

Daily Devotional, December 14, 2021 May Your Light Shine

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. John 1:1-5 (NIV)

I have never been much of a fan of country western music. While there are a handful of artists that I don't mind, it's not the kind of music I generally like, although I do enjoy a number of country-rock artists. I did, however, enjoy the few episodes I saw of Ken Burn's excellent documentary on country music a while back. I especially appreciated what Hank Williams wrote about the times he lived in and the troubles he encountered. Many of his songs reflect hard times such as, *I'm So Lonesome, I Could Cry, Cold, Cold Heart* and *Why Don't You Love Me*. Some of his songs speak of the hope he found through faith in Christ. One such song, *I Saw The Light* talks about wandering in the darkness.... *Just like a blind man I wandered along, worries and fears I claimed for my own. Then like the blind man that God gave back his sight, praise the Lord I saw the light!*

This song seems appropriate for these times we have experienced dating back to February of 2020. It seems as if we have been walking in darkness for so long. Elections that have divided our country, sometimes making enemies out of friends. We've endured a pandemic that has killed countless numbers of Americans and millions around the world, which has changed our lives in so many ways. Most of us don't shake hands or hug anymore for fear of catching the virus. The sports we love are also compromised through testing, causing infected athletes to quarantine and many of us are not allowed to watch in person due to limited seating and other restrictions. For months, our economy was shut down and still has not completely recovered.

Perhaps that's why I was excited recently when I got to be a part of two events that reminded me of what it was like to walk in the light again. It had been almost a year since we had presented our annual Interfaith Thanksgiving service. This once again would be presented virtually, but it provided Hope Lutheran Church an opportunity to show that even during a time such as this, we really do have much to be thankful for, no matter how bleak today's events may appear to many. God's light had a grand opportunity to shine through

The second event, which was very different, was getting to perform another infant baptism. We had not done an infant baptism for months due to covid restrictions, and it was so special to have a family bringing this young child to be washed in the waters of baptism. All the symbolism of baptism, new life, and new beginnings, helped to shine God's light on us that day.

I do not know what Christmas will be like this year. I do know that it was very different last year, and will be different again this year, to what extent remains to be seen. But I can't help but remember God sent Jesus to bring the Light in a time that was much darker than 2020 and 2021.

The Light will still shine through the darkness this Advent season, and I will still light a candle and sing *Silent Night & Joy to The World* on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day respectively. The Christ Child *will* be born in our hearts once again.

And I know this year when that happens, I'll be hearing Hank Williams sing, *No more darkness, no more night. Now I'm so happy, no sorrow in sight. Praise the Lord I saw the light!*

Father, thank you for light. I ask for you to give me boldness to shine my light in Jesus' name. I don't want to hide my light under a basket. Fill me with holy boldness .In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.