

LIGHT *into* DARKNESS

A Good Friday Service Based on the
“I Am” Statements in the Gospel of John



POST TENEBRAS LUX SERIES
Good Friday Services of Scripture, Story, and Song
(Song Suggestions Provided)

Lisa Wallover



Presbyterian Church in America

DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES

1700 North Brown Road | Suite 102 | Lawrenceville, Georgia 30043
www.pcabookstore.com | 1.800.283.1357

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Although many publishers do not capitalize terms, and particularly pronouns which refer to the Trinity, in this study CDM publications has capitalized those elements for clarity of reference.

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CONTENTS:

Introduction

Meaning 9

The Service

Readers 11

Setting/Service Directions 11

Readings 13

Director’s Notes

Service Structure 26

Music and Song Selections 27

Running Outline 28

Rehearsals 29

Attire 30

Note to Readers 31

Service Presentation Notes

Sound 32

Lighting 32

Materials List 33

Room Lighting and Sound Plan 34

Lighting and Sound Worksheet 35

Bulletin Information & Templates

Introduction 37

Order 38

Biblical Background 39

Appendix

Additional Song Selections 40

Artwork for Bulletin Covers and Posters 41

Light into Darkness

Light into Darkness

(Reading Time: 15-20 minutes)

Light into Darkness provides the readings and structure for a Tenebrae service of Scripture, story, and song that is based on the “I Am” statements of Jesus, uniquely found in the Gospel of John. The balance of all three elements, with the gradual dimming of lights and extinguishing of candles, creates a meaningful opportunity for thought and reflection. Musical selections are suggested.

One of the strengths of this service is that it is accessible and adaptable to a host of settings. It is designed to fit your context.

Originally presented in a mid-sized church, the readers were members of the congregation or choir who were comfortable reading aloud and expressively. Through the years, the readers became more comfortable portraying the biblical characters, and that was reflected in their representations. In addition, selecting music that fit the strengths of the church musicians was key.

The Tenebrae quickly became one of the most beloved services of the year.

The Service

CANDLE #1 (Last Supper; selections from John 13–16)

NARRATOR/JOHN (to congregation):

“I am the Light of the World.” That is what He said. That is what Jesus of Nazareth said.
“Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

(Pause.)

I am the Voice of John, . . . a fisherman, follower, friend of this Jesus.
After this day of confusion, sorrow, and darkness, we reflect on what we have experienced and on His glory: full of grace and truth.

(To READER) Judas! Come out of the shadows . . .

JUDAS (walks to podium, speaks to congregation):

The reflection of this Light is a glare in my eyes, trying to expose me.
But I am a man like you, and we prefer the shadows, to watch and plan.
What to do with a force like this . . . who can control Him?

He says He is one with the God of heaven, He sends us out to proclaim the coming kingdom, yet when the people would make Him king, He retreats.
He says a light belongs on a lampstand . . . yet when He heals, He seeks no glory or credit.

Like a king, He allows—even defends—the extravagant anointing of perfume to clean the dirt from His feet.

He says it is *right* to call Him *Lord* . . . and then *He* bows and washes our feet . . . *my* feet.

What kind of king is this? Not the kind I am looking for.

“Walk in the light,” He says.

“The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going.”

Oh, but I do know where I am going, and what I am to do.

Because now . . . it is night.

(FIRST READER turns the page in the binder, walks to the table and extinguishes a taper candle next to the center Christ candle. Turn off or lower lights as candle is extinguished. The NARRATOR begins as READER returns to his seat.)

Light into Darkness

NARRATOR/JOHN (to congregation):

When Judas had gone out, Jesus said, *“Little children, yet a little while I am with you. . . . Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in Me. . . . As the Father has loved Me, so I have loved you. Live in My love. Love one another, just as I have loved you. Truly, truly I tell you . . . you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn to joy. . . .In the world, you will have trouble. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”*

(The ENSEMBLE sings (for example): “The Upper Room.” As the song ends, the SECOND READER leaves his seat in the audience and takes his place at the READERS’ podium.)