

Greeting to all those who walk in the light,

SCRIPTURE:

John 8:12 (MSG) – Larger reading: John 8:12-20

“Jesus once again addressed them: ‘I am the world’s Light. No one who follows me stumbles around in the darkness. I provide plenty of light to live in.’”

STORY:

John Henry Jowett used to tell of the farmer who gave him a lantern when he had to meet a train on a stormy night, saying: “Just to help you to see where you are going, and to keep you out of the ditch.” Then the farmer added: “Do you see that glimmer of light yonder? That is Saddleworth station. Make for that.” The lantern gave him a light for each step, Jowett later recalled, and the glimmer in the distance appointed the course of his journey.

REFLECTION:

Another Christmas and New Years Eve tradition ...

When I was a young teenager I delivered the Miami Herald. It was in the early to mid 1950s. Streetlights were rather spread apart which resulted in some interesting dark shadows. Most of them had become familiar to me, but every now and again something different would appear and it would cause me to pause, my heart stopping as my breath would be taken away. There were a number of late night bars along 36th street with some rather frightening characters. The police often patrol the area because strange things did happen. Most of the night sounds were taken in stride, but again there were times when strange sounds would happen, my skin with become nothing but goose bumps. I was always glad when I finished throwing the morning paper on certain streets along my route.

But all of that changed on Christmas and New Years Eve because the various people along the route that had outside decorations would leave them on all night. Those lights gave guidance for my path and dispelled the fear. The darkness of night was lit up, the shadows were gone and the causes of those strange noises were easily identified. Besides it sure made for a pretty sight so early in the morning.

Light of the world, we hail thee,
Flooding the eastern skies;
Never shall darkness veil thee
Again from human eyes;
You long, alas, withholden,
Now spread from shore to shore;
They light, so glad and golden,
Shall set on earth no more.

The light of the world has come into our darkened world. There is nothing to be afraid of ... no strangers, no noises ... nothing that goes bump in the night. And so the lights are left on not only in celebration of Christ's birth, but in recognition that in his coming our world has received a great light! It is time of celebration and of joy. Old things have passed away and all things have been made new!

QUOTE:

"Who is more foolish, the child afraid of the dark or the man afraid of the light?" ~ Maurice Freehill

PRAYER:

God of grace and God of mercy, you have come into our world ... into my world ... the shadows longer hold sway over my fears. Help me to follow the light for it and it alone as appointed my path ... my destination. "Guide me O thou great Jehovah, pilgrim through this barren land. I am weak, but thou art mighty; hold me with thy powerful hand. Bread of heaven, bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more; feed me till I want no more." Amen

And the faith journey continues, Pastor Jim
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Don't forget that our safe and clean sanctuary is open for in-person worship this morning at 10:30 or join us via FaceBook (Manatee United Methodist Church) or via YouTube (the link will be sent out tomorrow morning

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