



# Pinewood Lutheran Church

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Have you ever been in a cave? I mean a real cave that is underground. I have, once. And I don't plan on visiting any cave again. The one I was in had fabulous rock structures with flowing water carving intricate details. It was cool, but not cold. Some rooms were so big that the lights provided could not illumine the deep recesses. But all I could think about was: "I'm a few hundred feet underground and if the lights go out I won't be able to see." It felt unsettling and creepy. I suppose tunnels are much the same albeit not as big. But really long ones can get to a person and would, if not for the light. I guess I'm not a mole.....

I stay away from caves and tunnels, but they still find me and you. I'm talking about the emotional caves and tunnels that we often find ourselves descending into. Sometimes we feel ourselves overwhelmed by a sense of abandonment. People let us down. The weather can pull us down and lead to gloom-and-doom thoughts. Anytime you're alone, or think you are, the last thing you need is more darkness. It all makes you feel very small and helpless. And the longer you're caught in such a trap, the more forlorn you become.

This is why people yearn for the good news of the holiday season. We yearn for the light! The winter season with its approaching solstice is dark, dank, and claustrophobic—much like a cave. But to be suddenly surrounded by light and break free from all that is uplifting! Light is freeing. Light brings contentment and joy.

The season of Advent is about the coming of the Light. Specifically, the coming of the Light of the world, Jesus Christ. It is God pulling us out of our man-made caves, or at least switching on the light. And that Light burns brightest on Christmas Eve, the night when "The Light to lighten the Gentiles" was born. The famous Advent reading from Isaiah 60 captures this quite well: "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn."

As a little boy I was happy to come out of that cave into the warm, bright light of a summer's day. I still remember how empowered I felt. Light will do that. It makes everything shiny and bright. It gladdens our senses with color and shape. It warms our bodies with its rays. Well, that's exactly what Jesus Christ came to do and will for you on December 25th! And the best part of all is: This Light will never go out! Through faith in Christ, Light pierces darkness! Good conquers evil! And inner peace will reign supreme.....

Pastor Thomas H. Fox