



Roanoke, Virginia
September 28, 2025

“The Light We Shine”

Matthew 5:14-16

Dr. George C. Anderson

Artists have always played an important role in the life of the Church—and in the life of our congregation. We are blessed with members whose talents in the visual and performing arts have enriched our worship, our programs, and the very spaces we inhabit. We need our artists.

Perhaps we need them more than ever these days. They bring order to chaos, beauty to counter ugliness, and light into darkness. Today, I’m stepping slightly outside my usual behind-the-pulpit role to let you experience that firsthand.

You are about to see the collaborative work of three of our own artists: a fine arts painter, a theater professional, and a media-arts creator. The media-arts creator, Andrea Boone, has produced a video that captures our stewardship theme this year, exploring both the revelatory qualities of light and what it means for us to let our light shine in the world. For the bulk of today’s sermon, we will watch and reflect on this artistic expression. But first, let us hear the words of Scripture that guide our reflection:

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵ People do not light a lamp and put it under the bushel basket; rather, they put it on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**



Light is one of the most powerful images in our faith. It reveals what is hidden, it reflects what is greater than ourselves, and it transforms the way we see the world. In the same way, artists use light to tell stories, stir emotions, and invite us into beauty and meaning.

To help us explore this more deeply, two of our own church members—an artist and a theatre director—share how light shapes their work and inspires their vision. Their perspectives invite us to see with new eyes and consider how we, too, are called to shine.



(scan the QR code to watch the video)

When artists speak of light, they remind us of something deeper than paint or stagecraft. They remind us of God's first gift—"Let there be light"—a gift that reveals what is hidden, reflects what is greater than ourselves, and draws us into beauty and purpose. Light heals, transforms, and points us toward hope.

As a church, we are called to shine this same light. In our worship, our ministries, our service, and our giving, we make visible the love of Christ that might otherwise go unseen.

Just as light is refracted differently through each of us, it is also refracted in a special way through the community of Second Presbyterian. Our worship—the music, the liturgy, the preaching—helps us see and live the truths of Scripture more deeply. Our programs form moral vision and character in people of all ages. Our outreach extends care, hope, and justice to the wider world.

No one of us can carry this light alone. But together—when each gift, each story, each act of generosity is joined—we reflect something far brighter than any of us could create on our own.

This is the light we carry. In doing so, we answer the call of Jesus: to let our light shine before others, so that they may see our good works and give glory to our Father in heaven. It is through this shared light that God continues to bring healing, beauty, and transformation to the world.

