Dear Friends in Christ,

“On Us the Light Has Shined!”

From her book *Soul Feast*, Marjorie J. Thompson told the following story:

An ancient rabbi once asked his pupils how they could tell when the night had ended and the day was on its way back. "Could it be," asked one student, "when you can see an animal in the distance and tell whether it is a sheep or a dog?"

"No," answered the Rabbi.

"Could it be," asked another, "when you look at a tree in the distance and tell whether it is a fig tree or a peach tree?"

"No," said the Rabbi.

"Well, then what is it?" his pupils demanded.

"It is when you look on the face of any other person and can see ... your brother [or sister]. Because if you cannot do this, then no matter what time it is, it is still night."

As Christians, we talk about seeing the “light.” We are reminded at Christmas time by the prophet Isaiah that “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined.” We are told in Matthew’s fourth chapter that Jesus fulfilled this prophecy. Jesus is the light of the world.

During Lent, we walk the forty days of preparation. We know towards the end of those forty days the world will go dark. The light will be put out. Jesus will die. And so we pass the time, often in solemn contemplation about the great sacrifice that has been made for us; sometimes making “mini” sacrifices of our own to better feel a kinship with Jesus. We say that we “give something up for Lent.” In reality, we give something up for Jesus, Our Savior.

But at the same time with our luxury of being able to look back, we know that the light cannot be kept out and that the world will grow bright once again. After three days in the tomb, Jesus was raised from the dead and his light perpetually shines upon us.

To really appreciate the light, we have to experience darkness. Perhaps during this Lenten season we can focus on some of those things in our life that tend to cast a shadow over our life. It might be a loss. It might be an illness or condition that we are struggling against. It might be a problem with a particular relationship, or a total breakdown in communication. Or it could be something about ourselves like bad behavior or mean thoughts that we really don’t like and when the light shines upon it, we want it to be gone.

There are simply times that we need to step out of the darkness and sing:

I saw the light, I saw the light
No more darkness, no more night
Now I'm so happy, no sorrow in sight
Praise the Lord, I saw the light. (Hank Williams)

The “Light” does not guarantee that our pain and sorrow will leave us, but that Jesus promises to light our way as we work our way through it.

*May you see in every face the face of a brother or sister, Pastor Rich*

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Pastor Rich’s Office Hours will vary. Monday continues to be his weekly Day Off, and typically he will be in the office **Tuesday – Friday, 9:30 a.m. into mid-afternoon.** Contact him anytime in emergencies and for appointments.

**Church Phone: 330-724-1370    Cell: 330-780-5081**

Church website: firestoneparkchristian.org
Worship Volunteers
Month – March
Deaconess – Pam Underwood

Date: March 1
Lay Reader: Pam Underwood
Elder: Nancy Fetty
Deacons/Greeters: Chris Wilcox, Joe Walters
Deacon: Michael Seibel
Sound Tech: Dave Scichilone

Date: March 8
Lay Reader: Yvonne Siegferth
Elder: Linda Oakes
Deacons/Greeters: Mary Alice Church, Chris Miller
Deacon: Pam Underwood
Sound Tech: Matt Church

Date: March 15
Lay Reader: Reva Newman
Elder: Gary Morgan
Deacons/Greeters: Frank Walker, Dave Scichilone
Deacon: Chris Wilcox
Sound Tech: Gary Morgan

Date: March 22
Lay Reader: Kathy Walker
Elder: Nancy Hoskins
Deacons/Greeters: Mary Alice Church, Chris Miller
Deacon: Pam Underwood
Sound Tech: Bill Keller

Date: March 29
Lay Reader: Nancy Hoskins
Elder: Reva Newman
Deacons/Greeters: Frank Walker, Dave Wood
Deacon: Jan Wood
Sound Tech: Gary Morgan

Birthdays in March
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03 – Nikii Beale
03 – Reva Newman
06 – Emily Ferris
10 – Nancy Salsberry
10 – Frank Walker
13 – Pat Prill
16 – Caden Seibel
16 – Vi Vandegrift
17 – Steve Dilworth
18 – Zach Rohrbough
21 – Barb Johnson
21 – Stephanie Buckwalter
25 – Yvonne Siegferth
30 – Michael Seibel

Anniversaries in March
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20 – Denise & Bill Keller

Board Meeting
The next regularly scheduled meeting of the board will be on March 18 at 7:00 p.m. with the elders meeting at 6:30 prior to the board meeting. If you are an elder, deacon, deaconess or trustee, you are a member of the official board and should attend this meeting. Anyone in the church may attend and offer information and ask questions.

Spaghetti Dinner
The Evangelism Committee’s annual spaghetti dinner will be held on Friday, March 20, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The cost for adults is $9 and $5 for 12 and under. It’s an “all you can eat” dinner and includes salad, bread, beverage and dessert.
What Do You Need?  
Eldon, Missouri Mission Moment

On Wednesday, May 22 of 2019, an EF1 tornado went through the city of Eldon, Missouri. The storm brought winds of 104 miles-per-hour and tracked for 13 miles. Many homes were damaged, while others experienced power outages lasting several days. Many homes and apartments in the community had extensive damage, and the immediate future was uncertain.

At daybreak, Pastor Bill Foglesong of First Christian Church began checking on his members, neighbors, and of course, the church building. Thankfully, Eldon First Christian Church had no visible damage. The Eldon Ministerial Alliance gathered, prayed and began organizing to address the destruction in the community. The Eldon churches, along with many of the Eldon community service organizations, were united in caring for their neighbors and meeting immediate needs.

The local community center--which was running on a generator--served as the primary shelter. Since they had power, many people came to the center for food, coffee, water and a warm place to rest. The two grocery stores in town were damaged, so they sent all of their perishable food items to the shelter.

Leaders of Eldon First Christian Church and Serve Eldon community group who were not affected by the storm gave their time to help. Some gathered donations of food and water, or organized the supplies that began flowing into the center. Others began cooking meals and coordinating volunteers. Together, this community became co-workers in rebuilding lives and investing in their shared future.

Pastor Foglesong’s wife, Lisa shares her perspective: Neither of us had been through any disaster before and it was mind numbing. With some of our people being affected and the whole town in disaster reaction mode, we didn’t know what to do. Our Regional Minister, Rev. Paul Koch called --he had seen Eldon on the news. When Paul asked how he could help, we were still stunned and had no immediate answer. Paul said he would contact Week of Compassion Executive Director, Vy Nguyen.

Moments later, Vy called and said simply: “what do you need?” Just a few days after, we received a check to assist our congregation members who had suffered damage from the storm.

Those two phone calls with offers of help and concern made all the difference when we were feeling overwhelmed. In those moments, we knew there was someone out there reaching out to us; and we knew that we could go to the community center and begin serving others too. The rest is history: the community came together, food came in, hot meals were made and served, and pastors and church members came in to help. People were cared for and comforted...

Knowing we were not alone and were supported by our wider Church was the breath we needed to answer the call of those in need around us. No more time for tears or shock – work needed to be done.

We did not need a large amount of money, but those who received support from Week of Compassion were surprised and grateful that the church was walking alongside them as they dealt with their own personal disasters. In that time of need, we served our neighbors as proud Disciples-- knowing the wider Church was behind us.

Thank you to the Week of Compassion and all who support this ministry. They were there for us in our time of crisis. We worked in this disaster with the feeling of support and love in our hearts from our church, which enabled us to serve in Christ’s name.

Global Ministries

Refugee Ministry of the Reformed Church in Hungary
Update: February 2020

In January 2018, the Hungarian government began to freeze the Asylum, Migration and Integration Funds from the
European Union intended for helping asylum seekers better adjust to their new environments. Unfortunately, many ongoing projects in Hungary for refugees and migrants came to an end by the summer of 2018. The Kalunba refugee ministry of the Reformed Church in Hungary did not close but has reduced the capacity of its services in order to sustain the program.

Though it is almost impossible to access Hungary by crossing the border and to file a valid asylum claim within the country, new asylum seekers are still arriving. The Reformed Church in Hungary continues to seek support for the refugee ministry. In the past years, the church has successfully reunited migrant families and has assisted many with the legal process in Hungary. Through a holistic approach and without government funding, the Reformed Church in Hungary, through the Kalunba refugee ministry, continues to offer migrants in Hungary with:

- safe housing
- language courses
- adult vocational training and education
- job search support and coaching in order to obtain legal, safe employment
- assistance for the integration into the school system for children and youth
- supportive community
- visibility, sensitization for the church community

Beginning in March 2019, the Reformed Church in Hungary began an income-generating program called, Barakfarm, which means a future built on peace. Through this program, the church employs refugees, and generates an income that provides enough for the core functions of the Kalunba refugee ministry.

Global Ministries continues to welcome gifts for the refugee ministries of the Reformed Church in Hungary.

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A man is flying in a hot-air balloon and realizes that he's lost. He reduces height and spots a man down below. He lowers the balloon and shouts.
"Excuse me - can you tell me where I am?"
The man replies: "Sure - you're in a hot-air balloon, hovering 30 feet above this field."
"You must work in Information Technology," the balloonist says.
"I do," the man replies. "How did you know?"
"Well," says the balloonist, "everything you told me is technically correct, but it's of no use to anyone.
The man below says, "You must work in business."
"I do," the balloonist replies, "How did you know?"
"Well," says the man, "you don't know where you are, or where you're going, but you expect me to be able to help. You're in the same position you were before we met, but now it's my fault."