ¹⁷God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, ¹⁸to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

Psalms 104.1-4, 19-23

¹Bless the Lord, O my soul.

O Lord my God, you are very great.

You are clothed with honour and majesty,

² **wrapped in light as with a garment.**

You stretch out the heavens like a tent,

³ you set the beams of your chambers on the waters,

you make the clouds your chariot,

you ride on the wings of the wind,

⁴ **you make the winds your messengers,**

fire and flame your ministers.

- ¹⁹You have made the moon to mark the seasons;
the sun knows its time for setting.
- ²⁰**You make darkness, and it is night,
when all the animals of the forest come creeping out.**
- ²¹The young lions roar for their prey,
seeking their food from God.
- ²²**When the sun rises, they withdraw
and lie down in their dens.**
- ²³People go out to their work
and to their labour until the evening.

Reflection

I share this reflection from Richard Clarkson which was originally written for creation tide:

“The early Celtic Christians knew the significance of that first command, ‘let there be light.’ J. Philip Newell, in his introduction to Celtic Spirituality, explains that for the Celts there was a distinct difference between the light of the first day of creation, and the light of the fourth day of creation. The light of the fourth day—the sun, moon and stars—is a visible light. The light of the first day, however, is the light of being, from which ‘inaccessible light of God all life comes forth.’ Without this light, nothing could exist. This echoes the opening of John’s gospel, ‘in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.’ Thinking about light in this way can help us to think about God.

If you shine a torch across a dark room you cannot see the beam unless it has something to reflect off—a speck of dust perhaps, or a far wall. The light reveals and illuminates all that it sees, yet it is still somehow mysterious. For the Celts, light was not a symbol of release from what would otherwise be dark, rather, as Newell puts it, ‘redemption is about light being liberated from the heart of creation and from the essence of who we are.’ With those first words of creation God filled the whole creation with the light of life, and that same light illuminates all life to this day.”

On the fourth day of creation darkness, as well as light, is declared good. Light pollution, however, means that more than one third of the human population is no longer able to see the Milky Way. But it is not just about what people cannot see. Frogs and toads are affected by the artificial light, as are migratory birds flying at night. Natural darkness enables humans to appreciate the wonders of the night sky - and many other creatures to flourish. The darkness is good. *Psalm 104 v 20 - You make darkness, and it is night, when all the animals of the forest come creeping out.* I used to be a forest ranger and I used to take people out on dusk and night walks. The forest was amazing at this time of night. We would use bat detectors to hear the bats and night vision scopes to see animals in the dark. For some people it was scary to be in the forest at night but for me I found it a magical experience. It’s much noisier than you would expect as most of the UK wildlife is nocturnal. Even if you find the physical darkness scary or use this darkness as a metaphor for the difficult times in life – know that God promises to be with us in it all. The light of God illuminates all of life.

We are in the season of spring. The clocks have gone forward and evenings are getting lighter. This season has come after the cold and darkness of winter. Take the seeds we planted earlier. They looked a bit dull and unpromising. We put them into the earth and we now wait. Eventually we will begin to see some shoots and eventually it will grow into something bright and beautiful. We had to push the seeds into the soil and cover them over so they are in complete darkness. Planting these seeds reminds me of the Easter story which is also a story about things that were dark and difficult coming to new life. On Good Friday we see that Jesus is taken down from the cross and buried in the tomb. A bit like us burying our seeds. But on Easter Sunday God shows us once and forever that his love is stronger than anything, even death itself. The women come to the tomb and find it burst open and Jesus risen from the dead. Jesus bursts from the darkness of the tomb into new life in the resurrection. There is hope as we focus on the light of God which illuminates all of life.

Try to notice the light around you as you go about your day today. Let it draw you into the presence of the God of light. Amen.

Prayers

Pray for the World

In the world around us, this day we pray **Your kingdom come**

In the world before us, this day we pray **Your kingdom come**

In the world beside us, this day we pray **Your kingdom come**

In the world within us, this day we pray **Your kingdom come**

Pray for yourself that you will know the light of God in your life



Pray for others. Those that are struggling or who are unwell at this time.

Be the Light



- **Equipment**
 Candle, matches
- **Set Up**
 Put the candle in the middle of a table or on a windowsill *(please ensure an adult is present)*
- **Instructions**
 When life is difficult we often need someone to encourage and help us – to light up our darkness.

 Who do you know that needs encouragement or help today? Who needs light in their darkness?

 Ask an adult to light the candle. Say a prayer for this person. Perhaps you could ‘be the light’ by sending them a message today.

Closing Prayer

Celtic Christians used a Cairn prayer, a prayer of encircling protection. Here is one to end our gathering:

**Circle me Lord
Keep protection near
And danger afar**



**Circle me Lord
Keep hope within
Keep doubt without**

**Circle me Lord
Keep light near
And darkness afar**

**Circle me Lord
Keep peace within
Keep evil out**

Extra activities

- Listen to this song ‘Light in the darkness’ by Hillsong and meditate on the lyrics.
<https://youtu.be/s0HpihVTfFg>
- Why not get an adult to cut out some stars and hide them round your garden or home. Go and see if you can find them all.

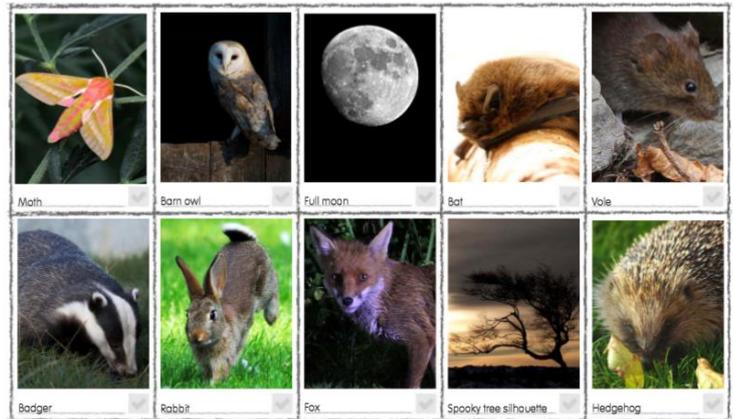
May You be a bright flame before me
 May You be a guiding star above me,
 May You be a smooth path below me,
 And a loving Guide behind me,
 Today, tonight, and forever.

**Cross image by Cari Buziak*

- Torch Tag. Played at night or in a dark house this game mixes hide and seek with tag. The person who is "it" waits at the "jail" counting to a high number while everyone else hides. Then, armed with a torch this person searches for the others who may be switching hiding spots. The torch must remain on at all times and may not be covered. When "it" spots someone, s/he must use the torch to get a close enough look at the person to identify him/her and call out his/her name. One variation is to pass the torch to the caught person, so s/he becomes "it." Another version is to send each caught person to "jail" to wait until everyone is caught. The first person caught then becomes "it."

- God declares both day and night to be good. Research online why dark skies are so important to so many animals.
- Go on a nocturnal animal hunt – take your torch and find what animals come and visit your garden at night.
- Download a stargazing app or print of a stargazing map and see what constellations you can spot!

After Dark Spotter



- Easter garden – Make an Easter garden and plant some grass seed in the soil. Water it, put it in a sunny spot and watch it grow!



Resources

Live Lent Church of England Resource <https://www.churchofengland.org/our-faith/living-out-our-faith/lent-holy-week-and-easter/livent-care-gods-creation>

Daily Reflections for Creationtide, Richard Clarkson

Prayer spaces at home - <https://www.prayerspacesinschools.com/prayer-spaces-at-home>

Night Spotter sheet - <https://www.wildlifewatch.org.uk/images/Downloads/spotters/after%20dark%20spotter.pdf>