

# FIRST (SCOTS) SERMONS

YOUTH SUNDAY: THE DAY'S THEME WAS LIGHT

“LIGHTING MY FAITH”

Scripture Lesson: Genesis 1: 3-5

*This sermon was preached by Susanna Woodward on Sunday, February 11, 2024  
at First (Scots) Presbyterian Church in Charleston, South Carolina.*

## Genesis 1: 3-5

*3 Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. 4 And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.*

## Lighting My Faith

When God said, “Let there be light,” he really wasn’t kidding. Everywhere we go, there is light. The sun beams light every day, and thanks to technology, car headlights help us see every night. But there’s also light in faith.

Before the pandemic hit, my light in faith was growing to be really bright. It was in confirmation class at the time, so I was talking about my faith every Sunday. Once the pandemic hit, it’s almost as if someone had blown the light out. All that was left was the smoke trail and the slight smell of a once lit candle. I was confirmed on Zoom and even then, it felt like it wasn’t real. Everything in this time period seemed to be blurred, and it was really hard to keep up with my faith. Watching church services from our TV was surreal, and seeing the sanctuary almost empty almost felt wrong. One of the many great things about a Sunday worship is being able to rejoice with other people around you to help spread that light. It’s a highlight to greet other people to spread the peace in the beginning of the service, but now it was a masked wave from six feet. It seemed as if all of the lights of the congregation were put out or struggling to stay with the wind gust that was the pandemic. As time went on, the restrictions slowly lifted, and we were able to worship once again. Being a freshman in high school, I took the summer opportunity to go to Montreat. The week-long trip made me realize how much I missed the church. Talking to kids my age about faith from all over the world really helped reignite my faith, and being able to experience it with my friends made the trip that much better. Since that trip, I realized that going to Youth Group was also really important.

Once I got my driver’s license, I was able to come every Sunday without begging my parents to take me at their convenience (love you mom!) I felt my light slowly coming back as I greeted friends and leaders who I hadn’t seen in a while. Throughout the rest of my sophomore and junior years, my

light for God slowly grew bigger and bigger. I joined the Youth leadership Team, went on mission trips, and returned to Montreat. Montreat does a candlelight service every year, and it is always in that moment when I realize how important it is to keep faith in your life. The Montreat Trio in the summer of 2022 had a fantastic music performance, and one of the nights they performed "Awake My Soul." Since then, that song really spoke to me, and I can't listen to it without feeling what I felt in that auditorium. After the Montreat trip this past summer, the nightly devotions between a tight knit group showed that spreading the light is important. I knew that I wanted to get more involved. I joined the leadership team once again and joined the presbytery youth council. My light is brighter than ever and I'm happy to share it with others. The biggest lesson I learned in this journey is that you don't realize how much you miss something until you do it again. God was able to light my journey in my faith and has been there since the beginning. He created light in the story of creation. I didn't realize how much I missed sharing my faith with others and being able to voice the struggles that I was dealing with without the fear of being judged. I always look forward to seeing everyone on Sundays to shine my light on others and to let them shine their light on me.

Thank you.