Sunshine Connection, FL Conference 1.29.26
Psalm 119
Rev. Michelle Carter Taylor

Faith is often formed somewhere in the tension between illumination and shadow. Much of what shapes us spiritually does not come from certainty or clarity, but from learning how to live faithfully when light and darkness exist side by side. I find myself returning to this truth often, especially in seasons when the way forward feels only partially lit.

As we have moved through the waiting of Advent, the light of Christmas, and the revealing moments of Epiphany, we now find ourselves turning toward Lent. The rhythm of the church year reminds us that God's presence is revealed not only in moments of joy and insight, but also in seasons that feel unfinished and unresolved. What is illuminated does not erase what remains in darkness. Instead, we are invited to hold them together as part of a faithful life.

We can be grateful for the presence of Christ and still feel the weight of this season. We can experience moments of insight and still feel unsure about what comes next. We can love the church deeply and still find ourselves carrying questions, concerns, and a sense of heaviness that does not resolve quickly. Holding these truths together is part of what it means to live faithfully in relationship.

Across our Conference, I am hearing this layered reality again and again. Some communities are sensing new energy or possibility. Others are carefully tending what feels fragile or stretched. Many are showing up with commitment and care, while quietly carrying a sense of heaviness that is not always easy to name. In this season, faithfulness often looks quieter, rooted less in momentum and more in the steady work of endurance.

We are also living and leading within a wider moment marked by deep uncertainty. Many are carrying the weight of what they are witnessing and experiencing beyond their own communities, including acts of violence, harshness, and a growing lack of compassion. The world can feel tilted, unstable, and difficult to recognize at times. And yet, even here, God's presence has not withdrawn. God remains near, attentive, and at work, holding us and calling us toward faithfulness in the midst of it all.

The psalmist offers us language for this kind of faith: "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." A lamp does not illuminate the entire road at once. It offers light where our feet are, making it possible to take the next

faithful step. Even when the way ahead is not fully clear, the presence of light tells us we are not without guidance, and that God is already near.

As we turn toward Lent, we are invited into deeper honesty. This season does not ask us to hurry past what is unresolved or difficult. It invites us to pay attention, to be honest about what we are carrying, and to remember that God meets us not only in strength, but also in vulnerability.

Holding more than one truth at a time is often part of what faith looks like in practice. It gives us room to sit with what is life-giving and what is heavy, with hope and vulnerability, without rushing to resolve the tension between them. In doing so, we are reminded that faith is not something we carry alone, but something shaped and sustained in relationship, with God and with one another.

How we hold this season matters. It is not something to fix or resolve, but something to tend with care and attention. In a time marked by complexity and vulnerability, faith invites us to remain present to what is unfolding, trusting that God is at work even when clarity comes slowly. This season is not meant to be carried alone. Faith is shaped and sustained through shared wisdom, mutual support, and the quiet grace of walking alongside one another, knowing God will continue to illuminate the way.

Rev. Michelle Taylor, Associate Conference Minister

Blessing

May you trust that God’s light meets you where you are, not all at once, but with enough illumination for the next faithful step. May you feel permission to carry hope and vulnerability together, without rushing yourself toward answers. And may you know yourself held in relationship, accompanied by grace, and sustained by a God who continues to walk with you, illuminating the way as you go.

Sunshine Connection, FL Conference 1.29.26
Psalm 119
Rev. Michelle Carter Taylor

