

Home Worship Service July 12, 2020



Deer Island Point Lighthouse

Welcoming the Light Adapted from the *Godly Play* Curriculum

Once there was someone who said such amazing things
and did such wonderful things that people began to follow him.
But they didn't know who he was.
So, one day they simply had to ask,
"Who are you?"
He turned to them and said,
"I am the Light."

Light your candle.

Let's enjoy the Light!

Gathering Music

#289 VU It Only Takes a Spark (Pass It On)
performed by Cantate Domino of the Singaporean Catholic Parish
<https://youtu.be/3yY3GFIsCo8>

Gathering Prayer “Prayer Reflections for a Beach Retreat” by Jayne H. Davis’

**Holy One, there is an ebb and flow to the spiritual life,
just as there is an ebb and flow to the waves breaking onto the sand.
It is much like breathing - inhaling and exhaling -
inhaling as the waves come in,
taking in an expectation of everything you might have for us today,
as we fill our lungs.
We exhale as the wave returns to the sea,
breathing out any heaviness we have on our hearts or minds or in our physical beings –
in and out, receiving and releasing.
There is a consistency of you in the waves.
There is a consistency of you in us.
Come and fill us today. Amen.**

Readings from Our Tradition

Psalm 43 (NRSV) “Prayer to God in Time of Trouble”

Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause
against an ungodly people;
from those who are deceitful and unjust
deliver me!

For you are the God in whom I take refuge;
why have you cast me off?

Why must I walk about mournfully
because of the oppression of the enemy?

O send out your light and your truth;
let them lead me;
let them bring me to your holy hill
and to your dwelling.

Then I will go to the altar of God,
to God my exceeding joy;
and I will praise you with the harp,
O God, my God.

Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my help and my God.

Luke 11:33-36 (NRSV) “Light on a Lampstand”

“No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar, but on the lampstand so that those who enter may see the light. Your eye is the lamp of your body. If your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light; but if it is not healthy, your body is full of darkness. Therefore consider whether the light in you is not darkness. If then your whole body is full of light, with no part of it in darkness, it will be as full of light as when a lamp gives you light with its rays.”

Reading from Our World

“Lines from a Lighthouse” by Elemenia P. Lurvey

The following poem was penned by Elmenia P. Lurvey, wife of Wood Island lightkeeper W. F. Lurvey (1917-1923). The poem appeared in the Bar Harbor Times on February 14, 1923.

I am sitting beside this billowy ocean,
And gazing on naught, but the sea and the sky;
The crystal waves roll with an unceasing motion,
As they rush on the sea shore, in foam breaking high.

We three are alone on this desolate island:
Alone with my husband and Wilbert, his son.
He is lightkeeper here on the Wood Island Light Station,
When daylight is ended his work is undone.
For, when nearly sundown, he ascends the high tower,
He lights the big lantern that gleams through the night;
For the sea-faring sailors, roaming over the ocean,
Who patiently watch for the red beacon light.

When the clock points to midnight, he again mounts the tower,
To wind the machinery revolving the light.
He carefully watches till its beams shine forth brightly,
Then wakefully slumbers through the rest of the night.

At the dawning of sunrise he starts for the tower,
To put out the light, tidy up for the day.
There's enough work to do to keep things running smoothly,
It is work while the day lasts, not much time for play.

More especially now, since the burning of soft coal,
Keeping everything covered with black, smutty dust;
It is useless to growl at the U.S.A. government,
But shovel the coal and in Uncle Sam trust.

Both outside and inside the tower must be painted,
The stairs painted too, winding up to the light;
The dwelling inside must be painted and varnished,
Outside every building is all painted white.

In sea fog and snowstorms he enters the tower,
To mind the big weight so the clock may run well;
For the benefit of seamen approaching the harbor,
Who anxiously listen for the sound of its bell.

Music from Our Tradition: #37 *More Voices Each Blade of Grass (Circle of God)*
performed by Ali, accompanied by Norma Caswell
<https://youtu.be/YNweAtDKA8o>

Reflection by Ali: "Lighthouse Keepers"

Attraction of Lighthouses

I am glad that the summer weather seemed to have returned this week.
Summer is my favourite season
and I think it's because my family likes to hike and to take little road trips.

Lately, with the pandemic and all,
we have been sticking pretty close to home
but we have been traveling a bit within Charlotte County.
One of the interesting things that I have discovered
is that almost every path we take,
leads us to a lighthouse.

We are typically out and about in the daytime
so we don't get to see them in their full glory.
However, in a way, it seems like the light is pulling us toward them,
pulling us toward the water's edge.

That's interesting because we know that the opposite is supposed to be true.
Lighthouses are supposed to keep you away.
Historically, the light was lit to keep ships away *from* the shore
lest they run aground or be battered by sharp rocks.
Yet, here I am, like a moth to a flame,
drawn to these unique towers.
Funny how that is.

Deer Island Point

Last Sunday, after we meet here for our service
and talked about boats and the seashore,
my family decided to take a drive to Deer Island.
(I think it was our worship time that inspired me
to want to leave St. Stephen and head for the ocean.)
We had never been to Deer Island
and were mostly just curious what it was like
and, hey, who can pass up a free ferry ride?

As soon as we go there,
we stopped at the first gift shop we came across
to do some browsing.
It belonged to an artist
who painted pictures of local scenes.

Immediately, a painting of a lighthouse caught my eye.
It was unlike any lighthouse I had ever seen.
Instead of the usual lamp at the top,
it looked almost like it had a flame.

The whole thing looked like a giant candle.
I passed it off as the artists' interpretation,
and didn't think the lighthouse actually existed
outside of her mind.
But, lo and behold,
as we continued to travel around the island,
we came across that exact lighthouse.
I took a picture
and I actually put it at the beginning of our worship materials this morning.
It is the Deer Island Point Lighthouse.
Have you seen it?
It is impossible to ignore that light.
Even in the day time,
you know its there.

Light & the Bible

Jesus talks a lot about light, doesn't he?
He tells his followers that he *is* the light.
He tells people not to fear walking in darkness
because there will always *be* light.

And let's not forget the important role
the bright light offered by the Christmas star
played in the legend of his own birth.

Of course, Jesus himself came from a people
for whom light was extremely important.

Verse 3 of the first chapter of Genesis -
the very beginning of the Torah -
personifies God and proclaims: "Let there be light!"

The entire book of Maccabees,
which is found outside of the Hebrew scriptures,
is about the miracle of a one-day's supply of oil,
providing eight day's worth of light.
And that is the cause for the Hanukah celebration
among our Jewish friends
to this day.

And the Psalmist,
whose words were spoken to us a moment ago,
imagines that, in their time of trouble,
God sends out a light to guide them
from a dark valley to a holy hill.

So, light is a constant and important theme.

The Right Kind of Light

And today, again, we hear about how Jesus uses the image
to empower his followers.

He tells them to shine brightly for all to see.
But he makes a distinction, doesn't he?
He is not asking for them to shine like any light
but like a light that cannot be ignored.

So, not the kind of light you get from a flashlight
as the batteries are about to die.
We all dread that light.

Not the kind of light that struggles to shine forth
from underneath a basket
or from the cellar.
No!

He encourages his followers to hold the light high
for all the world to see.
The kind of light that you put on a lampstand.
The kind of light that is kept safely and lovingly
at the very top of a beautiful and rugged lighthouse.

Jesus isn't asking for a little light;
Jesus wants a lot of light –
so much light, he says,
that it fills up your whole body
and comes pouring out your eyes.

What Does It Mean?

Such a beautiful image
but what does it mean?

What is this light that we are to keep,
to tend to,
to radiate?

Once again, our image can help us.
The first thing people often associate with lighthouses
is safety.
And yes, the light will keep you safe.
But it's so much more.

The light represents caring.
Think about our poem from the lighthouse keeper's wife.
Think about those families,
who devoted their entire lives
to making sure the lamp was lit
and the light stayed strong –
all for the benefit of total strangers,
by the way.

For some, the light means home.
When sailors come back after a long voyage
and see the light from their cove or hamlet,
they know that rest and a great reunion are soon to occur.

For many, the light is guidance
because we mustn't forget that before GPS and onboard navigational systems,
it was the beam from those coastal towers
that helped ships map their course.

For others still, the light represents trust.
You can have faith in knowing
that the light will always be there.
It is constant.
It is sure.
It is for us.

Conclusion

It's not a coincidence that a common phrase is "beacon of hope".
For there is something awfully reassuring about that signal fire,
that bright light.

And it's even more reassuring to think
that it does not only live
up high in a tower,
unreachable to us,
only ever handled by a small few.

Instead, it lives inside every one of us –
always accessible
never far from reach.

There when we need to feel safe,
or to feel nurture.

There, too, when we need to turn inward for rest and renewal,
or when we are searching for direction.

Let us admire the light we embody
and, in its glow,
may we find trust and hope and all we need.

But perhaps most importantly,
may we let it shine brightly into the world
so that others may bask in its glow
and so they may find the balance and healthiness that comes with it all.

All paths seem to lead to the light.
As we continue to walk along the sandy shores this month,
let us not fear it
but walk toward it
and share it with those we meet. Amen.

Reflective Music:

We Rise Again by the Rankin Family

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hffAItzLj2A>

(During the Zoom service, we will watch “Bay of Fundy Lighthouses”
while listening to the above:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGGQ9p5NeKc>)

Offertory

Spirit One, as we spend time in this lovely space that has been offered to us, we consider now the ways we offer parts of ourselves to the world. May the work of our hands and the generosity of our hearts continue to provide for others what they need. In giving, may we receive. In pouring out, may we take much in. Amen.

Prayer for Light by Mary Beth Thomas

God, with you there is no darkness. Your character has no shadows, and you are pure and good. Yet in our broken world, we see so much darkness around us. Pain, sickness, and disease are in our community and in many of our homes.

Bring your light and restoring presence to the dark places in our lives. Bring your hope to hearts that feel defeated. Bring your love and compassion to those in pain.

Give us faith to say with the psalmist, “God, you light my lamp and illuminate the darkness.” May your light of hope shine in the darkness for all today. Show us glimpses of your presence with us and the comfort you bring.

In the busyness of today, help us to take a moment to be still and sit with you. To slow down, breathe deeply, and release our burdens into your strength. Your Spirit allows us to trust, to find goodness, and to revel in truth. We thank you for the beautiful and deep care we feel. Open our eyes to see you at work today. Give us your light.

May it be so in the way that Jesus gave his light to the world, when he taught us to pray: Our Father . . .

Announcements, Joys and Concerns

Blessing

As we go from here,
may we know the warmth of the love
that has surrounded us during this hour.
May it feel like a campfire, blazing nearby.
May we latch on to its glow, as a ship focuses on the light from a rocky shore.
May we feel it burning like the hot sun on a summer's day.
But most importantly, may we share it with those we meet.

We Go Forth Singing This Little Light of Mine
performed by Bruce Springsteen & the Sessions Band
<https://youtu.be/R0qAYq1GVec>

Sharing the Light Adapted from the *Godly Play* Curriculum

I am going to change the Light now.
Look at how the light is all in one place.
I'm going to change the Light so it is not just in one place any more.
It can be in many places at once. Watch.

Extinguish of the candle.

The light surrounds us and is in us
and we will carry it with us as we go.

All prayers, images, and reflections by Ali Anningson except where otherwise stated.