

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany
February 8, 2026
United Church of Christ - Neillsville
Pastor Julie Ruegsegger

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PRELUDE *Prelude on "The King of Love"*
Gordon Young Karen Mohr

RINGING OF THE CARILLON

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

We are called to bring a new understanding of God:
that God so loves the world.

We are the salt of the earth.

We are called to bring a new hope in God:
that God gives us new life.

We are the light of the world.

We are called to follow the commandments and the
law.

**The Law of God is to love God and to love one
another.**

Come, let us be the salt of the earth, the light of the
world.

**Come, let us love one another with the love of God.
Let us join together in our love of God to worship
and follow Jesus.**

OPENING PRAYER

**God of compassion and justice, the worship you
choose for us is to loosen the bonds of injustice, to
let the oppressed go free, to share bread with the
hungry, to shelter the homeless poor. Then your
light shall break forth like the dawn, and your
healing shall spring up quickly. So, in praise and
wonder, we come to worship you not just with our
words, but with our hearts and our lives. Glory and
honour be to you, O God, Creator of a new heaven
and a new earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

HYMN *"You Are Salt for the Earth, O People"*
#181 NCH (vs. 1-3) Marty Haugen

**1 You are salt for the earth, O people:
salt for the reign of God!
Share the flavor of life, O people:
life in the City of God!**

Refrain:

**Bring forth the reign of mercy,
bring forth the reign of peace;
Bring forth the reign of justice,
bring forth the City of God!**

**2 You are a light on the hill, O people:
light for the City of God!**

**Shine so holy and bright, O people:
shine for the City of God!**

Refrain

**3 You are a seed of the Word, O people:
bring forth the reign of God!**

**Seeds of mercy and seeds of justice,
grow in the City of God!**

Refrain

PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION

Isaiah reminds us that our prayer, fasting and pious
Ritual must be lived out in compassion and justice:

When we forget the fast you desire—
To do justice, and stand up for the powerless:
Lord, have mercy.

When we forget the prayer you love—
To show compassion, and care for those in need:
Christ, have mercy.

When we forget the rituals you require—
To create relationships of righteousness and peace:
Lord, have mercy.

WORDS OF GRACE

PASSING OF THE PEACE

One: The Peace of God be with you.
Many: And also with you.

All are invited to greet one another with words such
as *"The peace of Christ be with you,"*
and the response: *"And also with you".*

RESPONSE: *“This Little Light of Mine”*

African American Spiritual

#524 NCH (Vs. 1-2)

This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine.

This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine.

This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine.

Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!

Everywhere I go, I’m gonna let it shine.

Everywhere I go, I’m gonna let it shine.

Everywhere I go, I’m gonna let it shine.

Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!

CHILDREN’S TIME

SCRIPTURE READINGS

OLD TESTAMENT Isaiah 58:1-12

True and False Worship

¹ “Shout with the voice of a trumpet blast. Shout aloud! Don’t be timid. Tell my people Israel of their sins! ² Yet they act so pious! They come to the Temple every day and seem delighted to learn all about me. They act like a righteous nation that would never abandon the laws of its God. They ask me to take action on their behalf, pretending they want to be near me. ³ ‘We have fasted before you!’ they say. ‘Why aren’t you impressed? We have been very hard on ourselves, and you don’t even notice it!’

“I will tell you why!” I respond. “It’s because you are fasting to please yourselves. Even while you fast, you keep oppressing your workers. ⁴ What good is fasting when you keep on fighting and quarreling? This kind of fasting will never get you anywhere with me. ⁵ You humble yourselves by going through the motions of penance, bowing your heads like reeds bending in the wind. You dress in burlap and cover yourselves with ashes. Is this what you call fasting? Do you really think this will please the Lord?

⁶ “No, this is the kind of fasting I want: Free those who are wrongly imprisoned; lighten the burden of those who work for you. Let the oppressed go free, and remove the chains that bind people. ⁷ Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help.

⁸ “Then your salvation will come like the dawn, and your wounds will quickly heal. Your godliness will lead you forward, and the glory of the Lord will protect you from behind. ⁹ Then when you call, the

Lord will answer. ‘Yes, I am here,’ he will quickly reply. “Remove the heavy yoke of oppression. Stop pointing your finger and spreading vicious rumors! ¹⁰ Feed the hungry and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you will be as bright as noon. ¹¹ The Lord will guide you continually, giving you water when you are dry and restoring your strength. You will be like a well-watered garden, like an ever-flowing spring. ¹² Some of you will rebuild the deserted ruins of your cities. Then you will be known as a builder of walls and a restorer of homes.

NEW TESTAMENT Matthew 5:13-20

¹³ “You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless.

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

¹⁷ “Don’t misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose. ¹⁸ I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God’s law will disappear until its purpose is achieved. ¹⁹ So if you ignore the least commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But anyone who obeys God’s laws and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

²⁰ “But I warn you—unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven!

SERMON “Shine!” Pastor Julie

HYMN “I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light”

#248 W&R Kathleen Thomerson

1 I want to walk as a child of the lightchild

I want to follow Jesus

God sent the stars to give light to the world

The star of my life is Jesus

Refrain:

In Him, there is no darkness at all
The night and the day are both alike
The Lamb is the light of the city of God
Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus

2 I want to see the brightness of God
I want to look at Jesus
Clear sun of righteousness, shine on my path
And show me the way to the Father

Refrain

3 I'm looking for the coming of Christ
I want to be with Jesus
When we have run with patience the race
We shall know the joy of Jesus

Refrain

MORNING PRAYERS

PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen

THE OFFERING SERVICE

Invitation to Generosity

Offertory "My Heart Ever Faithful" J.S. Bach

Doxology

Praise God, whose image we all bear;
Praise Christ, whose mercy we all share;
Praise Spirit, making justice grow—
One God from whom all blessings flow!
Amen.

Prayer of Dedication

We have the means to give, we have the reason to give, and there are many waiting for us to give. Yet often, our hands hold back, and we hoard what we have for ourselves. God of grace, help us live and give in your kingdom of love, where there are no enemies, only brothers and sisters, and kindness is the air we breathe. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

HYMN "Christ, Be Our Light"

(#53 Hymns of Promise) vs. 1-3

Lyrics & Music: Bernadette Farrell

1 Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
Light for the world to see.

Refrain:

Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts, shine through the darkness.

Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

2 Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has pow'r to save us.
Make us your living voice.

Refrain

3 Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
Shared until all are fed.

Refrain

BLESSING

SHARING OUR BLESSINGS AND BURDENS

As we are gathered together as children of God, we are called to share our blessings and joys and our concerns, our deepest fears, sadnesses, griefs and needs so that we may bear one another up and support each other in prayer and Christian love.

HYMN "Christ, Be Our Light" (#53 Hymns of

Promise) vs. 5 Lyrics & Music: Bernadette Farrell

5 Many the gifts, many the people,
Many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
Making your kingdom come.

Refrain:

Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts, shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Karen Mohr

RADIO BROADCAST
11 AM Sunday radio broadcast
on WCCN 98.5FM and 1370AM

This week's radio broadcast is sponsored anonymously by a "faithful listener".

Coffee fellowship after worship -
Sign up on back bulletin board

Feb 8 – Doris Bakker
 Feb 15 – Mathis'
 Feb 22 – Susie Karl
 Mar 1 -
 We need people to sign up

WELCOME

We welcome you to our service of worship!
 We are glad that you have joined us on site,
 through the internet or on the radio.
 We pray that you will hear God's call,
 seek to follow Jesus, led by the Holy Spirit.

Volunteers Needed for Sunday Worship

February - March 2026

We are looking for volunteers to assist with Sunday worship by **reading the scriptures and/or leading the children's message**. Pastor Julie will choose the scripture readings, and volunteers will prepare and lead the children's message. Pastor Julie has online resources available and is happy to discuss ideas or offer guidance.

If you feel called to help, please add your name to the schedule below. For more specifics of questions please contact Sally Sadowska or Janice Miller.

Thank you for serving!

YouTube link for Sunday, February 8, 2026
<https://youtube.com/live/tDtVm68X-gl>

| Sunday | Scripture | Children's message |
|------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Feb 1 | JoAnn Voss | Barb Shoemaker |
| Feb 8 | Kirk Rodman | |
| Feb 15 | Barb Petkovsek | Barb Petkovsek |
| Feb. 22 | Susie Karl | Barb Shoemaker |
| Mar. 1 | Wayne Voss | |
| Mar. 8 | Barb Shoemaker | |
| Mar. 15 | Byrl Buddenhagen | Barb Shoemaker |
| Mar. 22 | Nancy Rodman | |
| Mar 29 (Palm) | | |
| April 5 (Easter) | | |
| | | |
| | | |

ANNOUNCEMENTS

This Sunday, February 8th
- 9:30 AM Worship

- Deacon – Janice Miller
- Greeters – Jenna Ziegler & family
- Ushers – Ken Shoemaker, Travis Vine
- Power Point – Bonnie Weyer
- AV – Crispin Hediger

FYI - (for those who are scheduled for PowerPoint/AV it is suggested that you arrive 30 minutes prior to the church service to get the laptop turned on, allow for any updates, get screen down and start running the announcements).

Following Sunday, February 15th

- Deacon – JoAnn Wren
- Greeters – Karen Northup, Lydia Schumacher
- Ushers – Janet Meredith, Emile Miller
- Power Point – Jenny Erickson
- AV – Crispin Hediger

Tuesday, February 10th

- 1:00 PM Bible Study
- 3:30 PM Deacons Meeting

Thursday, February 12th

- 1:30 PM Circle of Friends Meeting

