

February 8, 2026

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY

## Becoming Salt and Light

The Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 begins with Jesus offering a series of blessings followed by a commission. Jesus leaves no ambiguity for his followers, commissioning them by stating, “You are the salt of the earth. . . .You are the light of the world.”

As a master teacher Jesus uses common elements of his day, salt and light, to illustrate his point. In Biblical times, salt was used to preserve food which might otherwise rot and decay in the heat. As a preservative, salt extended the length of time for food to be edible and was a valuable commodity, in part because of its permanence. Pure salt does not lose its taste over time. Salt remains salt. It is a needed element for a human body to live.

God so loved the world that Christ was sent to live with impure humanity, to walk with those who were unworthy, to eat with sinners, and to bring life. Jesus commissions his followers to do the same. You are salt. Be present in a confused and dying world. Extend life in Christ. Make a difference.

Jesus also proclaims his followers to be light in the world. There is no crash course for becoming light, no manual to read. It is by the grace of God a follower of Jesus shines. Jesus offers encouragement to his disciples: “In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16 NRSV) Let God’s light shine through you. Let God light your candle.

The message and mission of Jesus is not to be lost. We are to tell his story again and again, from one generation to the next.

**First St. John Lutheran Church**

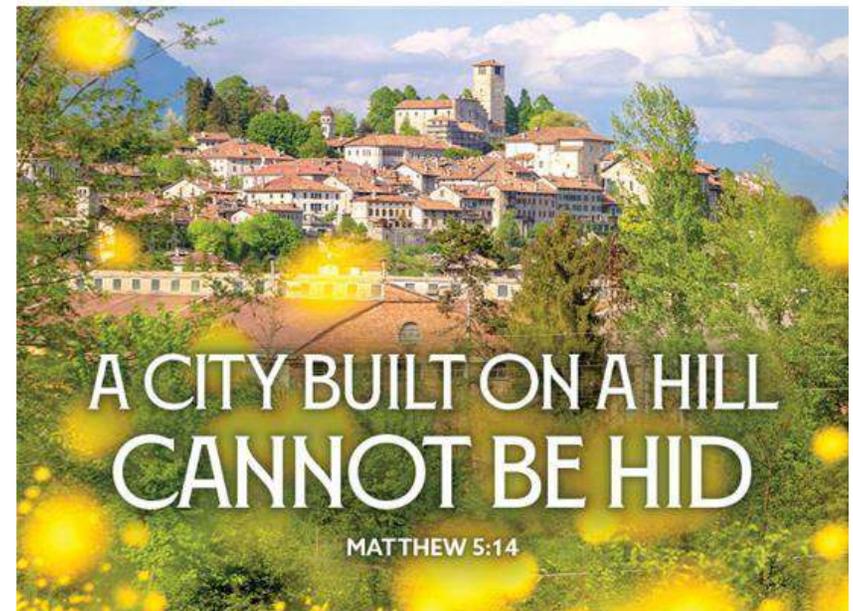
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Rev. Jerald K. Rayl, Pastor

Dr. Anthony Pattin, Church Musician  
Jo-Anne Chrysochoos, Director of Music  
Cheri Sergent, Bell Choir, Director  
Jessica Miller, Office Manager



**Called through faith; Gathered in worship; Serving the community**

**February 8, 2026 - 10:30 am**

Welcome to First St. John Lutheran Church! We offer two services with Sunday School for youth and adults and catechism (starting soon). Our regular Sunday schedule is:

- 8:00 am Early Worship
- 9:15 am JAM Sunday School
- 9:15 am Adult Sunday School
- 10:30 am Late Worship
- 2:00 pm Chapel Communion

*(2nd Sunday of the month)*

**LIVESTREAM AND RECORDED WORSHIP:** We livestream the service on our church website at [www.firststjohn.com](http://www.firststjohn.com). Also, the service will be recorded and published to the website

**SMILE! YOU'RE ON CAMERA:** Please remember you may be on camera during the livestream and the recording of the service.

**IMPORTANT REMINDER:** Please remember to silence your cell phone before church begins. Thanks!

**SUNDAY SCHOOL & CATECHISM** JAM Sunday School (church basement) and Adult Sunday School (lounge) meet each Sunday at 9:15 am. First year catechism will start soon! If you have a child in 6-7th grade interested please let Pastor Rayl know.

**NURSERY** is in the church basement and is now available during 2nd Service each week; you are welcome to sit with your child as well. A diaper changing table is available in the ladies restroom in the basement of the church.

**RESTROOMS** are in the church basement. Go to the Narthex (lobby) and take either set of steps to the basement hallway. The ladies room is at one end, and the men's room is at the other.

**FLOWERS:** If you would like to sign up for altar flowers, there is a book in the lounge. Or, you can call the church office during the week to check on availability.

**MEMORIALS:** If you wish to give a memorial in honor or memory of a loved one, you may mail it in or pick up a memorial card in the church office.

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*(Please be seated)*

**The Communion** *(distribution will be continuous)*

*All baptized Christians, believing that our Lord Jesus Christ is truly present in the bread and wine of Holy Communion, bringing to us the gift of forgiveness and the promise of eternal life, are welcome to gather at the Lord's table. Infants, children and others who have not been baptized are welcome to come to receive a blessing; please make an X with your arms across your chest."*

*If you wish to receive apple juice instead of wine, place your hand over your shoulder as you approach the person distributing the wine.*

*(After all have received communion, please stand.)*

**Prayer after Communion**

P: Let us pray. Radiant God, we have seen your glory in the face of Jesus Christ. In the sacrament of his body and blood you have drawn us to your heart. Send us from this table with delight, that our lives may reflect the beauty of your love, and bear witness to all we have seen and heard, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**C: Amen.**

**Blessing**

P: May the triune God, who has put a new song in your mouth and tuned your heart for praise (✠) bless you now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

**Closing Hymn**

*"This Little Light of Mine"*

No. 677

**Dismissal**

P: Go in peace. Do justice. Love mercy.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Postlude**

Nancy Russell

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**PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE**

**ELDERS**

John Roth  
Bob Haar

**READER**

Toni Wilbarger

**SOUND BOARD**

Ross Church

P: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord; who on the tree of the cross gave salvation to all, that, where death began, there life might be restored, and that he, who by a tree once overcame, might by a tree be overcome. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



P: In the night in which He was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to His disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

P: Again, after supper, He took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me. For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

**C: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

P: Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**The Lord's Prayer** (*prayed by all*)

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,  
 thy kingdom come,  
 thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
 Give us this day our daily bread;  
 And forgive us our trespasses,  
 as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
 And lead us not into temptation,  
 but deliver us from evil.  
 For thine is the kingdom, and the power,  
 and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

**Invitation to Communion**

P: Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

**C: Come to the table; taste and see.**

**ORDER OF WORSHIP—10:30 am**

Prelude Nancy Russell

Ringing of the Bell

**Opening Hymn** "Word of God, Come Down on Earth" No. 510

**Invocation**

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, (+) one God, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty Savior, Prince of Peace.

**C: Amen.**

**Confession and Forgiveness**

P: Trusting in God's steadfast love and faithfulness, let us confess our sin.

*Silence for reflection and self-examination.*

P: Mighty God, lover of justice,

**C: you call us to life in community, but we have served our own interests at the expense of our neighbors. We have sown deceit where honesty was needed. We say the right words, but our hearts are far from you. Turn us to seek your face. Knit us together and give us the mind of Christ, that we may do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with you, our God. Amen.**

P: The former things have passed away, and new things God now declares: Like a spring of water that never fails, God covers you in the righteousness of Christ, and forgives your sin in ☩ Jesus' name. May the Spirit give you strength to live for others, and bless you with the gift of peace.

**C: Amen.**

P: The peace of the Lord be with you all.

**C: And also with you.**

P: Let us share the peace of the Lord.

*The congregation may greet one another by shaking hands, fist bumping, or any other form of greeting with the words, "Peace be with you." We conclude the sharing of the peace by singing:*

**Grant us grace to see thee, Lord,  
 present in thy holy word;  
 grace to imitate thee now  
 and be pure, as pure art thou;**

**that we might become like thee  
at thy great epiphany,  
and may praise thee, ever blest,  
God in flesh made manifest.**

- Songs of Thankfulness and Praise ELW 310 (verse 4)

### **Prayer of the Day**

P: Let us pray. Holy God, you confound the world's wisdom in giving your kingdom to the lowly and the pure in heart. Give us such a hunger and thirst for justice, and perseverance in striving for peace, that in our words and deeds the world may see the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**C: Amen.** (Please be seated)

### **Announcements**

### **Introduction**

Light shines in the darkness for the upright, the psalmist sings. Isaiah declares that when we loose the bonds of injustice and share our bread with the hungry, the light breaks forth like the dawn. In another passage from the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus, the light of the world, calls his followers to let the light of their good works shine before others. Through baptism we are sent into the world to shine with the light of Christ.

### **FIRST READING: Isaiah 58:1-9a**

*Shortly after the return of Israel from exile in Babylon, the people were troubled by the ineffectiveness of their fasts. God reminds them that outward observance is no substitute for genuine fasting that results in acts of justice, such as feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, and clothing the naked.*

<sup>1</sup> Shout out; do not hold back!

Lift up your voice like a trumpet!  
Announce to my people their rebellion,  
to the house of Jacob their sins.

<sup>2</sup> Yet day after day they seek me  
and delight to know my ways,  
as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness  
and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;  
they ask of me righteous judgments;  
they want God on their side.

<sup>3</sup> "Why do we fast, but you do not see?"

Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?"  
Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day

P: You are to be faithful in your specific area of serving, that the Spirit who empowers you may be glorified.

P: You are to be examples of faith active in love, fostering peace, harmony, and mutual understanding in this congregation.

*(The pastor addresses those being installed)*

P: On behalf of your sisters and brothers in Christ, I ask you: Will you accept and faithfully carry out the duties of the offices of which you have been elected?

**Response: I will, and I ask God to help me.**

*(The congregation stands. Those being installed face the congregation. The pastor addresses the congregation)*

P: People of God, I ask you: Will you support these, your elected leaders, and will you share in the mutual ministry that Christ has given to all who are baptized?

**Response: We will, and we ask God to help us.**

*(Those being installed face the pastor who addresses them)*

P: I now declare you installed as Leaders of this congregation. Almighty God bless you, and direct your days and your deeds in peace, that you may be faithful servants to Christ.

**C: Amen**

### **The Offering** **Offering Prayer**

P: Let us pray. God of majesty, no eye has seen, no ear has heard what you have prepared for those who love you, yet in this meal you reveal the wideness of your mercy. Use what we have gathered to feed us with the reign of God come near, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**C: Amen.**

### **The Great Thanksgiving**

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

**C: We lift them to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

He descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

**Pastoral Prayer** (*Each petition concludes with this response*)

P: Hear us, O Lord,

C: **your mercy is great.**

*(Please be seated)*

**Installation of Officers**

*(All newly elected and currently serving officers of WELCA, Church Council, Day School Board, and Altar Guild please come forward.)*

P: The following people have been elected by the congregation to positions of leadership. We give thanks for their willingness to serve. In baptism we are welcomed into the body of Christ and sent to share in the mission of God; we rejoice now that these sisters and brothers will lead us in our common life and our mutual mission as a congregation.

*(The pastor addresses those being installed)*

P: A reading from First Corinthians: There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

*(1 Corinthians 12:4-7)*

P: You have been elected to positions of leadership and trust in this congregation.

P: You are to see that the words and deeds of this household of faith bear witness to God, who gathers us into one together with their whole church.

P: You are to seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support, so that the mission of Christ is carried out in this congregation, in the wider church, in this community, and in the whole world.

and oppress all your workers.

<sup>4</sup> You fast only to quarrel and to fight  
and to strike with a wicked fist.

Such fasting as you do today  
will not make your voice heard on high.

<sup>5</sup> Is such the fast that I choose,  
a day to humble oneself?

Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush  
and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?

Will you call this a fast,  
a day acceptable to the Lord?

<sup>6</sup> Is not this the fast that I choose:  
to loose the bonds of injustice,  
to undo the straps of the yoke,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
and to break every yoke?

<sup>7</sup> Is it not to share your bread with the hungry  
and bring the homeless poor into your house;  
when you see the naked, to cover them  
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

<sup>8</sup> Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,  
and your healing shall spring up quickly;  
your vindicator shall go before you;  
the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.

<sup>9a</sup> Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;  
you shall cry for help, and he will say, "Here I am."

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: Psalm 112:1-9**

<sup>1</sup> Praise the Lord!

Happy are those who fear the Lord,  
who greatly delight in his commandments.

<sup>2</sup> **Their descendants will be mighty in the land;  
the generation of the upright will be blessed.**

<sup>3</sup> Wealth and riches are in their houses,  
and their righteousness endures forever.

<sup>4</sup> **They rise in the darkness as a light for the upright;  
they are gracious, merciful, and righteous.**

<sup>5</sup> It is well with those who deal generously and lend,  
who conduct their affairs with justice.

<sup>6</sup> **For the righteous will never be moved;  
they will be remembered forever.**

<sup>7</sup> They are not afraid of evil tidings;

their hearts are firm, secure in the Lord.  
<sup>8</sup> **Their hearts are steady; they will not be afraid;  
 in the end they will look in triumph on their foes.**  
<sup>9</sup> They have distributed freely; they have given to the poor;  
 their righteousness endures forever;  
 their horn is exalted in honor.

**SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 2:1-12**

*Though people such as the Corinthians are enamored with human philosophy and wisdom, Paul continuously presents God’s hidden wisdom which is Jesus Christ crucified. True spiritual maturity involves judging ourselves and others in light of God’s revelation in the cross.*

<sup>1</sup> When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the testimony of God to you with superior speech or wisdom. <sup>2</sup> For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. <sup>3</sup> And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. <sup>4</sup> My speech and my proclamation were made not with persuasive words of wisdom but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, <sup>5</sup> so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

<sup>6</sup> Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are being destroyed. <sup>7</sup> But we speak God’s wisdom, a hidden mystery, which God decreed before the ages for our glory <sup>8</sup> and which none of the rulers of this age understood, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. <sup>9</sup> But, as it is written,

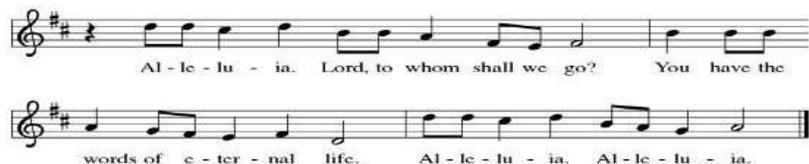
“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,  
 nor the human heart conceived,  
 what God has prepared for those who love him”—

<sup>10</sup> God has revealed to us through the Spirit, for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. <sup>11</sup> For what human knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God’s except the Spirit of God. <sup>12</sup> Now we have received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

**C: Thanks be to God.**  
 (Please stand)

**Gospel Acclamation** (sung by the congregation)



**Gospel Announcement**

P: The Gospel according to St. Matthew, Chapter 5.

**C: Glory to you, O Lord.**

**GOSPEL: Matthew 5:13-20**

*In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus encourages his followers to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, doing good works and keeping God’s commandments.*

[Jesus said:] <sup>13</sup> “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

<sup>14</sup> “You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. <sup>15</sup> People do not light a lamp and put it under the bushel basket; rather, they put it on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

<sup>17</sup> “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. <sup>18</sup> For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. <sup>19</sup> Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>20</sup> For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

**Gospel Response**

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

(Please be seated)

**SERMON**

Pastor Rayl

**Sermon Hymn**

“Christ, Be Our Light”

No. 715

(Please stand)

**Apostles’ Creed**

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
 creator of heaven and earth.  
 I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord,  
 who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
 born of the virgin Mary,  
 suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
 was crucified, died, and was buried;