

5th Sunday after Epiphany - February 8, 2026

Call to Worship

We are called to bring a new understanding of God:
that God so loves the world.

We are the salt of the earth.

We are called to bring a new hope in God:
that God gives us new life.

We are the light of the world.

We are called to follow the commandments and the law.

The Law of God is to love God and to love one another.

Come, let us be the salt of the earth, the light of the world.

Come, let us love one another with the love of God.

Let us join together in our love of God to worship and follow Jesus.

Written by Rev Mindi and posted on Rev-o-lution. <http://rev-o-lution.org>. Reposted: <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2017/01/call-to-worship-loving-god-and-one.html>.

Hymn

Jesus bids us shine

773

1. Jesus bids us shine with a pure, clear light,
like a little candle burning in the night.
In the world is darkness, so we must shine,
you in your small corner, and I in mine.
2. Jesus bids us shine, first of all for him;
well he sees and knows it if our light grows dim.
He looks down from heaven to see us shine,
you in your small corner, and I in mine.
3. Jesus bids us shine, then, for all around;
many kinds of darkness in this world abound:
sin and want and sorrow; so we must shine,
you in your small corner, and I in mine.

"Jesus bids us shine." Words by Susan Warner. Public domain.

Prayer of Adoration and Confession

Light of the world,
In the sparkle of the snowflake, we see your gentle beauty.
In the towering frosted treetops, we're reminded of your splendour.
You created each hibernating animal and every chirping bird.
Even in the cold of winter your creation amazes.
We thank you for blessing the world with such beauty and giving us a place within it.

Yet we confess that too often we take your creation for granted. We squander your gifts and ignore our responsibility. Sin and pride take us over; selfish wants consume our thoughts. Forgive us we pray. Take away whatever holds

us back from living fully as salt and light in the world. Through Jesus Christ the true light. Amen.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. 2nd Sunday after the Epiphany. January 19, 2014. Year A.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Amidst the darkness of all of our sin, Christ shines a redeeming light.
In him we are forgiven, restored and made new. Thanks be to God.

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Prayer for Understanding

Holy God, your mysteries surround and astound us each day. May your Spirit come upon us now so that we would rest not on our own wisdom but on yours as we read the scriptures together. Amen.

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Scripture Reading Matthew 5:13-20

Salt and Light

¹³ “Let me tell you why you are here. You’re here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth. If you lose your saltiness, how will people taste godliness? You’ve lost your usefulness and will end up in the garbage.

¹⁴⁻¹⁶ “Here’s another way to put it: You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We’re going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don’t think I’m going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I’m putting you on a light stand. Now that I’ve put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you’ll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.

Completing God’s Law

¹⁷⁻¹⁸ “Don’t suppose for a minute that I have come to demolish the Scriptures—either God’s Law or the Prophets. I’m not here to demolish but to complete. I am going to put it all together, pull it all together in a vast panorama. God’s Law is more real and lasting than the stars in the sky and the ground at your feet. Long after stars burn out and earth wears out, God’s Law will be alive and working.

¹⁹⁻²⁰ “Trivialize even the smallest item in God’s Law and you will only have trivialized yourself. But take it seriously, show the way for others, and you will find honor in the kingdom. Unless you do far better than the Pharisees in the matters of right living, you won’t know the first thing about entering the kingdom. *The Message (MSG) Copyright © 1993, 2002, 2018 by Eugene H. Peterson*

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church. **Thanks be to God.**

Message Taste and See

At this time of year one of the things that most of us look forward to is the incremental lengthening of the hours of daylight that we get. Emerging from the darkness of winter, as we experience it in this part of Canada, brings us hope for spring, new life in the

vegetation and the awareness of the animals around us, as well as the appreciation that the icy waters will at some point start to move more freely.

It is that light that brings the hope. Light allows us to stop groping our way through the darkness.

One of the things our family enjoys doing is camping, however it can get pretty dark. There has been more than one occasion where the flashlight or the light from the phone has been enough to help me and others find their way back to the warmth and safety of the tent or trailer. Even a campfire in the darkness brings an assurance that there is light out there somewhere.

This is what is meant when in the scripture we are called light-bearers. Remember this is written in a time of no electricity. There would not be street lights everywhere or even a well-lit house. Sometimes all that was available would be a lamp with a wick and oil. It is into this kind of darkness that Jesus speaks about being light for others in their darkness. It is not that darkness is all bad. The only way you can see the moon and the stars is when it is dark. And maybe that is what we are like for others at times in their darkness. We are the flicker of light, the ones who bring hope, kindness, gentleness, and compassion to a situation. Maybe we are the ones who can see their light when they cannot. Or maybe we need someone to remind us of our light.

Most of us would be like those small lights of the moon or stars, a oil lamp or a flashlight. We are light when we are gentle with someone just starting out in their job. I think of the many new comers to Thunder Bay from outside of Canada, learning the language, the ways of this country, trying to handle the expectations, even in jobs as regular as serving you coffee at Timmy's.

We are light when we sit with someone who is grieving, grieving a loss through death, but also loss of health, a job, a dream. Not trying to make it all better but to just be present, few words needed, but just a presence. Making the cup of tea or weeding the garden, hanging out to fix a car, or a fence, or to just have a beer.

But to add to our individual lights, we are called as Christian community to be light in the world. Working together to bring hope to others. It is then that we are more like the light house on a hill that alerts people to danger and keeps them safe. It can be a sign that safe harbour is not far off. It is how as a community of faith we respond to what is going on in community and in our world and do what we can to restore hope, relationship, and community. We are the ones through whom Jesus' light shines.

I spoke about camping, but another thing I enjoy are cooking shows or Instagram reels of people cooking. If you are like me, you may have particular cooks that you follow. For me it is a young man named Chef Dwight Smith. Now I caught on to him because he happens to be my daughter's brother-in-law. But I watch because his food looks good, and often I feel like I can actually make what he is cooking. Of course, he is adept at working with those who film him and for some reason I am always struck by his simplest

act of putting salt on the food. He doesn't ever skip that step in the recipe. The camera angel, the intentionality of it gives it weight.

Now we heard the line about salt in the scripture reading. We often hear people say that someone is "salt of the earth", meaning regular, solid people. Yet I think that may diminish just how important salt was and is. Salt then and now preserves food so it maintains its quality. It also enhances the flavour of food, which is why it is such an important part of a recipe. There are few recipes that don't include a measure of salt or at least a dash of salt.

Try eating the most basic of food like pancakes and you will notice if the salt is missing. Now this analogy could go sideways pretty fast, as too much salt can also kill the enjoyment of food, but Jesus is talking about how as Christians we are to bring the flavour of God to the world, to give people a taste of God's kingdom, God's good government, God's love, compassion, grace, and forgiveness.

The one thing I want to point out, that may not be clear yet, is that we are not to become salt or light. We are salt and light. The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible says, "You are the salt of the earth" and "You are the light of the world." Or as The Message says it, "You're here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth... You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept." – Shine!

For the last few weeks, we have been in what the church calls the time of Epiphany. It is a time of light, learning what it means that Jesus is the light of the world. Hearing messages about how, in some way, we can be beacons of light for the world. We may not have used light language each time, but that was a theme presented in some way. This is not about becoming salt and light in order to get into heaven. It is about being who we already are, salt and light that brings the kingdom of God to earth.

And this may feel daunting, yet it happens in the smallest acts of kindness and generosity. As individuals this is doable. Give of yourself to another. Spend time in places or with people where hope is needed. It is not that you need to preach, though I would encourage you to not hide that it is your faith that encourages your work and worship. It is presence that makes a difference. Your loving kindness. Words are important though. If you hear someone drop words that are unkind or dehumanizing, if you see someone struggling to keep it together because others are being judgemental or demeaning, please don't stay quiet. At the very least affirm the humanity in each person. If at all possible, try to keep people's dignity in tact. For each person is salt and light, they just may need to be reminded of their own worth as a child created in God's image.

We are how the world and the people in it get to experience the flavour of God and the light of God. Don't' hide yourself. Stepping out in faith can be scary. Those of you who worship with me tend not to be ones to talk about the things of God in ways that are overtly God-talk, but we, as individuals and as community, are still the salt-flavour, the

light bearers, the image bearers of God. If we keep that hidden, what we know about God's grace will also be hidden.

This week, may I encourage you to step out of your comfort zone a little. Be present to and for others. Don't hide your faith or that you attend church, pray, or read scripture. Be kind to those you don't know. If you hear a rude comment, take a breath and address it in kindness, with words that lift people up and grant them dignity. And don't forget to let others be salt and light to you.

Also, pray that God will continue to guide the work and worship of this congregation as we engage in being salt and light together in a world that is in deep need of those who do what is fair and just to the neighbor, being people who are compassionate and loyal in love. Take God and God's word seriously, however live with joy and hope in all you do knowing that God's got you and walks with you.

I speak to you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayers of the People

God of all justice and righteousness,

Thank you for the gift of your son Jesus Christ who came to live out your love in this world. We thank you for the wisdom he shared in word and deed that continues to enlighten our faith journeys today. Striving to live in his light, we bring you our prayers of and for the people whom he loved so much.

We pray for those who need your justice, Lord. We think of those who sleep on the cold streets, those who have no food to eat, those whose homes have been ravaged by war and power. We pray for refugees and political prisoners. We think of the children who must work instead of going to school and for parents who cannot afford proper health care. Give them your hope so each day might be a step closer to rights restored.

We pray for those close to us who need your healing touch. We pray for people who are confused and afraid, for those in hospitals and nursing homes and who are dealing with long-term or mental illness. We pray for families in conflict and relationships that are rocky. Surround them with your peace and comfort so they can carry on.

Compassionate God, we ask that our prayers and our worship would be more than just words and motions but that they would reflect our true affection for all you are to us, for we know that you call us to root our whole lives in service to you. Encourage us to be the salt and light that you desire, not pious and presumptuous but compassionate and caring. Strengthen us to work for the freedom that you envision for all those who suffer, in body mind and spirit. May we be encouraged by your grace and inspired by your Holy Spirit constantly in motion in our lives. All this we ask in Christ's name and the one who taught us to pray...

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Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen

Invitation to the Offering

We are salt for the earth and light for the world. We offer our gifts today, trusting that the Holy Spirit will bless them to make the world a brighter place for all who face some kind of darkness so that our words and actions will serve as salt to flavour the earth with God's love and mercy.

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Check out the opportunities to financially support St. Andrew's ministry at our website, [St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay, ON – Part of the PCCWeb network of churches](http://st-andrews-thunderbay.ca)

Hymn

Let all things now living

338

1. Let all things now living a song of thanksgiving
to God our Creator triumphantly raise,
who fashioned and made us, protected and stayed us,
by guiding us on to the end of our days.
God's banners are o'er us; pure light goes before us,
a pillar of fire shining forth in the night,
till shadows have vanished and darkness is banished,
as forward we travel from light into Light.
2. By law God enforces: the stars in their courses,
and sun in its orbit obediently shine.
The hills and the mountains, the rivers and fountains,
the depths of the ocean proclaim God divine.
We, too, should be voicing our love and rejoicing;
with glad adoration a song let us raise,
till all things now living unite in thanksgiving:
to God in the highest, hosanna and praise!

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Benediction

May our love be like salt that makes life tasty and worthwhile.
May our Christian living be a light to those who live in darkness.
May our Christian communities be cities of light to be seen from afar
as signs that God lives and works in his people.

And may God bless you all for this mission: the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
Go now, and let the light of Christ shine on all those who live around you.

Thanks be to God!

Posted on Liturgy Alive. <http://www.bibleclare.org/liturgy>. Reposted: <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2014/01/blessing-matthew-5-13-16.html>.