

TERRITORIAL CONGRESS 2020



3 pm - Saturday 24 October

JESUS, LIGHT OF THE WORLD

WITH

Chief of the Staff Commissioner Lyndon Buckingham

AND

World Secretary for Women's Ministries

Commissioner Bronwyn Buckingham

SUPPORTED BY

Commissioners Anthony and Gill Cotterill





GENESIS 1:1–3

‘In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.’

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Commissioner Gill Cotterill (Territorial Leader for Leader Development)

‘Let there be light’ are the first words spoken by God recorded in Genesis at creation, and ‘Let there be light’ are still the words that God wants to speak right into our hearts this weekend. We need some of that light in our world today, right through these days in the pandemic, that God will bring light into our hearts as we share together.

The theme for this year’s Congress comes from verse 3 of General Albert Orsborn song, ‘When Shall I Come Unto The Healing Waters?’ (SASB 742).

*Light, life and love are in that healing fountain,
All I require to cleanse me and restore;
Flow through my soul, redeem its desert places,
And make a garden there for the Lord I adore.*

We hope and pray that that will be our experience – that we’ll receive inspiration, encouragement and refreshment to our hearts.

‘JOYFUL, JOYFUL’ (SASB 39)

A song of praise to the creator of Heaven and Earth

1.
Joyful, joyful, we adore thee,
God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flowers before thee,
Hail thee as the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
Drive the clouds of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness,
Fill us with the light of day.

2.
All thy works with joy surround thee,
Earth and Heaven reflect thy rays,
Stars and angels sing around thee,
Centre of unbroken praise;
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
Blossoming meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird and flowing fountain
Call us to rejoice in thee.

3.
Thou art giving and forgiving,
Ever blessing, ever blest,
Wellspring of the joy of living,
Ocean-depth of happy rest.
Thou the Father, Christ our brother –
All who live in love are thine;
Teach us how to love each other,
Lift us to the joy divine.

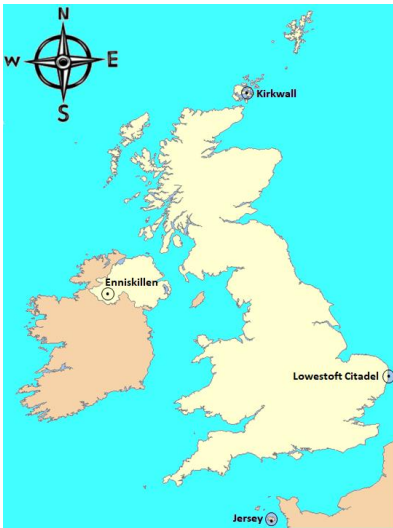
4.
Mortals, join the mighty chorus
Which the morning stars began;
Father-love is reigning o’er us,
Brother-love binds man to man.
Ever singing, march we onward,
Victors in the midst of strife;
Joyful music lifts us sunward
In the triumph song of life.

COMPASS POINT PRAYERS

Prayers from the corps at the four compass points of the territory.

NORTH – Madaleine Maclean, Kirkwall: Father God, we thank you for this wonderful world: the mountains, the valleys, the seas, the lakes, the animals, the plants and the trees – all so fantastically made. We thank you for the beauty of nature and for the positive effects it has on us physically, mentally and also spiritually, as we remember that the creator of all loves us so much. In recent weeks, as we have marked the harvest time, we have been reminded of how you continue to provide food for us through your creation, and so much more. Thank you.

Lord, in Genesis 2:15, you put Adam into the Garden of Eden, to work the land and to take care of it. We thank you for the people who know how to work the land properly. And we ask you, Lord, to give us all the wisdom to know best how to look after your world. Help us see the impact our actions have on us now and the generations to follow. Forgive us, Lord, for the times we got it wrong and help us, Lord, each in our own way, to be part of the change we want and need to see. We love you, Lord, and ask these things in the precious and powerful name of Jesus. Amen.



EAST – Lisa King, Lowestoft Citadel: We thank you, Jesus, for your journey to the cross: from leaving Heaven, entering Earth as a man who was persecuted, mocked and falsely accused, to be crucified on the cross so that we may have eternal life. Thank you for coming as the Light to this dark world, that we may believe and follow you to a life that is right and honourable and pure and full of praise. Help us to live a life, not concerned for ourselves, but a life concerned for others – a life worthy of the calling, by being completely humble and gentle, being patient and bearing one another in love. Give us the wisdom to meet and speak with others, who may see the light of you living in and through us, that they may believe and come to know you as their personal Saviour. Challenge us, Lord, to live a life of light and love. Amen.

SOUTH – Lieutenant Alice Nunn, Jersey: Loving God, you are the Light of the World – a light that brings hope and peace for all. As we look at Corbière lighthouse here in Jersey, that faithfully and consistently shines a light of safety and hope to sailors, may we be reminded of you, faithfully and consistently lighting our way. Lord Jesus, for each one of us navigating the hazards and storms of life, help us to see your light. Guide us and lead us through all life, whatever it throws at us, in the calm and the storm. Lord Jesus, may we know your transforming Spirit in our lives, as we follow your guiding light every single day of our life. Amen.

WEST – corps folk at Enniskillen: *The Lord bless you and keep you...* Thank you, God, that you have sustained and kept us through the months of lockdown and tight restrictions. We bless all those who have shown love, care and compassion to the lost, lonely and hungry ones in our society. We bless all those who have provided ways to do justice, mercy and grace to anyone who would have struggled during these times. We bless all those with frontline ministries and thank God that these have been inclusive, supportive and open to new ways to see the gospel spread through new avenues. *The Lord make his face shine upon you...* We bless you, that justice and righteousness might take its proper place within our towns and cities. We bless you to know wisdom and strength and have it overflow within you. We bless you with endurance to develop strength of character, which will provide a confident hope of salvation. *The Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace...* We bless, you that the father's compassion might fall upon your people. We bless your poor, that they might be lifted up. We bless you, that the knowledge of Jesus might come in like a flood. We bless you, that the favour and goodness of the Lord might rest upon you and give you peace. Amen.

'INDESCRIBABLE'

The MACA (Music and Creative Arts) dancers interpret this song of worship.

From the highest of heights to the depths of the sea,
Creation's revealing your majesty.
From the colours of fall to the fragrance of spring,
Every creature unique in the song that it sings.
All exclaiming:



*Indescribable, uncontainable,
You placed the stars in the sky,
And you know them by name:
You are amazing, God.
All-powerful, untameable;
Awestruck, we fall to our knees
As we humbly proclaim:
You are amazing, God.*



Who has told every lightning bolt where it should go,
Or seen heavenly storehouses laden with snow?
Who imagined the sun and gives source to its light,
Yet conceals it to bring us the coolness of night?
None can fathom.



*Indescribable, uncontainable,
You placed the stars in the sky,
And you know them by name:
You are amazing, God.
Incomparable, unchangeable,
You see the depths of my heart
And you love me the same;
You are amazing, God.*



Laura Story; additional lyrics by Jesse Reeves

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JOHN 1:1-18

Corps folk from Govan bring the Bible reading.

'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

'There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

'The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.





‘The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

‘(John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, “This is the one I spoke about when I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’”) Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. For the law was given

through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in the closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.’ Amen.



‘LET THERE BE LIGHT’

The International Staff Band plays Stephen Ponsford's exhilarating piece, combining the idea of the creation of light (Genesis 1) with the image of Jesus, ‘the true light’ (John 1). It features the tune of the song, ‘Light Of The World’ (SASB 114).

1.
Light of the world,
You stepped down into darkness,
Opened my eyes,
Let me see
Beauty that made this heart adore you,
Hope of a life spent with you.

*So here I am to worship,
Here I am to bow down,
Here I am to say that you’re my God;
You’re altogether lovely,
Altogether worthy,
Altogether wonderful to me.*

2.
King of all days,
Oh so highly exalted,
Glorious in Heaven above;
Humbly you came
To the Earth you created,
All for love’s sake became poor.



‘PRAISE IS RISING’

We acknowledge the presence of the Lord Jesus, ‘the God who saves us’ and who is ‘worthy of all our praises’.

1.
Praise is rising,
Eyes are turning to you,
We turn to you.
Hope is stirring,
Hearts are yearning for you,
We long for you.
’Cause when we see you,
We find strength to face the day;
In your presence
All our fears are washed away,
Washed away.

*Hosanna, hosanna,
You are the God who saves us,
Worthy of all our praises.
Hosanna, hosanna,
Come, have your way among us;
We welcome you here, Lord Jesus.*

2.

Hear the sound of
Hearts returning to you,
We turn to you.
In your Kingdom
Broken lives are made new,
You make all things new.
'Cause when we see you,
We find strength to face the day;
In your presence
All our fears are washed away,
Washed away.

*Hosanna, hosanna,
You are the God who saves us,
Worthy of all our praises.
Hosanna, hosanna,
Come, have your way among us;
We welcome you here, Lord Jesus.*

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LIGHT BULB MOMENTS

Two people testify to moments of revelation in their lives.

Catherine Mapfumo (Hemel Hempstead)

When I was a child in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) children who grew up in a single parent household were not allowed to go to a government school. So my mum found places for me and my sister in a Salvation Army school. Every day in assembly we used to sing a song: 'In The Salvation Army, that's where I belong,/ All the troubles and tribulations will find me there.' I used to sing that every day on my way to and from school. Through the words of the song I was making a covenant with God and became a Christian.

Moving to England, I started training as a registered general nurse, and I fell in love with palliative care nursing, helping people who are approaching their end of life. You can't just do this job for the money. You have to love what you are doing.

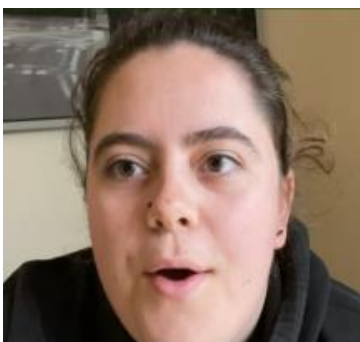
When I started coming to the Salvation Army at Hemel Hempstead, everyone showed love. There is a warm welcome to everyone. When I decided to become a soldier, it was during the pandemic. I spoke to my officers and they were very kind to me. I managed to do my lessons via Zoom. Finally, I became a soldier in the pandemic. That is something I will never forget.

As a palliative care nurse it is difficult dealing with death almost every day, but as a soldier I pray before work. God gives me strength for the challenging situations I face.



Ella Doheny (Abergavenny)

I did a prayer course with my youth group this year – we looked at lots of different kinds of prayer. I struggle to talk to God sometimes but I started doing more of it. It was set as homework after the prayer meetings to get us talking, get us praying and exploring our relationship with different kinds of prayer.



I was at the beach with my friends. I'd been having quite a rough time, and I realised in the moment that I was having such a fantastic time with my friends. I thought about our weekly mission to pray for others – and I thought, 'Do you know what? Now's the time.' So as they were all eating fish and chips I went on a walk. I had a chat with God and I thanked him and I prayed for others. I talked about it with my friends – and they were all really interested to hear.

I think my lightbulb moment is that prayer isn't always for us. Prayer can sometimes be for others because, after that, my friends

started asking me to pray for them when they were struggling with things. And that isn't something that I've had before. They were always aware I was Christian but they were never involved in my faith. And I think my lightbulb moment was that prayer isn't just for you. Prayer can be something for others as well.

'SHINE YOUR LIGHT'

Castleford Singing Company encourage us to shine for Jesus as lights in the darkness.

*Shine your light,
Shine your light, everybody,
Shine your light for everyone to see.
Jesus is the light,
Jesus is the light, everybody,
Jesus is the light for everyone to see.*

1.
A lamp stuck in a cupboard
Is a waste of a place to be,
So bring it in the open,
For the whole of the world to see.

Shine your light...

2.
Jesus said the darkness,
Could never put out the light,
He shines like sun in daytime,
And like stars in the darkest night.

Shine your light...



'WHEN SHALL I COME' (SASB 742 adapted)

The worship group Transmission (USA Southern Territory) present a contemporary version of the song.

1.
When shall I come to the healing waters?
Lifting my heart, I cry to thee my prayer.
Spirit of peace, my Comforter and healer,
In whom my springs are found,
Let my soul meet thee there.

*From a hill I know,
Healing waters flow:
O rise, Immanuel's tide,
And overflow my soul!*

2.
Wash from my hands the dust of earthly striving;
Take from my mind the stress of secret fear;
Cleanse thou the wounds from all but thee far
hidden.
And when the waters flow let my healing appear.

3.
Light, life and love are in that healing fountain,
All I require to cleanse me and restore;
Flow through my soul, redeem its desert places,
And make a garden there for the Lord I adore.

BIBLE MESSAGE

Commissioner Bronwyn Buckingham

We began this time of worship in the formless, empty, dark void of nothingness that was the Earth before Creator God breathed order, and life and light into creation. The Bible describes God as light. His presence dispels darkness because darkness cannot exist where God is.

His first creative touch on the Earth brought light because this is the essence of who he is. We know that creation, which culminated with human beings being made in his perfect image, didn't stay that way for long. Soon darkness cast its shadow again through the wilful disobedience of those first humans, resulting in all that came with that, including the worst consequence of all, separation from God.

And then, after hundreds of years, the declaration came through the prophet Isaiah that light would come again into this world: 'That time of darkness and despair will not go on forever... The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine' (Isaiah 9:1 and *2 New Living Translation*).

The dawning of a coming new light-filled age was ahead. God would become flesh and live among us. This is Jesus, who will be the Saviour of his people. God is light. The light will come.

In John 1 we see this beautiful prophecy fulfilled. I imagine the apostle John sitting down to put into words the encounters he'd had with Jesus. He knew Jesus as a trusted friend and personal Saviour. John could recall the sound of his voice, the facial expressions when Jesus was excited or disappointed. He'd heard Jesus laugh and been the recipient of personal prayers that Jesus has prayed with him. John had so many experiences and stories to call on, so many descriptions he could have used to explain Jesus to those who had not met him in the flesh. He chose light.

John describes Jesus as the light of God coming into the world. Remembering that God is light, and that God promised light through a Saviour, John saw that the promise had been fulfilled. Jesus, Light of the World, had come. John was also witness to Jesus' own claim: 'I am the Light of the World. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life' (John 8:12 *NLT*).

The mission of Jesus was to show the people he loved, and ultimately died for, the way to abundant, eternal life. All this is available to anyone who chooses to accept and follow Jesus as God's true light in the world. When we follow Jesus we can avoid walking blindly and tripping into sin because he lights the way ahead of us, guiding us in how to live. So long as we choose to follow and submit to his purposes, he continues to remove the darkness of sin from our lives. Why would anyone not choose this life of following the light-giver?

If you're looking for proof that Jesus was who he said he was, look no further than his resurrection. All the claims he made were proved correct when he defeated the darkness of death and rose from the dead. If we've said 'yes' to Jesus, then our personal testimony is one of knowing his promise of guidance, protection, comfort, courage, joy and peace beyond earthly understanding, even in the toughest of times. He's alive and he's interceding on our behalf, just as he promised he would.

If you're one who has not yet said your 'yes' to Jesus, then this can be your time. John was certain that absolutely no one is outside of all that Jesus brought to this world, when he wrote these words at the beginning of his Gospel: 'To all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God (John 1:12 *NLT*). The promise of re-creation is available to anyone who accepts Jesus for who he is, the one who shines light into the dark spaces of our lives and offers ongoing transformation as we continue to give our lives over to him every day.

God is light, the light will come, the light has come, and Jesus said of himself: 'I am the light'. But we cannot and must not keep this to ourselves, for when we become a child of God we become one of his representative in this world. Jesus said to his followers 'You are the light of the world' (Matthew 5:14 *NLT*) When we believe, we receive the promise of God's indwelling Holy Spirit who shines through us into the world.

This is the work of the Church. This is the work of the believer, to shine for the glory of God. This is why we say 'no' to anything that would cause that light to dim in our hearts. This is why we keep drawing in close to Jesus. This is why we surrender ourselves every day to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Shining with the light of Christ brings holy living, a harvest of spiritual fruit that makes a difference in our personal and family lives. It makes a difference in our worshipping communities. It makes a difference in our workplaces and neighbourhoods.

Now I don't have to tell you that living through a global pandemic isn't easy. And I won't deny that I've had days in these past few months where hopelessness has overwhelmed peace and joy, and fear has threatened to replace faith. God in his graciousness has accepted this, has accepted my tears and my questions and my doubts and my fears. I have sat quietly in his presence in those times and, gradually, there has come awareness again through the Holy Spirit that this world, which seems so dark at the moment, with all its ongoing complex issues, needs the fruit of the Spirit through his people in ever increasing abundance. And we each have both the responsibility and the privilege of being the light of Christ wherever we find ourselves in these days.

Peter, like his fellow disciple and his friend John, had been transformed and re-created by the light of Christ. He says: 'You are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation. As a result, you can show the goodness of God, for he called you out of darkness into his wonderful light' (1 Peter 2:9 *NLT*). Salvation Army family, we are called to be the light of the world. Just like every family, The Salvation Army is made up of individuals, and we each have a part to play.

Will you thank God again today for shining his light into this world and shining his light into your life? Will you commit again to allowing the Holy Spirit to shine in and through you in ways that make a difference? God is light. The light will come. The light has come. Jesus said, 'I am the Light of the World.' Then he said to us, 'You are the light of the world.'

Allow me to pray words from Song 261 as we conclude these thoughts today. 'As we gaze on your kingly brightness/ So our faces display your likeness./ Ever changing from glory to glory,/ Mirrored here may our lives tell your story./ Shine on me, shine on me.' Amen.

TIME FOR RESPONSE

In moments of prayer the International Staff Songsters sing 'Shine On Us' and Elliott Chappell (Regent Hall) draws images illustrating the song.

You are invited to respond to the Bible message by praying at home and/or by sending prayer requests to the Territorial Prayer Network at saprayernetwork@salvationarmy.org.uk.

Prayer requests can also be sent to the network via **Lieut-Colonel Jonathan Roberts, The Salvation Army, 101 Newington Causeway, London SE1 6BN.**

1.
Lord, let your light,
Light of your face,
Shine on us;
That we may be saved,
That we may have life,
To find our way
In the darkest night,
Let your light shine on us.



2.
Lord, let your grace
Grace from your hand
Come over us;
That we may be saved,
That we may have life,
To find our way
In the darkest night,
Let your grace come over us.

3.
Lord, let your love,
Love with no end,
Come over us;
That we may be saved,
That we may have life,
To find our way
In the darkest night,
Let your love come over us,
Let your grace fall on us,
Let your light shine on us.
Shine on us, O Lord.

PRAYER

Territorial Commander Commissioner Anthony Cotterill

Gracious Lord, we thank you that in Jesus you came as the Light of the World. We thank you that you call us and need us to be lights in this world.

We echo that prayer, Lord, that you would shine on us right now, wherever we may be. That even when a sense of darkness pervades, we might know you as the Light of the World, and that we in turn might reflect your love, your life and your light to all who we come into contact with.

We offer our lives afresh to you in the name of Jesus. Amen.

‘LIGHT-WALK’

The International Staff Band presents Barry Gott’s big-band style setting of the song ‘Walk In The Light’ (*SASB* 523) as images of Salvationists spreading the light of Christ during the pandemic appear on the screen.

‘Tis religion that can give –
In the light, in the light –
Sweetest pleasures while we live
In the light of God.

*O let us walk in the light,
Walk in the light,
Let us walk in the light,
In the light of God.*

‘SHINE AS THE LIGHT’

To conclude the meeting, the International Staff Band brings the last section of Peter Graham’s festival arrangement, with the climactic affirmation: ‘The light has come’.

Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God among us,
Everlasting Father, Prince who rules in peace.
To us a child is born, to us a Son is giv’n,
To those who walked in darkness, the light has come.

(*SASB* 133)

AND FINALLY...

‘The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace’ (Numbers 6:24–26)

Amen!