



First United Methodist Church of Hanford  
*Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.*



505 N. Redington Street Hanford, CA93230

559-584-4075 (voice) 559-584-5438 (fax)

office@fumchanford.org [www.fumchanford.org](http://www.fumchanford.org) Facebook: @HanfordFirstUMC

### **“Light of the World”**

*Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. John 1: 3-5 (NIV)*

Probably around five years old or so, I delighted in the exciting moment when I was asked to take a deep breath, make a wish, and blow out the candles on my birthday cake. That special day, I inhaled until I could hold no more, scrunched up my eyes and face in deep thought of a desired fantasy, and then with all the force my little body could muster, I blew out the candles. Success!!! Yes! They all went out! Until . . . they all lit up again.

Not understanding, I reassumed my position, took my breath and... it happened again... and again! What was going on and why was everyone laughing? This was not how it was supposed to happen! As my frustration grew, someone—either my mother or my older sister—explained that the candles were special. They were made to never go out. Until they made contact with water, they would keep re-igniting despite of my determined efforts. I was not a fan.

While now, I do appreciate the attributes of trick birthday candles (I laugh with my kids now), there is another source of everlasting light for which I do give thanks. Time and time again, Jesus’ light has led me safely along a path that was dim and uncertain. I fall to my knees in immense gratitude when I consider the joy and security I have in Jesus’ enduring Life-Light! Because of his faithfulness, I have come to know that in any time of personal darkness—loss, rejection, betrayal, or failure-- I am guided by an Eternal Light that will never be extinguished.

And I know that in these times of collective darkness—political unrest, global illness, and unjust oppression--my Life-Light will never stop burning out into the night! As the end of 2020 is approaching knocking the door of a new year, how glad I am to know that there is nothing that can put out the brilliant life-giving radiance of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Let us pray: As the days of 2020 are ending and the days of 2021 are on the horizon, let us not be discouraged, for we know that you, O Jesus, are the Light who remains vibrant and strong, and nothing can ever put out your loving Light. Amen.

Happy New Year!!

“Now I can say I Live a Day” (John Wesley)  
Pastor Pablo  
December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020

### **For Reflection**

1. Looking back at 2020, what events were hard to take? How did they affect you?
2. What personal improvements did you make in your life? List them.
3. What relationships became difficult or problematic? Can you repair them? Consider how that might happen.
4. What new relationships did you develop in 2020? How will they bless you in 2021?
5. List any affirmations or goals you would like to experience in 2021. How can your faith help you with them?

### **Online Devotionals**

To grow in your relationship with God and others, it is important to have some spiritual disciplines in your life. Below are some helpful websites that will lead you to read scripture, pray, and focus on God.

**UPPER ROOM DAILY DEVOTIONAL** <https://www.upperroom.org/devotionals>

A daily devotional including scripture lesson and story.

**UPPER ROOM DAILY REFLECTIONS** <https://upperroombooks.com/neweverymorning/>