

Date: November 4, 2012
Sermon Title: *Lumen de Lumine*
Pastor: Rev. Alida Ward.

On Thursday night,
with power still out up here,
and all our buildings cold and dark – as so many of yours have been all
week –
I decided to go ahead nonetheless with our youth group meeting, SPF.
I figured if they were even half as stir crazy as I was,
it was time to get them out of their houses.
I did a massive group text to let them all know
and one teen texted back immediately, confirming my suspicions:
“Thank God,” said the text, “I have done as much family bonding as I can
possibly take.”
So meet we did, in a Barn lit only by three camp lanterns,
but made warm immediately by the laughter and good humor of every
kid and adult in there.
We bobbed for apples, used toilet paper to wrap each other up like
Halloween mummies,
and then we – 70 teenagers and 10 adults – listened as Art Thurnauer
read a scary story to us, complete with really silly sound effects.
It was a good evening.
And after the last kid had headed home,
I walked out of the Barn and into the pitch darkness.

Rounding the corner of the Church House,
I realized it wasn't pitch dark anymore.
The church steeple was lit,
the light over the church's front door glowing.
And here's the thing – nothing else was alight.
Surrounded by houses with no power, including my own,
the church was literally a beacon of light.
And as I opened the front door, still somewhat incredulous,
the warmth of the Sanctuary enveloped me.
Warmth never felt so good.

The next morning,
a crew of trucks from Georgia pulled up Bronson Road
and set to work.

I went out to greet them. I thanked them for coming all this way.
And then I said, “by the way, I’m a pastor of that church there,
and I just want to invite you to make yourself at home in there,
put your feet up, have some coffee,
‘cause for some reason the church has power.”
And the leader of the crew grinned this great grin,
drew himself up a little straighter,
and said “Ma’am, that was us --
we’re the ones who put the lights on in your church last night.”

We’re the ones who put the lights on.

Our mailman stopped in yesterday to the church office.
“You know what your sermon is for tomorrow, right?”
“Tell you the truth, I sure don’t know,” I said. “Why, do you?”
“Come on,” he said, “you gotta know what it is.
Let there be ?”
“*Let there be light,*” I said.
“There you go,” he said, and headed back out to his truck.

We’re the ones who put the lights on.

Let there be light.

Two guys pointing me in the right direction,
because that is exactly what we’re here for this morning.
To remember that there is light.
To remember, too, that we’re the ones who put the lights on.

This week has been hard, and it continues to be –
there is great suffering out there,
there is suffering among us.
From the devastation of untold loss,
to the anxiety of unplanned costs
to the sheer exhaustion of keeping a household in the cold and dark,
it has been, it is, a lot.

On Thursday, right here, we hosted a town meeting of sorts; all our elected officials were here, and our police and fire chiefs, and the doors were open to anyone who wanted to come and ask questions.

And a lot of the people asking questions, I have to say, sounded pretty cranky.

I didn't *like* it – I never like cranky – but I *got* it. 'Cause it's all been a lot. It's been a dark week – from the fear with which it began to the fearsomeness to which we awoke on Tuesday.

And in the midst of it, my mailman reminds me:

Let there be light.

As a statement, and as a prayer: O Lord, let there be light.

Today our choir sings about light, about the **one** true light.

In the words of the beautiful piece which you heard just a minute ago,

I believe, they sang, *Credo*

in One God, the Almighty,

and in God's son, who is the Light of Lights.

Lumen de lumine, they sang, light of lights.

Christ our Savior, Light of lights.

And into *every* darkness **this** is the one true light that shines,

the light of Love,

the light of Hope,

Christ our Savior, Jesus our friend,

lumen de lumine, light of all lights.

And so you know what our calling is, you know what our job is.

To be bearers of that light,

to be the ones who reflect that light.

We're the ones who put the lights on,

the Georgia man said to me,

and yes, that's right, that's what we're all called to be –

the ones who put the lights on.

Near the end of the kinda cranky town meeting,

one woman, I don't know, put her hand up and said,

"All I want to know is this. What do you need me to do?"

What can we do to help?"

And you know, it turned out there were a lot of folks like her in the room. Folks looking for ways to put the lights on for others.

And you folks? All of you?

That's *all* I've heard from all of you this week.

What can I do? Where do you need help? Who needs me?

Those of you with power took hot soup to those without, turned up in neighbors' driveways to help move trees, wore yourselves out cleaning out waterlogged homes, made a meal for Operation Hope, prayed and prayed and prayed.

You put the lights on for others, over and over again.

You have shone the light of Christ's own love.

And that love, that light, is, in the end, what truly draws us here on this Remembrance Sunday.

Long before a storm made its way to our shores, this Remembrance Sunday was planned to be a Sunday when we remember the light that no darkness can ever overcome, the love that never ends, the life that makes of death not an end but a beginning.

We have named the names this day, the names of friends and fathers, mothers and grandmothers, one lost just yesterday, a firefighter lost five days ago, sisters and dear ones, wives and husbands, children. We have named the names, as we do each year, because in naming them we honor the light that shone through their lives into ours, and the light which now surrounds them forevermore.

And in their honor we resolve to love that bit more; in their memory we promise to cherish others that bit more; on this Remembrance day we say that *we* will be the ones who put the lights on for others ... as they – the named and unnamed today – as they did for us.

Let there be light.
Let the light of all eternity shine through us.
Let there be light.
Amen.