

**Pastor's Blog**  
*A Little Light Makes A Big Difference*

On December 21<sup>st</sup> we officially reached the darkest day of the year—or the longest night, as it's sometimes called. Since June we'd been losing a little daylight each day—barely noticeable in the late summer, but when the sun starts setting shortly after 4pm in December, it's hard to miss.

It's no surprise that the early Christians chose December 25<sup>th</sup> as the date for Jesus' birthday. That's right, they chose it; we don't know when Jesus was born. Scholars surmise that the early Christians wanted something to counter the pagan solstice celebrations that were happening around that time. So why not celebrate the birth of the light of the world as the light begins to slowly increase in the Northern Hemisphere with each passing day? December 25<sup>th</sup>, then, it is.

It makes sense. For as I'm writing this—on January 13<sup>th</sup>—we have gained 00:18 of light. It may not seem like a lot, but it's 4:30pm right now and the sun has not set yet.

A little light makes a big difference.

It seems fitting, then, that Epiphany—the season that runs from the end of Christmas (January 6<sup>th</sup>) through the beginning of Lent (February 18<sup>th</sup> this year)—is often called the season of light. It's a season in which the light grows each day—such that by Ash Wednesday we'll have gained 1:45 of light. The increasing of light, then, becomes an apt metaphor for where we find ourselves right now.

For there is a lot going on in the world, to say the least. The news, social media, phone alerts all seem to be stuck in an endless pattern of darkness: wars, violence, economic struggles, political tension, accusations of who's wrong and who's right from every side. I'll be honest when I say that often I don't know what to do with it all.

But that's where the light comes into play. For just as, I believe, the more we stay open to the light, the more it shows us where it needs to be shined, we are also reminded that each and every act of kindness, justice, peace, compassion, empathy, love, grace, and mercy, brings a little more of that light into the world. And we have to trust that if we each do that—if we each shine whatever light we have, wherever we can—we will be able to overcome even the deepest darkness.

For as the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said: “Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that.”

So let's shine our lights, friends, remembering that even a little light makes a big difference. Don't believe me? Just look outside your window.