

“Be the Salt You Wish to See in the World”  
A Epiphany Five; Matthew 5:13-20  
February 5, 2017  
Congregational UCC, Buena Vista, CO  
Rev. Rebecca K. Poos

## **I. JESUS SHAKES IT OUT! (MSG)**

**13** “Let me tell you why you are here. You’re here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth. If you lose your saltiness, how will people taste godliness? You’ve lost your usefulness and will end up in the garbage.

**14-16** “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.

Salt and light. Who we are, and what we’re called to be in every act and thought. Jesus tells the disciples who they are. Jesus tells *us* who we are and what we’re to be about. Two common, every day images—Jesus is really quite down-to-earth!

Salt—the spice of life. Gives food and our bodies and every part of earth what it needs. If you ever doubt that, try making some bread without salt—tastes like cardboard!

Light—*of* the world and *for* the world God loves—we are part of keeping things vibrant, alive, lively and love-filled by shining God’s light out of us and into the world, resisting those forces and facts that would squelch, extinguish and put a bushel over our spark.

## **II. A TIME FOR SHAKING & SHINING**

Let me tell you where I see salt and light around me, today, shaking and shining. And then you tell *me* where *you* see and hear it.

### **A. At Congregation’s Alive**

This weekend, at Congregations Alive, we were ignited. That was the theme—decided on two years or more ago when the planning began. But it wasn’t just a theme. It was the reality.

We were ignited, set on fire, filled with the Holy Spirit—with ideas and creativity and insight.

We heard of churches much like ours where political divisions were causing strife and people were staying away. But then we heard of coming to the table, true and open dialogue and healing of divisions. Of congregations looking to the light of what binds us together being far more powerful and important than what divides us.

We heard of churches where change had been a struggle—whether in worship time and format, music style, sanctuary architecture, mission focus, budget battles, or whether children were truly valued and welcome *as* children. Squirmy and sticky and bouncy and unpredictable and loveable—just as they are!

And, we heard how thoughtful salt and light, in the form of patient, open-hearted listening and conversation brought these communities *through* the struggles to a beautiful place. A spirit-filled, humming and dancing spiritual home for all ages and life and faith experiences.

We learned of congregations where, like us, people had been “going to church” together for *years* but didn’t really know each other’s stories, interests and passions. These folks started having intentional “1-to-1’s” –simple conversations across the generations, and the congregation was transformed! From “A Friendly Church to a Church of Friends.”

### **B. At CUCC**

And, this week, I see salt and light around us, shaking and shining, right here!

In a party getting planned for a very special, wise elder of our church family, as we celebrated Charlotte's 95<sup>th</sup> birthday. And who is more "salty" than Charlotte, in the best way possible?! Charlotte sent me a flyer about a cause she is very concerned about—the mistreatment of horses in some rodeo events. Animal welfare is a cause many of us are bringing salt and light to.

Another note appeared on my desk from the Adult Sunday School this week. This group is very concerned about refugees and the immigration issues going on in our country. They are inspired to shake some salt on the situation by getting involved in social action.

Others are letting their light shine through writing in our Newsletter about what's on their hearts. Watch for that this week!

We are exploring Mission Pilgrimage trips to Alaska and to Ireland. Taking our salt and light out into the world—to spice it up and to add flavor and depth to our spiritual lives. And next Sunday, the Scouts will share their salt and light with us in our Scout Sunday worship and Coffee Hour!

The possibilities are endless, and they are inspiring! That LIST I shared with you last week about all the places "around the edges" this congregation serves and shines was just the tip of the iceberg! If you missed last Sunday—you missed something amazing! I'd be happy to share—it's in the sermon—which can be found every week on the wall outside my office.

### **III. IGNITING –VOICES**

#### **A. Laurie, Shawna, Kacie share Salt & Light**

#### **B. Jean Brody—life in the Light**

Last evening, as I pondered this message, some light came in unexpectedly from another wise elder in our midst, Jean Brody: As we age we, hopefully, gain a little wisdom. Probably the most important insight for me is that we need to keep our eye on the Light as we journey through life. But what happens when we can no longer see the Light? Then what? Are we lost or is it simply that we, perhaps, become part of the Light? After soul searching, here is what my heart tells me is true.

I have come to believe that when we walk to the edge of all the Light we have and we take that step into the darkness of the unknown, we (at least I) must believe without question that one of two things will happen. There will be something safe and solid for us to

stand on or God will teach us to fly.

The way I see it - either way, we are safe and just knowing this gentles me. Think about it. You know what? I had planned to expand this simple belief but really, what more is there to say? What more could we ever need?

The view from the mountains is wondrous.

#### **C. Don't Play Small**

BRUCE EPPERLY:

"You are the salt of the earth...you are the light of the world...let your light shine." Don't play small; you are about God's business. Don't minimize your impact; one act of love can change the world. Your deepest nature is enlightenment, the revealing light of God."

### **IV. IGNITING –VOICES**

In a few moments, we will gather around the table. Salt shakers remind us that WE are the salt of the earth, and we are challenged to "shake!" WE are the light of the light of the world with our story that we share and create together.

During Communion, ponder this song that Steve and Kacie are going to share with us. Where do you see God's salt and light in your life and where are *you* salt and light in God's life in the world?

LAUREN DAIGLE:

For You are salt and light  
Oh the love that set me free  
You bring hope to those in need

You have written and redeemed my story  
Let my eyes see Your kingdom shine all around  
Let my heart overflow with passion for Your name  
Let my life be a song, revealing who You are

For You are salt and light  
You are love's great height  
You are deep and wide  
A consuming fire  
You are salt and light  
You are...