

SPECIAL
SUNDAY

UMCOR SUNDAY

SERMON STARTER



This sermon starter is part of the UMCOR Sunday pastor and leader kit and connects with the theme “Embodying Compassion: Being God’s Light.” It can be adapted for your context and integrated into your worship service with the other material in the kit.

In February 2023, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck southern Turkey. UMCOR, the United Methodist Committee on Relief, worked with a trusted partner in Turkey to respond.

Because many displaced people still live in tents where open flames of candles or kerosene lanterns are dangerous, solar lanterns were distributed, thanks in part to gifts from United Methodists.

We are embodying compassion and being God’s light through UMCOR.

Today’s reading comes from John 3:21 (CEB): “Those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”

The reading focuses on a conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus. Nicodemus seeks out Jesus late at night. In the dark, he finds room to experience divine presence. Without distractions, Nicodemus is invited to explore holy new perspectives.

This conversation opens up the expansiveness of God, who so loves the whole world and who

sent Jesus to lead us on a path to saving grace. Under the cover of darkness, Jesus engages in this conversation with compassion and shines God’s light into Nicodemus’ life.

Jesus says to Nicodemus, “Those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”

Nicodemus later stands up for Jesus when the Pharisees want Jesus arrested and in John 19, he brings a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes with which to wrap Jesus’ body. He embodies compassion. He is God’s light.

UMCOR is like a beacon of God’s light in some of the bleakest moments of people’s lives. When disaster strikes, when families lose their homes, when lives are turned upside down, UMCOR is there, just as Jesus calls us to be.

In Ukraine, fighting forced Tatiana and her seven-year-old daughter to flee their home. Eventually, Tatiana was connected with an UMCOR-IOCC supported Eleos-Ukraine shelter in the Chernivtsi region in the eastern Carpathians.

“Everything was different from the hotel,” says Tatiana. “Good infrastructure, a clean room and staff who always listen to you and try to solve your problems.”

After receiving medical checkups and legal consultation, the pair qualified for state social assistance. Tatiana found a job and her daughter was placed in a nearby school. “Lots of people we don’t know care about us and want to help,” says Tatiana.

We embody compassion and God’s light through UMCOR. “Those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”

UMCOR is a living example of the light of God’s love in action. When we support UMCOR, we become part of something much larger than ourselves, and we shine that light even brighter. Through UMCOR, we bring people from the despair of Good Friday into the brilliant reality of Easter.



Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

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