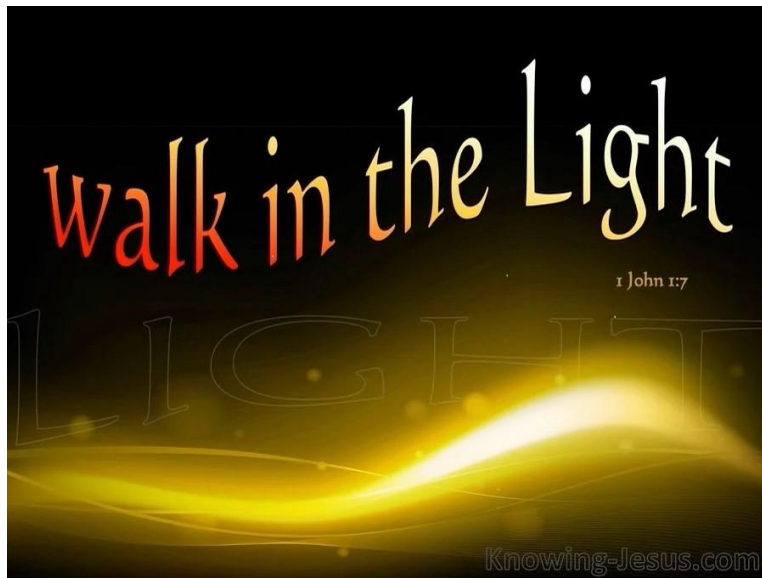


2022
ADVENT DEVOTIONAL



Dallas First Christian Church
1079 SE Jefferson Street
Dallas, OR 97338
503-623-2569

The season of Advent begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day:

First Sunday of Advent, November 27, 2022

Second Sunday of Advent, December 4, 2022

Third Sunday of Advent, December 11, 2022

Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 18, 2022

Christmas Eve – December 24

7:00 pm – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service.



The candles of Advent serve to remind us to open our hearts and reach out our hands to comfort and help all God's people so they too, would be prepared to receive their Lord and Savior.

Dear First Christian Church Family

The word “Advent” comes from the Latin word *adventus*, which means “coming.” Advent, the four Sundays leading up to Christmas morning, is a time of preparation, a time of waiting for the birth and coming of Jesus. It is so much more than the tree, decorations, parties, music and shopping, it is a time where we prepare our hearts and minds for the coming of Jesus, Immanuel. There is so much in this world will drown out the simple, still voice of God that comes into the world through God’s Son, Jesus.

This year’s theme is *Walking in the Light*. We are called to not just prepare our hearts and minds for the coming of Jesus, but to help prepare and announce to the world that Christmas is about the birth of Jesus. The promised birth of God’s Son into a broken and lost world, much like ours. We are called to shine the Light of Jesus into the broken world. The way the Light came into the changed the world and continues to change us and the world today. As we begin the season of Advent and journey to the celebration of Christmas, I want to encourage each of us to pause regularly and remember the simple message of God’s love and Light that came and still comes through simple ways and simple people who walk each day in the Light. It is our hope that this devotional will help us to remember that simple message of Love and encourage each of us to Walk in the Light of Jesus.

Advent is an invitation to set your mind off of the stresses of the year. We can take our focus off of the crazy hustle that can be associated with the Christmas season that often threatens to produce more hassle than delight. Advent is a chance to focus our thoughts on the gift God has given us in his son Jesus who stepped down from Heaven and took the form of a man so that we might believe.

May Immanuel, God with us, be very present and real to you and your family through the season and coming year and the Gift of

God's Love shine through us to the world around we live in each day.

Merry Christmas from your Church Family.

Pastor Darren Anderson

November 27, 2022

Finding Hope

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13

Hope can be in short supply. Back when Paul wrote this letter, he was under arrest and there was persecution happening to the church. I'm sure that hope was hard to find in the midst of their situation. With all that was happening, they may have been wondering what the future held.

We, too, may have those feelings. As we move through this holiday season, with all the pressures of life and the uncertainties that surround us, we have a hard time finding Hope. Biblical Hope is not just wishing for a better future, a better life. It requires us to have belief in God above everything else in this world.

Our belief in God gives us Hope for a better future, because it is God who doesn't let us down and walks with us through the tough times. We have Hope that as we are transformed by God through our faith, our situation will change and our communities and world as well. As Paul encourages the believers in Rome, he reminds us too, that we are to hold onto the God of Hope and that Hope will then overflow from us into the world.

What is stealing your hope today? Is it because you are looking at things of this world over trusting in what God is doing? Are you finding it hard to see what God is doing? Recommit yourself to seeing what God has done and is doing and find that Hope once again!

Peace.

God of Hope. Refresh and renew us this Advent season. Show us the Hope that comes in the baby of Jesus, the Hope that you give to us, the Hope that changes the world and our hearts. Amen.

Darren Anderson

November 28, 2022

Walking in the Light

John 8:12: When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life"

Christmas is when we celebrate Jesus's birth
When the light came to live with man on earth.

Thank you, Lord, for lighting my way
Keeping me from going astray

Your words my path make bright
Guiding me to do what is right

Darkness I never need to fear
I know you are always near

Help me to show others, your light in me
So they will seek and turn to thee

Heavenly Father. Thank you for giving us Jesus, the Light of the World. Help me to let that light shine bright this Christmas. Amen

Coni Bell

November 29, 2022



Daylighties

1st Peter 2:9; But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Over one hundred years ago my great grandfather was superintendent of a fish cannery built over the Columbia River on the North coast in Astoria. He lived up the street from the cannery, walking distance from his work.. His "right hand man" at the cannery was the China Boss who spoke a little English and could pass on great grandpa's directions to the Chinese workers. One day the China Boss was knocking on Grandpa's door at his house on Cedar Street. My grandma opened the door, and the China Boss was gesturing wildly. "Bossy Man, him need daylighties! "Daylighties", he repeated over and over, louder and louder, "DAYLIGHTIES!" Then he put his fingers around his eyes, forming circles with his thumbs and fingers, "Daylighties!" he shouted!

"Oh," Grandma said, "the bossy man has forgotten his glasses!" She quickly retrieved great grandpa's glasses from his desk and handed them to the China Boss. Much relieved, the China Boss took off at a run for the cannery, the precious glasses in his hand.

A number of us need to put on our "daylighties" to read the instructions on a recipe, to read the newspaper, or a favorite book. With our glasses in place the dim words on a page come into focus. It is like coming from the darkness into daylight. When we view the world we live in through a human perspective, it is as if we are seeing dimly. 1st Corinthians 13:12 "For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face." Everything changes when we take on a heavenly

perspective. We do indeed move from darkness into the light. We have gone from night into daylight!

Heavenly Father, Draw us near to you and help us to see the light of your presence in a world dark with sin. What a difference you make in our lives! Our hearts are full of praise for you. Amen

Audrey Cameron

November 30, 2022

The Light is Dawning

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. Isaiah 9:2

These words from Isaiah are used to speak of the coming of the Messiah. Isaiah describes a people who were struggling with life. Darkness, struggle, gloom covered the land and had become embedded in the hearts and lives of the people.

There is a light appearing on the horizon. A light at the end of the tunnel. Hope, Peace, Joy, Love was coming in the Light.

Sound familiar? I know that many feel this way today. Life is hard, yet during Advent, we can look to the coming of the Light in the birth of Jesus.

Hang on, look to the coming of the Light, born in the manger, the Light of the World is coming to all the world.

As we begin this Advent season, a time of waiting for the coming of Jesus and all that He embodies, the Emmanuel, God with us, we look forward to the coming of the Hope, Peace, Joy and Love that is coming and is present with us each day.

Remember, “The Light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.” John 1:5

Peace.

Loving God, Help us to wait expectantly for the coming of Jesus and all that He brings to us. Push out the darkness and gloom and replace them with the presence of the Light that is dawning. Amen.

Darren Anderson

December 1, 2022

Look to the Light

John 8:12: ¹² When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

Shortly after we had announced the theme for this year’s Advent Devotionals, I was driving past a church and saw “Look to the Light” on their sign. I started thinking about the difference between looking to the light and walking in the light. To me, there is a vast difference between the two. When I look to the light, I’m seeking direction or guidance. When I am walking in the light, I am following that guidance.

In spite of the difference that I perceive, the light is what is important. We are so blessed to have a God who loves us so much that He sent His only son to save us – to be the light that we need.

Heavenly Father, thank you for the guidance you provide for us in the Bible and through teachers and preachers of your word. Thank you for the reminders of your love that we get at church and from friends and family. Amen.

Marsha Heeter

December 2, 2022

This little Light of Mine

Matthew 5:14 "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

"This little light of mine" was a favorite Sunday school song that I sang, that my children and grandchildren sang, and now I am anxious to teach it to my great grandchildren. When teaching it to children, you hold up your "pointer" finger and sing, "This little light of mine." Then as the verses go along you put your "light" under a "bushel" (basket), you shine it all over your neighborhood, and a favorite verse is when you "don't let Satan poof (blow it out) it out" and you "Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine."

Jesus said that His followers are "the light of the world." We have all known wonderful Christian people who really do seem to "shine" with this heavenly light. My father was one such person, and as a pastor and also a high school teacher, he was able to share this "light" with so many people. It is always a blessing to me to meet people who my father influenced in their daily lives and hear them express the gratitude they feel toward him. His "light" was always shining!

In our own church family so many "saints" come to mind. Beulah Curtis was one such person who in her singing radiated such joy and love for her Savior. Who could ever forget Pastor Mildrum, and his beautiful wife, Johanna? Eula Minich also comes to mind, and as the rose planted in her memory by the entrance to the church blooms so beautifully in its season, it is a sweet reminder of that dear lady.

How will we be remembered? How is our "light" shining? Life hands us some heavy burdens at times. We serve a Savior who is the Light of the world. We can trust Him to carry us through every trial in our lives and lift us up to be a "light" for others around us. Was a clerk cranky to you in a store? Ask them how their day is going, thank them for serving you, say "God Bless your day," as you leave the store. Lately I have enjoyed handing out some homemade cookies.

I have never had anyone refuse a nice plate of chocolate chip cookies, even though my daughter tells me mine are too "small." Find ways to be kind to others, even in a small way.

Light up the world around you!

Heavenly Father, help me to be a shining light to those around me. Fill me with the light of your love and pass it on to others. I want "this little light of mine" to shine in this dark world. Amen

Audrey Cameron

December 3, 2022

My Walk Into the Unknown

I do not know what the future will bring

My God has planned it that way

I just need to have faith in Him

As I live from day to day

I know that I need to have the trust

that God will light the path I tread

That He will cause His face to shine on me

And give me my daily bread.

An attitude that is positive
And friends with which to play
And above all, during my walk of faith
I must remember to pray.

My day-to-day walk into the unknown
Has many crooked ways
But God can make my pathway straight
and guide my sunset days.

Jean Sarff

December 4, 2022

Finding Peace

*Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way.
The Lord be with all of you. 2 Thessalonians 3:16*

We often use the word 'peace', to refer to an absence of conflict or chaos. Yet in scripture that is only a small part of the meaning. Peace, or Shalom (the Hebrew word often translated as peace) describe something much greater.

These often refer to wholeness or completeness, a recognition of God's presence with us and in our midst. The prophecies of Jesus' coming refer to the Messiah as the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). Jesus is also called Emmanuel, God with us. When we remember that the Prince of Peace is with us while the chaos and uncertainty swirl around us, we can begin to experience the Peace that passes understanding. We lives begin to change and we can begin to work toward the wholeness and completeness for all those around us.

In this way, the presence of God, the Peace of God, is not just a good feeling but moves us to action for our neighbor.

Where do you experience the presence of God? Do you know God's peace in those times? How do you live that peace each day? Peace.

“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.”

Numbers 6:24-26

Darren Anderson

December 5, 2022

Walking in the Light

When you do farm chores morning and night day after day, you inevitably are walking in darkness.

Maybe you fell asleep in a chair and started evening chores too late. You might have stayed too long in town, getting home after dark. There are all kinds of reasons why you are called to do those barn chores after dark. After 49 years of raising sheep, I have been one "acquainted with the night." Baby lambs need to be delivered, whenever they decide to be born. A sick lamb needs to have a baby bottle of warm milk, even on the darkest night. And so, over the years, I have become used to being out in the dark.

The darkness is not so bad in good weather, but on a stormy and cold night it is a little hard to put on the coat and boots and head out the door. I am blessed to have lights in both of my barns and a nice security light on the big barn that sheds its light over the barnyard. I often turn on the house lights so they are shining down on me when

I go out the door. My sheep barn is about a football field away from the front yard, and the distance seems long going down there, and short coming back. Heading towards the light makes all the difference.

Darkness out on my farm is when bad things happen. Cougars kill a lamb, and sometimes even a large sheep. Possums, skunks, raccoons, all raid the chicken houses. Sometimes I keep a light burning just to deter the wild animals, and a radio playing loudly can do the same thing.

When daylight comes, we all feel safer. The light brings a feeling of relief, and the frightening thoughts disappear. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world." The light of His love and watchcare over us makes all the difference in our lives. We can trust Him to keep us safe and even protect those we love. When I am afraid, I can pray, and I know God answers prayer.

We can step out of the darkness into His light.

Heavenly Father, draw us near to you. Take away our fears and doubts as we step into your light and walk with You. Use us to spread this light to others around us. Amen

Audrey Cameron

December 6, 2022

Jesus is the Light

*When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."
John 8:12*

John begins his Gospel telling us that, “the light (Jesus) shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” Later, John tells us that Jesus tells those around Him and us, that He is the Light of the world and those who follow Him will not walk in darkness.

Taking these two scriptures together, remind me about the importance of how as we ‘walk in the light’ helps us to understand better who Jesus really is. As we walk in the light, by faithfully following the words and life of Jesus, we grow deeper in our faith. Almost like walking into the ocean or a swimming pool from the shallow end. Each step takes us deeper.

When Jesus was born in a manger, God’s light entered the world in a new way. That light shines brighter today and shines in each one of us. Let us check each day how our walk is progressing. Are we walking in the Light or in our own way.

Peace.

Gracious God, may each step I take, each word I say be guided by the Light that shines in Jesus and help me to draw closer to Jesus. Amen.

Darren Anderson

December 7, 2022

Stepping in the Light

"How beautiful to walk in the steps of the Savior, stepping in the light, stepping in the light, how beautiful to walk in the steps of the Savior, Led in paths of light!" (From Sacred Selections For the Church)

We experienced a total eclipse of the sun in 2017. It was an exciting day. We had company here on our farm since we were in an excellent position to view this. We had children, grandchildren, a nephew and great-nieces and a few friends along as well. It was especially fun to watch what happened to the farm animals as the eclipse took place. Chickens went back into their coops and perched in the darkness that ensued. The sheep headed back to the barn and the horse and pony went into the horse barn to have their evening feeding.

It was all over quite soon, and then the sun was shining again and light filled our valley. A rooster crowed to greet the new light and animals went into the pasture to graze. During the darkness in the middle of the day everything seemed out of order. It was not the usual scheme of a day's events.

When we drift away from our Savior it is as if an "eclipse" takes place in our lives. We are not experiencing the joy of "walking in the steps of the Savior." We are not being "led in paths of light.". Once our spiritual life gets straightened out, we can experience the joy of walking in the "steps of the Savior". Psalm 56:13 tells us "For you have delivered me from death and my feet

from stumbling that I may walk before God in the light of life."

Heavenly Father, help us to experience the beauty of stepping in the light and walking with you. Help us to experience the light of life found only in you.

Amen

Audrey Cameron

December 8, 2022

A Light for the Gentiles

Isaiah 49:6: he says: "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth."

I don't think I ever realized that God made it so plain in the scriptures that he had plans to save everyone, not just the Israelites. I wonder if any of the Israelites ever thought about this promise to provide His light to the Gentiles. Did they think that this meant the Gentiles had to become Jews? Did they just ignore it or figure that it probably wouldn't happen in their lifetimes, so they didn't need to worry about it?

What a blessing to the Gentiles that God keeps his promises and sent Jesus to this earth to save us, too.

Heavenly Father, thank you for allowing us to share in the light of your love and to serve you each and every day. Amen.

Marsha Heeter

December 9, 2022

WALK IN THE LIGHT

"LIGHT" is used in the scriptures to recognize "THE CHRIST". Jesus identifies Himself as The "LIGHT". Read in John 9:5, "while I am in the world, I am the light of the world." All throughout His ministry, He calls those of us to follow Him, His love, His forgiveness, and His obedience to the Father.

In this season of Advent, be cautious, be kind, be faithful and be loving, so that wherever you walk you don't cast shadows but rather you share the "LIGHT"

God be with you!

Gary Ivey

December 10, 2022

The Season of Lights

There are lights upon my Christmas tree
And lights in my yard for all to see.

There are lights on the corner of every street
And lights on fence posts that look so neat.

There are lights on church and steeples tall
And lights in building and in each hall.

But the light that warms me deep inside
Is the Light of Lights that with me does abide.

Jean Sarff

December 11, 2022

Finding Joy

And Mary said: ‘My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me—blessed is his name. His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; . . . Luke 1:46-55

The scripture above is part of Mary’s response to Elizabeth when Mary went to see her after finding out she was going to give birth to Jesus. A teenage young lady was going to face a lot of different struggles in the coming months and throughout her life because she said YES to God.

Mary found Joy in her situation because she knew that God was with her and in this song, she not only acknowledged God’s presence with her, she also remembered God’s presence and action in the history and life of Israel.

Joy doesn’t come from the situation but from a deep faith and knowledge of God’s presence and action in our lives. We often struggle with the situations of life, yet we can know the Joy of God’s presence and action in our lives. As we walk in the Light of Jesus, we are made more aware of what God has and is doing in the world.

If you are feeling less than joyful, stop and remember how much God loves you and your family and has provided for you all this year. Things may still be hard and uncertain but we can be joyful in God’s presence with us each day. Continue to walk in the Light.

Gracious God, please stir within me today, the joy of your salvation and presence. In my situation, remind me that you are with me and love me unconditionally. Amen.

Darren Anderson

December 12, 2022

Nightlight

John 8:12: Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

When my grandkids come to stay overnight, we always plug in a "nightlight." This is a soft little light that can go into the outlet in a room and when the overhead light turns off, the nightlight turns itself on. It is a soft, glowing light, and reminds you of a Christmas light. It is a comfort if someone wakes up in the night and forgets where they are to have a light to show them the way to Grandma's room.

When I stay in an unfamiliar place, I like to have someone leave a light on down the hall. If you wake up in a place other than your own house it is easy to forget where you are and feel a little disoriented when you wake up. A little light makes all the difference!

I like to think of my Savior as a "nightlight" for me. The darkness of night seems to bring on all kinds of frightening thoughts. If the "Light of the World" is watching over us, how can we be afraid? We sang a song in my Bible school classes about God's watchcare over us. It said "He never sleeps he never slumbers." (Psalm 121:4 "He who watches over Israel will never slumber nor sleep.") If the Lord is watching over us who can harm us?

Heavenly Father, be a "nightlight" for me. Give me peace when darkness comes to lie down and find rest through you. Be the light in my life. Amen

Audrey Cameron

December 13, 2022

“THY WORD IS A LAMP TO MY FEET AND A LIGHT TO MY PATH”

Read Psalm 119:105

My mother decided one night to get up in her house and walk to the kitchen. When she came around the corner in the dark, she caught the corner, tripped, and fell. If you have ever tried doing things in the dark, you are probably aware of the dangers that lurked there. With my mom, she fell and broke her wrist.

The psalm reminds us that we need a light. It also proclaims that the light is found in God’s word. The gospel of John tells us that The Word becomes flesh. John points directly at Jesus as the Word. Read the scriptures and turn on the light. “IT IS A LAMP TO OUR PATH”. The Father doesn’t want us stubbing a toe or breaking a wrist

Gary Ivey

December 14, 2022

Light of our Lives

John 8:12: I am the light of the world.. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

One of our family stories is about the death of our great grandfather. He was superintendent of a fish cannery in Astoria, Oregon, and the cannery employed a number of Chinese workers. Helping my Grandfather with these laborers was a man who was called the "China Boss". This man knew enough English to give

instructions from my grandfather to the workers. They worked closely together and had a great deal of affection for each other. The Chinese believed that life was like a "flame, or a light", and that was what prompted the China Boss to say upon learning of Grandfather's death "Bossy man, him blow out, me blow out too!"

Like that China Boss I too have felt when someone I loved died that I wanted to "die" myself. Life seemed impossible without that loved one. For me, the words of John 8:12 give hope beyond this life. The light of the world is our Savior and as we follow him he leads us out of darkness into the light of life. This story of my grandfather and the China Boss happened over 100 years ago. I am hoping that my grandmother, who was a staunch Scotch Presbyterian and started a Sunday School in the neighborhood where they lived, just blocks up from the cannery over the river, had been able to assure the China Boss that he still had reason to live. He had a loving Heavenly Father who loved him and could offer him the "light of life."

We went to high school with the grandchildren of the "China Boss" and I know they attended a Baptist church that was located in the part of town where a number of Chinese people lived.

A Chinese man was the organist at that church for many years and I like to imagine that the Christians in that "Chinatown" heard the good news of the gospel through Grandma's Sunday School. We have a responsibility to share the "Faith of our Fathers" with others.

Heavenly Father, You are the Light of our Lives and have drawn us out of the darkness of despair into the light of life. I am claiming your promise that Your faithfulness continues through all generations. Amen

Audrey Cameron

December 15, 2022

Shine!

“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:14-16

I love this image that Jesus gives to us. It is the basis for the children’s song that many of us learned, “This Little Light of Mine”.

Jesus says that WE are the light of the world when we are following Him. His light shines in us and what we do is a reflection on who Jesus is for all to see. Our deeds, our words, our attitudes, our hearts and our minds should all shine brightly because of Christ’s light and love that shines in us.

The question for us today (and each day) is how bright are we shining? Is our light dim? Are we hiding it under something? Do the things of this world block the light of Jesus from shining through? We have to be intentional each day that Jesus’ light shines through us and is not hidden or things of this world don’t ‘PUFF’ it out.

Peace.

Gracious God may the Light of Christ shine in me today, so brightly, that all around me see Jesus in me and their way is lit too. Amen.

Darren Anderson

December 16, 2022

Look Toward the Light

Never fear the shadows

For light is shining somewhere

Look not into the darkness

Nor seek the path of despair

Look for the beams

Shining through the cloud

Reach up and grasp each for your own....

Taking a stand, tall and proud

Look toward the light, it shines for you –

Let it fill your soul

Let it seep deep within

And make you again feel whole

Let the light glow in your eyes

As you bid the shadows adieu

For tucked away down in your heart

Is a radiance awaiting you.

Jean Sarff

December 17, 2022

Light in the darkness

1st Peter 1:9: "You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

When the lights go out where I live in the country, it becomes very dark indeed. There is always the hurried search for that old kerosene lamp sitting on the piano and a flashlight or two used for going to the barn for chores. There are always a few candles around but those can become a little dangerous in the hands of a small child and the wax that drips all around the house is hard to get up later. I sometimes find myself going into a room and flipping a switch, an idle gesture because there is no electricity to turn on!

Once our lights were out for ten days straight. None of my neighbors soon forgot about that. The roads were icy and we were very much "snowed in." Another country problem is our wells. The pumps run on electricity and no power means no water. Out of this calamity we are so relieved when the power finally does come on. We go from the darkness into the "wonderful light."

In our lives we sometimes go through some "dark days." No one can imagine what we ourselves and others have and will experience in our lives. There is sadness and sorrow in every family. How does one go through these trials and keep on living! Jesus says: "I am the Light of the world." If we are able to trust in Him, the darkness turns to light. Even death is not the end of life for a Christian. There is hope and joy ahead, if not in this world, in a world to come. We can step out of "darkness" into his "wonderful light."

Heavenly Father, draw us near to You to experience Your light in the darkness that sometimes falls upon us.. Help those we love who struggle with illness and distress. Give us that peace that comes only from You. Amen

Audrey Cameron

December 18, 2022

Finding Love

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16

Ultimately, the gift of Jesus, born in Bethlehem, is a gift of love for All the World. Jesus is the ultimate expression of God's love for each one of us and meeting us where we are in life.

Jesus is not only the physical representation of God's love for us, Jesus shows us in His life how to love God better and how to love those around us.

Peace.

Loving God, Thank you for the gift of Jesus, a gift of love for the whole world. Help us to follow the example of Jesus to love you more and to love those around us. Amen.

Darren Anderson

December 19, 2022

God is Love

1 John 4:8. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

Being created in Gods image makes us special. It is comforting to know not only does God love us, but God is love. Can each of us say our names and 'proclaim' we are love? What a great example we show to our creator and others if we could do that.

Love poured out from God as He sacrificed His own son for us. This perfect love is passed on to us to make a difference in this world. Does life at times seem to be a struggle? That is when we need Gods love the most. When we pray each day for His love, we are kind not rude, have no jealousy; and all pride can be lifted. We need His strength and love everyday

Today is the day we need to be reminded to take God with us wherever we go. Through us people will see, God is love.

Father, I pray to always show your love. In Jesus name, amen

John Dodge

December 20, 2022

STAR LIGHT, STAR BRIGHT

“First star I see tonight, I wish I may, I wish I might, have the wish I make tonight...”

Have you ever wondered what the wise men said as they went off following a star in the night sky? I'm pretty sure it wasn't that! This light was for them an answer to the promises of ancient scriptures. "Promises" of things that were to come. Promises of leadership better than what was present. Promises of hope and salvation for mankind. Promises of Truth that would over power the lies of humanity. This is the advent. Herein is the full revelation of God.

Read Isaiah 9:2-7 "For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, ... Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace... of His government and peace there will be no end,"

*TOGETHER LET US WALK IN THE LIGHT MY FRIENDS,
AMEN.*

Gary.

December 21, 2022

Let the Lower Lights be Burning

1. Brightly beams our Father's mercy,
From His lighthouse evermore,
But to us He gives the keeping
Of the lights along the shore.

o *Refrain:*

Let the lower lights be burning!
Send a gleam across the wave!
Some poor *struggling, fainting seaman
You may rescue, you may save.

o

2. Dark the night of sin has settled,
Loud the angry billows roar;
Eager eyes are watching, longing,
For the lights along the shore.

3. Trim your feeble lamp, my brother;
Some poor sailor, tempest-tossed,
Trying now to make the harbor,
In the darkness may be lost.

*original wording: fainting, struggling

By P.P. Bliss

Lighthouses along the Oregon coast are always fun to explore. If you visit them on a stormy day, you really get a glimpse into what those lights must have meant to ships out at sea. I have a friend who was a sea scout in his teenage years, and he describes being allowed to go along on a Coast Guard boat as it brought supplies to a lighthouse. The waves were so high and the wind so strong that the boat could not get too close to the lighthouse. Supplies had to be sent up on a cable attached to the lighthouse. He describes it as a "harrowing experience", one he has never forgotten. The keepers of those lighthouses had to be very strong individuals. It is heartwarming to read their diaries and hear firsthand how their lives were spent.

In Bliss's hymn he charges us to be the ones to keep "the lower lights burning." Our Father God is the keeper of the lighthouse, and we are to keep a "gleam across the wave" The imagery here is striking! As I remember being at the ocean on a stormy day. I can imagine someone struggling to make the shore. I grew up not far

from the wreck of the Peter Iredale on the Northern shore. We played around it day after day, and the church my father pastored at Clatsop Plains had graves behind it of those buried after perishing there. It is not hard to catch Bliss' intent on writing this hymn. People are struggling in their lives and looking for some "light" in their lives.

"Dark the night of sin has settled, Loud the angry billows roar; Eager eyes are watching, longing for the lights along the shore." This is the hymn writer's charge to us: We are to be the keepers of the lights someone is searching for. This powerful imagery of the lighthouse and the stormy sea makes one long to be one who "keeps the lower lights burning." I can think of so many ways to do this, from being strong in my faith in my own family, to reaching out to others. May God give us the strength to "Let the lower lights be burning."

Heavenly Father, how brightly beams your mercy unto us from the light of your love. Help us to reach out to others needing Your light in their lives. Help us to offer a hope and joy to those who are struggling today. Amen

Audrey Cameron

December 22, 2022

Unexpected gifts

Sometimes, the best gifts are the ones that are unexpected... or maybe not!

As Christmas approached, the family prepared for the annual festivities of baking, decorating, singing carols and locating the

"perfect" tree. It was a flurry of activity as the lights were strung, as each ornament was hung on the tree's branches and tinsel draped among the pine needles. The children stood back in awe, as their Dad positioned the finishing touch... followed by gasps of joy and excitement as the tree came "alive" with twinkling lights and a brightly glowing star.

Several days later, the whooping and shouting of the children could not be ignored. In a moment, the cause of the commotion was apparent. It was a massive migration of bugs... swirling, crawling, flying to the windows...dozens of them; thousands of them! And, as the bugs continued to hatch, the children were squealing and chasing and grabbing wildly. It was, clearly, a major praying mantis fest!

Several egg sacks, attached to the inner branches of the tree, had gone undetected when the tree was brought inside. The warmth of the house hastened the hatch and... Surprise! With the vacuum in hand, the bugs disappeared as they landed on the window ledges. As the room returned to "normal", as the excitement abated, a little voice exclaimed, "Oh, Daddy, this has been the best Christmas ever, can we do it again next year??"

In the eyes of a child, Christmas is all about presents, colored lights, snow globes, Santa, Christmas trees, snowmen and ten black olives; one. on. each. finger. But, as we grow and mature, the eyes of our adulthood look beyond the childhood visions to the deeper meaning of the season.

Philippians 2:6-8. "Though He was God, He did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, He gave up His divine privileges; He took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When He appeared in human form, He humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on the cross."

The story of Christmas is a story of God's love; His perfect gift to us; His Son. Hope arrived when Jesus was born. Jesus didn't stay in Heaven. He didn't stay in the manger. He didn't stay on the cross. He didn't stay in the tomb. His mission was to reconcile us to God, our creator, who knows us and who loves us. That is a mission worthy of celebration! And, one day, He will leave Heaven again. He will receive us unto Himself and take us to Heaven, to live with Him for eternity. What a gift! What a treasure! What a mighty God we serve!

Thank you, Lord, for the gift of Jesus. Please help us to keep our focus on you, especially in the midst of the stress, the busy-ness and the chaos in this world all around us. Lord, fill our hearts with your joy and peace during this season and beyond. And, thank you for the precious spontaneous moments of laughter and the delight we share with family and friends. In the name of Jesus, our Savior I pray. Amen

Written and submitted by Connie Bowers

December 23, 2022

Light of the World

John 8:12: When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness."

When I was ten years old, I had a paper route. I walked up to a grocery store about 10 blocks from my house after school to pick up my papers. I went down one street that was down close by the river, delivering the daily paper to the fishermen who lived in the

bunkhouses there. I went down Birch Street and up Cedar Street delivering papers to nearly every house until I was back at the grocery store and could go home

On stormy winter days it got dark early, and I remember one day when the wind was blowing fiercely causing white caps out across the river and as the rain was pouring down. I was soaking wet and scared because I could hear thunder rumbling across the sky. As I made my way up Cedar Street, darkness began to fall and tears were splashing down my wet face. Then I saw some car lights coming my way, and my Daddy opened the car door and said, "Come on in." The car was warm and cozy and after a minute he said, "I will help you deliver those papers." I put papers on porches on one side of the street and my Daddy put the papers on porches on the other side of the street. We left the heavy canvas paper carrier in the car, and we went very fast up to the end of the paper route.

Sometimes we feel ourselves walking through a dark and stormy place and we wonder how we can ever get through it. Then a light shines: A heavenly light! We feel God's loving arms around us, he says "I will help you." And He does help us. Just as my kind father helped me deliver papers on a stormy evening, my Heavenly Father helps us through the difficult places in our lives. 'Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.' 1st Peter 5:7

Heavenly Father, send your light into the dark places in our lives, where fear and doubt trouble us. Help us to walk in Your light. Amen

Audrey Cameron

December 24, 2022

Redeeming Light

Matthew 5:16 "In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

The Christmas season is a time when light is incorporated in traditions that overcome darkness and create beauty. There are snowflakes lit up on power poles in town and store fronts with brightly lit scenes in display windows to capture our attention. At home we light our rooms with twinkling lights on our Christmas tree and add lights to our house to brighten the neighborhood.

There is a Light that shines no matter the season. I am reminded of that each time I experience the candle lighting service on Christmas Eve. The sanctuary is completely dark, with the exception of the Advent candles. The pastor takes the flame from the Christ candle and shares it with several people in the congregation and the sharing continues until everyone's candle is lit. It is then, with the light is still reproducing but not yet compete that it comes to me why I love Christmas so much.

In a world where it is much easier to say what we are against than what we are for; in a society where the loudest sound we hear is often cynicism, argument, and complaint; on a planet where the sounds of war can be overwhelming, there is a better way. There is a light we can pass on by which we can brighten every human heart we chose to touch and bring healing to every place God's grace directs us to serve.

That is why I am grateful that once the candles are lit and voices sing "Son of God, love's pure light: radiant beams from Thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace..." the congregation leaves the sanctuary, carrying the light that will never fail in a world that can so easily disappoint.

Heavenly Father, please help me live life in a way that reflects the “beams from Thy holy face”. Amen

Nelda Holeman

December 25, 2022

Christmas Morning

Luke 2:1-14

“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.”

A simple story with lift changing results. A simple birth (as much as that can be) to simple parents. Yet announced by angels to the shepherds along with songs and praise. The angels lit up the night sky bright as day but that was only a fraction of the Light of Jesus’ life and love. We have been talking about walking in the Light this Advent season.

Walking in the Light means that we live each day striving to be more like Jesus. The Hope, Peace, Joy and Love that Jesus brings and embodies become who we are more and more. Jesus’ light shines in the darkness and shows us the way forward each day.

My prayer this Christmas morning is that you experience the Light of Jesus in a new and powerful way and that His light shines around you and through you each and every day.

I pray that this Christmas morning will be one that is full of celebration, fun and joy. Remember why we are celebrating and

remember that the birth of Jesus is not just meant for one day, but is to make a difference each and every day of our lives.

“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.”

Peace!

Lord, may the birth of Jesus continue to shine light into and through my life. May I share with others, like shepherds did, what Jesus has done for all of us through Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. Help me not to live in fear but joyful expectation and anticipation of Your coming into the world. Amen.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!!

Darren Anderson

December 26, 2022

Love

1 Timothy 4:12: Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love in faith and in purity.

If we love Jesus, we will love each other. We must follow His great example of love. We can see how he lived in this world and did not conform to it. Jesus was able to do good for all and avoid the evil. The more we act like Jesus the closer He gets to us. What a great example He set!

From youth to adult, we must walk and honor Christ daily. We have a commandment to love everyone. We can only do this when we follow the examples of Jesus.

Father, help me to be your example of love. In Jesus name, amen.

John Dodge

December 27, 2022

The Light of the Cross

*When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."
John 8:12*

When I was in Junior High School there was a very old big white church standing high on a hill overlooking the river in my hometown of Astoria, Oregon. On the front of the church facing the river stood a large white cross that was lit up at night. My father had retired from the full-time ministry at that time and was teaching full time at Knappa High School. A lady from that church asked my dad if he would come and preach for the handful of people who remained in that congregation. He faithfully came for several years to minister on Sundays to that church. I always came along with him and there were several boys my age who faithfully attended every Sunday. Finally, the church was closed down and sadly, it was dismantled. I believe it has been gone for over 70 years.

Ten years ago, some classmates and I were standing below the hill where that church stood and having a memorial service for our class members whose names were written on the "Fishermen's Memorial"

there. One of our classmates had perished in the river and his name was written there. He was one of the boys who had faithfully attended that church. I mentioned the church with the cross on the front and some classmates who were the sons of commercial fishermen who fished with their dads out in the river remembered the cross lighting their way when they were out in the waves on stormy nights.

That church was torn down and I went to see if any sign of it remained after all these years and I believe a nursing home was built on that site. You would never know a church had ever been there! The gillnet fishery and canneries who processed their fish are gone now. The men and boys still living who looked up at that cross to get their bearings in the river, are no longer allowed to fish there.

Changes take place through the years, and those who need a "light" to find their bearings can find comfort in the Savior. "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the Heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." Earthly lights can suffer the ravages of time.

Our lives often involve "shifting shadows". The giver of light does not change.

He is the same, "yesterday, today and tomorrow." Trust Him to direct your path and you will not walk in darkness.

Heavenly Father, direct our paths and help us not to put our hopes on earthly treasures but to have the light of your life living in us and through us. Amen

Audrey Cameron

December 28, 2022

Let Us Walk in the Light

This is what Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem: In the last days the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. Many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the temple of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. Come, descendants of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the Lord. Isaiah 2:1-5

There have been times, while camping, where I have been outside in the middle of the night. Having to be very careful how and where I step, I am grateful for any light to light my way. It is amazing how much more confident I am when I remember to bring my flashlight or when the moon is visible, even a little. Having a light makes a huge difference in how I am able to walk.

I think the same is true for us as we walk in the Light of the Lord. The way in which Isaiah describes this scene of coming to the Temple of God and walking in His ways and paths shows us that as we live by the light of God that is born and shown in Jesus, our lives become different. We no longer focus on the way the world tells us to live, but by a new way of the Light of God.

Peace

Loving God, as we walk each day, may Your light guide us to a new way of living and being. May that light shine for others to see and be drawn to you. Amen.

Darren Anderson

December 29, 2022

The Light at the End of the Tunnel

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 2 Peter, 2:9

We have all heard the phrase:

"Light at the end of the tunnel." There have been poems written about this. It is a hope that after a long period of adversity, the light will be there.

On a trip I frequently take over Highway 26 to the coast I go through a tunnel. This particular tunnel, which I have gone through since I was a baby, once collapsed. A person working on the tunnel (whose name is now given to that tunnel, designated by a sign there) perished at the site. I think of that man often when I go through the tunnel, and, honestly, hope it doesn't collapse on ME.

A poem by Langston Hughes says, "I'll be alright, it will be alright if only there's an ember of light at the end of the tunnel."

For a Christian, the "light at the end of the tunnel" might be our hope of eternal life. As life goes on, there are a number of dark "tunnels" we all go through. A loved one is sick or in an accident. We ourselves get sick or face some other hardship. With a loving

Savior guiding us with His light, there is indeed "light at the end of the tunnel."

Heavenly Father, as we go through "tunnels" where we experience pain or defeat, show us your "light" to lead us out of the darkness into the hope only you can provide for us. Thank you for being a "guiding light" in our lives. Amen

Audrey Cameron