“Mary Did You Know?” was probably my Mother’s favorite Christmas song. When it would be sung in church on Christmas Eve she would be quietly sniffling in the darkness. She loves everything associated with babies so Christmas as it focuses on the Son of God coming in human form, Jesus born as a baby and placed in a manger in Bethlehem, this was so very special to her. And to us, as well. It says: “When you kiss your little baby, you kiss the face of God.” The song, “Mary Did You Know?” says, “Did you know that your baby boy is heaven’s perfect Lamb? This sleeping child you’re holding is the GREAT I AM?” Its still the greatest story ever told...

The light that shines in the darkness shines from the face of the Christ Child of Bethlehem. The glory of God breaking through from heaven on Christmas Eve shines forth from Him born in human vesture, shining from His little face, beams of glory etched with light cascading from the manger out into a dark and darkening world. The angel who announces His coming birth and the shepherds to whom the announcement was made were surrounded by the GLORY of God. The heavenly host and the shepherds then together reflected back the glory of God and proclaimed, “Glory to God in the highest!” The shepherds left the manger “glorifying God” for all they had seen and heard in the manger at Bethlehem. It was GLORY and GLORY and more GLORY. We receive GLORY by the manger and we radiate that same GLORY back to God and out into a dark world that needs it so. John 1: 14 says: “We behold His glory as of the only son...” We have come to Bethlehem to SEE this glory, to BEHOLD this glory, to have the LIGHT shine within us, and for that same glory to shine forth from us this night. Our scripture from II Corinthians declares: “For it is the God who said, “Let light shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.”” (II Corinthians 4: 6) The light shines out of the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. The glory shines from the face of Christ. The light and the glory, the presence and the creative power of God that shone first at creation, now shines again in Bethlehem, now shines forth from the face of the Baby Jesus, now shines from HIM to our hearts. We behold Him. We see His glory. His light shines and pierces our every darkness. We have come tonight to Bethlehem to see, as the scripture says, “THE GLORY OF GOD IN THE FACE OF CHRIST.” v. 6

So perhaps you have received some bad news; a doctor has told you or a loved one something that feels very dark and the darkness seems to be breaking in this year. Behold His glory! See the light that has come! The LIGHT ALWAYS BREAKS THROUGH at Christmas!

Or perhaps you were just laid off from your job or received a very bad piece of financial news and the darkness seems very strong indeed, pronounced, impenetrable and dark and
darkening over your life. Behold His glory! See the light that has come just for you! The LIGHT ALWAYS BREAKS THROUGH at Christmas!

Or perhaps some dear loved one has died and the darkness of death has enfolded them and the dark shroud of grief has surrounded you this Christmas. Come to Bethlehem and see Him of whom the angels sing! Behold His glory! See the glory and the promise of eternal life, the glory from heaven where your loved one now lives, breaking through! The LIGHT ALWAYS BREAKS THROUGH at Christmas!

Or perhaps you are some young person who has convinced yourself that life itself is not worth living. And the darkness and the depression has descended like the deepest darkness on the longest, darkest day of the year. Come to the light! Behold His glory! See the light of creation dawn again to recreate you and bring you new life in a Baby born in Bethlehem! See the glory of God in the face of the Christ Child! The LIGHT ALWAYS BREAKS THROUGH at Christmas!

I have been baptizing a lot of babies this fall. Sometimes as a joke people refer to me as the “baby whisperer” because babies never cry when I hold them. This fall when I look down into their little face I think to myself how much my dear Mother would have loved to see this little child being baptized – she loves little babies so! But I look into their little faces and I see the miracle that each one of them is. The gift of love and light from the heart of a loving and light-filled God. Maybe that’s why they don’t cry; because I always see them as the little baby Jesus. I feel the love that God has for them. But also the love God always has for me, as well. When you kiss this little baby, you kiss the face of God! When you look into the face of the Christ Child in the manger you see the glory of God – “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” The light shineth in Bethlehem and it casts away the darkness. Always has; always will...

(We have tried to light the Rose Window behind the chancel area. We believe you will be particularly able to see it as the lights in the sanctuary are turned out, and the candles are lighted during the singing of “Silent Night”. Look up and behold the light that shineth in the darkness – the Glory of the God in the face of Christ!)

Behold, the Christ Child! See the glory of God in the face of Christ! And know that whatever darkness you face this night that the LIGHT BORN AT BETHLEHEM ALWAYS BREAKS THROUGH! Amen and Amen.

By: The Reverend Dr. Stuart D. Broberg, The Church of the Covenant, Washington, PA

IF THIS HAS BLESSED YOU, PLEASE PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND!