

*13“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. 14“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. 15No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16In 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.*

*17“Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. 18For 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. 19Therefore, 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. 20For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.*

You are the light of the world. Not could be or might be or should be but you are the light of the world. Like a city built on a hill your light shines for all to see.

That is Jesus word to his followers this day – Jesus’ word to you.

You are the light of the world. The word you is a plural – not you individually but you – all of you together  
Where has that light been shining?

A few years ago Eric Mohny decided that young people from this congregation could have an opportunity to go on a mission trip with young people from Bay First United Methodist Church. I must confess that when he first spoke to me about it I did not exactly encourage him. But Eric did not need anything from me – he needed the interest of high school students and the support of their parents and of this congregation. Light began to shine. Leaders and students were prepared for the trip, money was raised, many of you supported them as they raised money. The group traveled to Appalachia and the light shone in sharing and helping and laughter – the light shone in love. Christ shown forth in all of that. People saw good works and gave glory to God in heaven.

Some years ago Chuck Leverknight came to us proposing that Christ Lutheran become a partner with other Lorain county congregations in housing homeless people through the family promise program. You said yes and Chuck Heindrichs and so many others took the lead in making our building a shelter for families who have no home. Four times a month your light shines through this program.

Next Friday confirmation students organized by Betsy Floyd will be feeding and playing games with the families that we are hosting. No one asked Betsy to do this but she wanted to expand the light by involving many

students in this ministry. Through students and so many of you who serve as volunteers setting up and taking down and food providers and overnight hosts for the family promise program the light shines – people see your good works and give glory to our Father in heaven.

Sometimes when I visit someone in the hospital they make a big deal out of thanking me. When I am thinking clearly this is what I tell them: when I visit you I come as the one sent by the congregation – I visit on behalf of all the people who have called me. Now I am not trying to convince the one I am visiting that I do not personally care about her or him but I do want her or him to know that it is the congregation that provides the visit. It is not my personal light that is shining but the light that we are called by Christ to be together.

Martin Luther taught that in Holy Communion we each individually receive all that Christ has done and is – all of Christ’s loving and forgiving and dying is yours as you eat and drink Christ’s body and blood. In exchange you give to Christ all that you are and have done. All your love and goodness, all your sins failings belong to him. But that is not all – because we are Christ’s own body we also have communion with one another in this meal – all that you are and have done belongs to me and all that I am and have done belongs to you.

I have mentioned just a few in this sermon who have been light in such a way that they have enabled others to be light also. I have not mentioned those who shovel sidewalks and mow lawns and sing in the praise band or a choir or ring bells or prepare the altar or take meals on wheels or give to the United Way. All that you all do to show the light that Christ has made you is the work of this body of Christ.

Years ago everyone who worshipped here was invited to tell of all the ways in which they shared the love of Christ – to write on a post it note and cover the wall with these sparks of light. Being shy and humble Lutherans almost no one was willing to tell what they were doing. But you know how you are light shining in your neighborhood and through the PTA and with your volunteer work serving on boards and coaching and helping where help is needed.

Jesus knows all those things even if we do not post them on a wall. “You are the light of the world,” Jesus says. Not could be or should be or may be or wanna be but are.

“You re the light of the world. Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.” Amen.