

Light Shines in Darkness

by [Bonnie Thurston](#) in the [December 2022](#) issue

Everybody knows Christmas
is good for business.

To attract the tourist trade,
our town council cheerfully
promotes an annual
“Festival of Lights,”
the lurid illumination
of a normally pastoral park.

Neighborhoods take up
the gauntlet, festoon
with energy-guzzling lights.
In a bid to replace outdated
plaster of Paris crèches,
immense inflatables,
snowmen, cartoon characters,
claim center stage on lawns.

But a blurry, early morning
Advent communicant might,
on her sleepy way to Mass, see
nature-enforced genuflection
in heaps of deflated plastic around
some old concrete Holy Family:
kneeling Joseph, blue-robed Mary,
the Mystery in the manger.