

**Jesus Has the Power to Dispel Any Area of Darkness in Our Lives and in Our World**

"During the past few weeks as we've had overcast skies and a good deal of rain, I've found myself in a sort of 'winter funk,' wishing for more sunshine and bluer skies," the Rev. Dr. Brook Thelander said in his sermon Sunday, "and wishing for it to stay light longer during the gray winter days.

"But recently I read about another place that made me stop and count my blessings," he continued. "I read about the city of Barrow, Alaska, located at the northern tip of Alaska on the Arctic Sea. The article I read said that in Barrow, Alaska, when the sun sets on or around November 18, it takes a little vacation. Darkness envelops Barrow for approximately 65 days, and the sun does not appear again until near the 24th of January! The article said that when the light finally does re-appear, the people of Barrow all gather and enjoy a public celebration of its return.

"Wow! Can you imagine living for two full months in darkness? Can you imagine what it would be like to greet the light after being without it for that long?"

"Many years ago the prophet Isaiah spoke about a similar lack of light. It was a moral and spiritual darkness that had surrounded the people for many years, a period when God often seemed absent or silent. Into that dark period Isaiah finally said, 'Arise, shine. Your light has come.'

"As we gather today for the feast of the Epiphany, we do so because we believe that the birth of Jesus was indeed the coming of the Light into the world. If Christmas has seen the light of God rekindled in the world, then Epiphany shows that light coming into full view, being seen by others, and casting its brightness upon all people. Indeed, at the heart of Epiphany is the conviction that in Jesus, God shows himself not just to the Jewish community, but to all the peoples of the world. . . .

"In terms of our marking time through the Church Year, . . . the next six weeks (the season after Epiphany) are about appearance, visibility, recognition and public action. . . . After the glimmerings of Advent and Christmas, the light of the world now shines clearly in the world . . . . As we come to the Table today, we come with the assurance that Jesus has the power to dispel any area of darkness in our lives and in our world."



"The Baptism of Christ", by Annibale Carracci (1560-1609), S. Gregorio, Bologna. © Web Gallery of Art. As we will hear this Sunday, "And John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?' But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.'"

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Sundays

10:00 a.m.: Word & Table service

11:30 a.m.: Refreshments, conversation

11:45 a.m.: Post-service discussion

6:00 p.m.: (First Sundays only) Evensong, tea & refreshments

**Thursdays:** 6:30 p.m.: Evening Prayers. 7:00 p.m.: Singing & discussing hymns.

**Readings, 1/13:** Is. 42:1-9; Ps. 89:19-29; Acts 10:34-38; Mt. 3:13-17. **1/20:** Is. 49:1-7; Ps. 40:1-10; 1 Cor. 1:1-9; John 1:29-41.

**Prayer Emphases:** Malaysia; Fellowship of Grace Brethren; First Baptist Church, Dallas, TX, and the Rev. Dr. Robert Jeffress; National Council of Churches; parishioners on Bay Street.

**What is Unique for You about Epworth?**

- Intentional engagement with the entire breadth of the Christian Church?
- Intentional integration of hymn and service music texts with the day's Scripture readings and the progress of the service?
- Preaching that is always orthodox, pertinent and concise?
- Open Table, where all who seek God's grace may come?
- Post-service discussion, which integrates the day's readings, Collect, sermon and hymns and which helps Epworthies to find a personal application to take away with them?

Whether it's one or more of these, or something else entirely, there's likely someone you know, who is hungry for this richness.