



  
**WE CELEBRATE ALL MEN  
THIS FATHER'S DAY...  
ESPECIALLY THESE GUYS.  
HAPPY FATHER'S DAY**



## Welcome

**Hymn** “Faith of Our Fathers” (UMH #710, all verses)

**Scripture** Matthew 5:14-16 (the Message)

“Here’s another way to put it: You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We’re going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don’t think I’m going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I’m putting you on a light stand. Now that I’ve put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you’ll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.

**Message** “Light Bearers”

One pastor wrote, “When I was a small boy growing up in Pennsylvania, we would often visit my grandparents who lived nine miles away. One night a thick fog settled over the hilly countryside before we started home. I remember being terrified and asking if we shouldn’t be going even slower than we were. Mother said gently, ‘Don’t worry. Your father knows the way’ . . . so often when I can’t see the road of life and have felt that familiar panic rising in my heart, I have heard my mother’s voice: ‘Don’t worry. Your Father knows the way.’” (*Illustrations Unlimited*, p. 201, # 6)

This reminded me of my own dad who used to get in the car and figure out how to arrive somewhere. Those were the days of paper roadmaps – no GPS or Navigation systems. As long as Dad knew where North, South, East, or West was, he could find his way, but he also would never hesitate to stop to ask for directions. He taught me to read a map, pack a car, laugh even when you wanted to cry, joke with puns, and persevere



through the storms of life. It was Dad's faith that kept him going through everything, even last year when he was dying of COVID-19.

For the pastor whose father knew the way, for my own dad, and for countless other fathers and father-figures who have been the ones to help us to find our way through teaching us, guiding us, and being light-bearers in our lives, we give thanks. There are a lot of people who have not had a father present in their lives, but hopefully, there have been grandfathers, uncles, teachers, coaches, mentors, friends of the family, and pastors who have stepped in to be light bearers for them.

What does it mean to be a light bearer? In today's scripture passage, Jesus tells his followers, including us, that they - we - are the light of the world and are to let our light shine before others so they can see God working in and through us. These flashlights remind us of what it means to provide light for the journey. Some are small, some are large, and we all share the light of Christ regardless of the number of gifts we have or the amount of light we can give. Light can break through any darkness, whether it's as small as a pinhole or as large as a spotlight.

Those men - and some women - have taken on the role of father or father-figure and bear the light, helping us to find our way, setting an example for us, and helping us to grow into the person God intends for us to be. And we, in turn, become light bearers, too, when we share the love of God in the world. Being a light bearer to a child or a friend or someone who needs support and encouragement can make all the difference for them. Shining our light helps them to overcome challenges and reassures them that they don't walk alone on the path of life.

Many of us have seen this happen, and our family is no exception. Alex is my husband Dave's youngest brother. When I first met Dave, about

sixteen years ago, Alex had been diagnosed with colon cancer, and even after treatments, the cancer had advanced too far. Sadly, Alex, at age 39, died a week before our wedding, leaving a wife and four sons. The youngest son, Alex Junior – better known as AJ, was about three years old at the time. Our sister-in-law was overwhelmed as she took on the role of both mother and father.

She had a lot of help, though, particularly from her dad, family friends, and teachers at in the school system. Three of the boys joined the wrestling team, and the coach became their friend, cheerleader, and a strong father-figure in their lives. This past week, AJ, who now prefers to be called Alex, graduated from high school. He knows that his mom, coach and so many others were part of trying to help him as he grew up. Even though they couldn't take the place of his dad, they stepped up to help him find his way. They were his light bearers.

Jesus says, “you are the light of the world.” Don't hide your light under a bushel, but let it shine for all to see. Our calling is to bear the Light of Christ in the ways we interact with others, and we know that our world today can certainly use those who are light bearers! Every day of our lives, we have opportunities to build relationships with others. It isn't about what we can get out of it, but what we can give to make a difference in someone's life. We follow in the example of Jesus who touched many lives regardless of the person's social, economic status; whether they were sick, of a different race, gender or were outcasts in society.

As the Church of Jesus Christ in the world, we live in the Light of Christ and are open to the movement of the Holy Spirit who works in and through us to share the love of God with others. “You are the light of the world – let it shine for all to see!” When Jesus used the metaphor of a city set on a hill, he was referring to Jerusalem, which is built on a high hill in Israel where people can see its lights for miles around. Jerusalem is called

the Holy City, a place of hope, blessing, and promise for many people who seek to experience the presence of God in a special way.

As followers of Jesus, we carry the Light of Christ within us through the gifts we have been given and let that light shine for all to see. One pastor described it this way: “Your light is that special, unique, one-of-a-kind thing that God has deposited in you to make you who you are . . . Your light can be one of the most wonderful parts of your life that reflects your special character, your value, your worth and the way you are going to influence the world by sharing the love of Christ among others.” (*K. Heath McDougal-Deans, “Lighting the Way,” January 11, 2020 sermon*)

So, what are your gifts? Maybe you know some of them but are still discovering others. How will we use those gifts to let our light shine? On this day when we celebrate Father’s Day, we can remember people who have been the light bearers in our lives and learn from them. Who has led the way for us?

There is a story about a man and his young son who were hiking up a mountain. They came to a place where the climbing was difficult and even dangerous. The father stopped to figure out which way he should go when he heard the boy behind him say, “Choose the good path, Dad; I’m coming right behind you!” (*author unknown, Illustrations Unlimited, p. 202, #10*)

When we follow the path of life, the way can sometimes be difficult and challenging, but we also can have confidence that Jesus doesn’t just call us to discipleship and light bearing only to abandon us and say, “Okay, you are on your own.” Jesus walks with us through the power of the Spirit who speaks to us through our conscience, through other people’s words, teachings, and examples, and through our own sense of what is a good direction for us to go.

What we know without question, is that we are called to act, speak, and live through ways that offer hope, acceptance, kindness, compassion, and care as we share the love of God with others. That is what light bearers do – they light the way, share the light as they illuminate the darkness so those who encounter them see the Light of Christ at work.

On this Father's Day, may we recognize those fathers and father-figures who have been the light bearers in our lives, who have shown us the love of Christ, who have walked with us on the path, who have set an example, who have loved us, encouraged us, and led us so that we, too, can be the light bearers to others.

I am reminded of the first verse of the hymn "Here I Am, Lord"  
I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry.  
All who dwell in dark and sin my hand will save.  
I who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright.  
Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?  
I have heard you calling in the night.  
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.  
I will hold your people in my heart.

Thank you, fathers, father-figures – all who have been light bearers. May every one of us learn from them, follow Jesus, who leads the way, and let our lights shine! Amen.

### **Prayer**

Oh God, our Father, Abba, “Daddy,” we thank you for your abiding and endless love for us as your children. We are grateful for the fathers and father-figures who have been in our lives, men who have set an example, mentored, and guided us through our lives. They have been your light-bearers who have shown us what living and loving was all about. They have been men of faith, honor, and integrity who have led us to know you better and inspired us to be all we can be. Thank you, Abba. Amen.

### **Lord’s Prayer** (from The Message Bible)

Our Father in heaven, reveal who you are. Set the world right; do what's best – as it is above, so it is below. Keep us alive with three square meals. Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others. You're in charge! You can do anything you want! You're ablaze in beauty! Forever and always. Amen.

### **Hymn** “This Little Light of Mine” (UMH #585)

### **Sending Forth**



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# WE LIFT UP IN PRAYER

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Juliann  
Joan Allen  
Naomi  
Erin Frane  
Madeline  
Charles Gilman  
Josh Jones  
Jenn

Harry Junkins  
Marilyn & Gil  
Donna Smith  
Sophia  
Bobbie Noble  
Dan Strange  
Danny Westbrook

Christine & her parents  
Those in nursing and assisted living care  
Our Church family






## FUMC PORTSMOUTH A RECONCILING CONGREGATION

We, the congregation of the First United Methodist Church of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, are dedicated in worshipping, learning, and serving with all people as we embrace Jesus Christ's message of love and acceptance. As a United Methodist Church we stand fully behind the statement "Open Hearts, Open Minds, and Open Doors". We celebrate our diversity and invite all persons regardless of age, gender, racial or ethnic background, sexual orientation, marital or socioeconomic status, nationality, physical or mental ability into full membership and participation in the life of this community of faith.



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# CELEBRATING TOGETHER

**First UMC, Eliot UMC and St. Mark's UMC**

You are all invited to join with our sister churches in Maine for an old fashioned outdoor worship service, communion and a barbecue lunch all provided by the Eliot church.

Here are the details...mark your calendars:

DATE - July 4th

TIME - 10 am

WHERE - 238 Dow Highway, Eliot, ME



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REV. DR. DEBRA J. HANSON

We will be following local CDC & denomination guidelines of social distancing and wearing masks.