

April 11, 2021 (Focus: 1 John 1:1-2:2; Second Sunday of Easter)

Caveat re light and darkness (race, visual acuity)

Each week we end the service by proclaiming that even as our worship has ended, so begins our service, as we take God's light out into the world with us. This taking God's light out into the world with us, it is both unintentional and intentional, and the degree to which that light shines is something we sometimes cannot help but to do, and sometimes is our greatest challenge.

We are quite unintentional about taking God's light out into the world with us because God's light is part of us, it goes wherever we go, that divine spark. And it shines forth when we do the sorts of things that have become second nature to us because we have been raised in the light, the kind words we offer, the kind acts that happen even before we think about it.

But God's light in us arguably shines forth brightest in those times when we intentionally seek to let it shine, oftentimes when we are confronted with particular darkness that we feel needs to be drowned out by the light.

Why important that we are carrying God's light out into the world? Light reveals truth (turn off video, say sanctuary is filled with dancing broccoli, turn video back on, light reveals truth)...investigative journalists, scientists, biographers, parents dealing with kids scared of dark...shedding light to reveal truth...

Us: we conceal the light on our own lives (fear, shame, devalue ourselves); not be afraid of our own sin, for we will be forgiven if we cast a light on it

“Only when we are brave enough to explore the darkness will we discover the infinite power of our light.” Brene Brown

“Maybe you have to know the darkness before you can appreciate the light.” Madeline L'Engle

Us: sometimes we neglect to turn the light on; we are in the dark concerning experiences of people different from us... blacks, Asian/Pacific americans, Hispanic, immigrants, gender identity issues, teens,... ; sometimes out of ignorance or neglect (the light shines for us, so we don't the darkness we cast or that we tolerate for others), sometimes because we are afraid of what the light

will reveal; only want so much light, because we will be challenged to face the darkness cast by historic sins and by sinful policies and systems in place today

Others: turn off the light, because they don't want us to see (power, control)

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." [Martin Luther King Jr](#)

Walking in the light of God, means we are living the truth of the gospel, living in God's ways. God's ways are about shining a light on the injustices in the world so that they can be acknowledged and then something can be done about them.

Yes, Jesus sacrificed for us on the cross, but maybe there are sacrifices we still need to make to live more fully in God's light, sacrifices of comfort, sacrifices of privilege, sacrifices of pure self-interest.

God's light is about helping us to recognize the darkness at play in our world today so that light may break forth. We may experience discomfort as we live in God's ways and God's light, but we can handle it because we also have fellowship with God when we venture into the darkness so that it might be overcome. We have God's love and God's power to transform, and these help the light to shine ever more.

"Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness." [Desmond Tutu](#)

We are marching in the light of God

Kids: Doubting Thomas...people criticize him for having doubts, asking question...not only one (no stupid questions, others probably have same question but just afraid to ask; Thomas was the brave one. Notice that Jesus doesn't tell him it's a stupid questions, or that he was wrong to ask it

Let us turn our hearts and souls again to God in prayer. Loving Creator, we are grateful for this new day, clouds and gloom but also life-giving rain, and whatever else today might bring, blessings all. As we go through our routines, as we rest and work and play, help us to be mindful from time to time that the spirit of the Risen Lord is with us, blessing us, offering us new life in God's love and grace.

The risen living Christ continues to go before us, and we follow, but like his first disciples, we too sometimes have doubts. Help us not to feel shame over these doubts. Help us to recognize that doubts can be part of the journey of faith, so long as we don't get too stuck in our doubts that they are a barrier to living a life of faith. Help us always to seek help in our doubts, to rely on our faith community to help us negotiate such spiritual roadblocks. Help this faith community to be one that always welcomes and supports and nurtures the doubter in their faith journey, for we remember what it is like, and we know some words and deeds that can help someone find the path ahead again.

There are so many among us, in our community, and in the world in need of your healing compassion and care – grant all in need an experience of your renewing touch, especially...

Silent prayer/meditation

Gracious and loving God, mysterious and wondrous and holy, bless us today and in the days ahead. Help us to proclaim in word and deed that we walk with the living Christ. Help us to shout out our Alleluias as we rejoice in the good news you offer us and all creation. In your holy name we pray. Amen.