

**2018 ADVENT-URE: JOURNEY INTO THE LIGHT**  
**Second Week of Advent: WAIT FOR THE LIGHT**



## **Wait for the Light**

One by one the candles of Advent are lit.  
Rejoice the light is coming.  
A candle for the hope our patience is rewarded.  
Rejoice the light is coming.  
A candle to mark our journey of faith.  
Rejoice the light is coming.  
A candle to celebrate the joy of Jesus' birth.  
Rejoice the light is here.  
A candle for the peace his light brings.  
Rejoice the light is ours.  
God's promise fulfilled.

**Brenda Hassinger**

## **Wait for the Light**

Psalm 119: 105

The verse for the Wait for the Light Advent theme I selected is for Tuesday: God's Word as Beacon. (I am humming the hymn) Thy word is a lamp until my feet and light unto my path, from the Psalm selection 119: 105 "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path".

I recently waited for God's light to shine for me and on behalf of my family. One of the Bible verses for this season of Advent is from the book of Isaiah—Celebrating Your Roots Isaiah 1 1:1-2. However, the words from Isaiah that became the lamp unto my feet came from the book of Isaiah 43: 2-3. The September issues of Living Lutheran the Bishops message: Fear Not—when you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire... (Look it up, it is definitely worth the read). As I read and reread this verse, I realized God does not want us to view bible passages as magical words of abracadabra, but to daily read passages from the bible as the flashlight for healthy living. God's Word as a Beacon!

Many times the use of light is used to show the presence of God. The aaha moment, the light bulb switching "on" in your mind (ta da) Let there be light. God's light truly can lead us from darkness, if we just take a few minutes, a few times a day and look, feel or close our eyes to see God's life giving light. I recently read in the Word in Season a

quote from Helen Keller “Better to be blind and see with your heart, than have two good eyes and see nothing at all.” When we are worried, it stops us from living in the presence of those around us. Turning, seeking and being open to the light of God enables us to living freely, it’s liberating to let go of worry and turn it over to the wisdom and gentleness of God. It can be scary the path we are following, and sometimes, waiting for the light to shine brightly in our dark moments may seem to take a long time! Wait for the light; we are in the season of Advent, waiting for our lord’s birth. We light a candle to wait for our Messiah, preparing our heads and our hearts.

During the summer, I used my light analogy to be like a lighthouse blinking on/off. Perhaps the patterns of prayer are like that too. We are intentional when we are looking for someone or something. When what God really wants is a regular dose of his children actively and openly seeking the light of God and learning to be habitual and reflective shining for others to see.

**Amy Mason**

### **Wait for the Light**

Growing up, my family spent our summer vacations at Cape Hatteras, North Carolina on the Outer Banks. We stayed at a campsite right next to the tall striped lighthouse there.

Every evening I would sit and watch the beacon go around and round, casting a beam of light far out to sea. I often wondered what it must have looked like for sailors at sea.

I joined the U.S. Coast Guard after high school and on one of our many sailing trips to the Caribbean Sea, took us right past the Outer Banks. When I first saw the beacon from the lighthouse, I thought of all those childhood memories of it.

Like a lighthouse, may the light of our Lord guide your way.

**Bill Byers**

## **Waiting for the Light**

Each day the shadows grow. Morning light comes later and evening creeps in at mid-afternoon.

Each day there is less and less illumination. I am oppressed by the shadows, beaten down by the lack of light.

And so, I light the fireplace... and the candles. I brighten the bulbs in the lamps, turn them on sooner and keep them on longer.

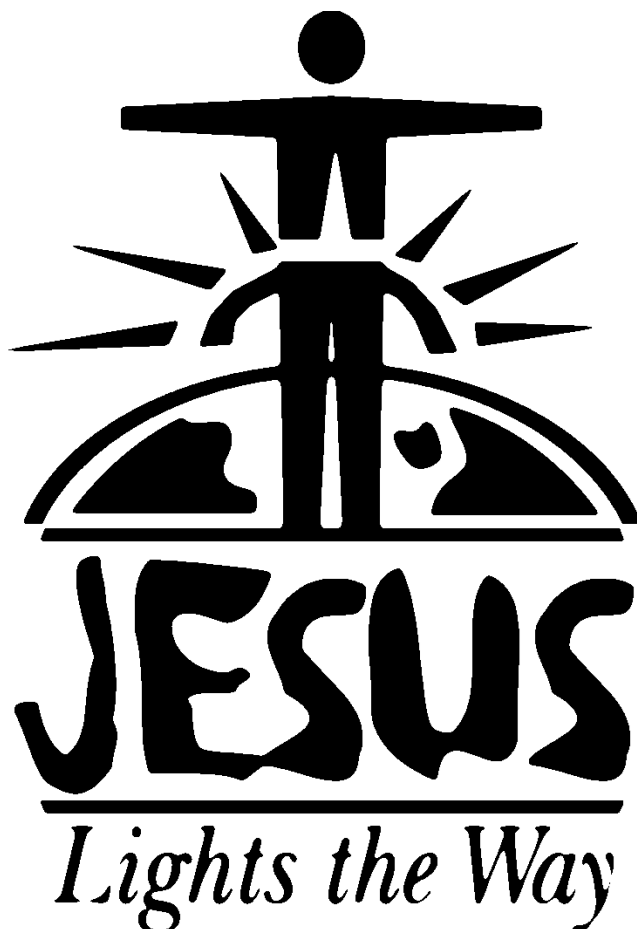
I breathe through the darkness—waiting for the light.

I do not quite despair, for I pray that the holy light will come.

Day by day, I wait to welcome it into my heart and spirit. I hold this time gently and lean my heart toward promised light. Come. Enlighten my heart and spirit with the dawning of the holy light.

Come, Jesus, come.

**Valerie Wills**



Autumn is here. My personal favorite time of the year. The smell of wood burning in the air, smoke laying on rooftops early in the morning, colors all around, warm blankets, giving up ice cream for hot chocolate, the end of baseball, the height of football, the start of basketball and hockey, Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas all make me happy and enjoy this time. I know what comes next, though, and I think it's why so much happens in the fall. Like squirrels and chipmunks, we try to pack as much as possible into our shorter days knowing winter is around the corner. Every day the day shortens, one gets out of bed, it's dark. You drive to work, it's dark. You get home, and it's dark. Throw in those late year, overcast days and it often feels like all we do is wait for the sun to come and light the planet again.

This season also draws us closer to the holidays and into an opportunity to explore our role as the children of God. Even in this we find ourselves waiting. Often for things that make us anxious. The kids, and probably more than a few adults, wait for presents. Some wait for a huge meal to be ready and company to arrive dreading embarrassing moments or all the work to be done. So much to wait on, so much to worry about. Some, far worse off, wait for a warm place to sleep, a meal, contact with estranged family, word from a loved one off fighting or working in a far-off land. Too often, we may even begin to feel that there is little light in our heart and soul, that we have passed some sort of spiritual equinox and the night of our heart is far longer than the light in our heart. It is hard to overcome this. Plenty has been said and written about psychological impacts of holidays, lack of sunlight, lessened activity and other factors in our perception and emotional wellbeing. A lot of this we cannot change. Even if we could tilt the Earth's axis, it would just make Australians mad. A lot of it we can change with perception and faith and the knowledge that the Light of God we wait for will come.

The first, most rock-solid reason for not letting our own darkness engulf us is simple. The very first Christmas gift. Which was first? Gold? Frankincense? Myrrh? It doesn't matter because the first gift has been told to us over and over. Surely most remember a day when you couldn't watch any event on television without the ubiquitous John 3: 16 poster. For God so loved the world our first Christmas gift was His Son. We know He came to us and we know He will come again. He will light our darkness. Believe in the Light, in Jesus, in all the good there is and will be. That's the faith part. Believing the light will come. For the perception change, we must look to ourselves though.

Too easy it is to find ourselves despairing or lamenting difficulties in our lives. As easy is the tendency to want to blame others or circumstances for what befalls us. This creates a spiral further into darkness, deeper into despair. God however gives us another

path, a spiral up which works every time and requires only one's effort. We find, in a broad, general sense, we often have two states in life. One is trials, the other is blessings. Here is our foundation. For God's path to work we must embrace our trials selfishly, and share our blessings selflessly.

Looking at our darkness it does not help to say, "well if only Larry hadn't..." or "If I had more ..." or "Dear God, please make this go away and I will...". These aren't evil or even bad responses. They are human responses that simply reflect our weakness. I promise I do not look down on anyone that says these things. I've said each one myself. What I have learned is that God wants us to handle our business and He is glad to help. My oldest calls once a week from college. Not once has she asked me to do her trig homework. She has asked for ideas on getting rest and dealing with stress. God is not looking to do your trigonometry either. If instead we ask that He gives us wisdom and patience and then use those tools to exam how we found ourselves in the middle of a trial and what tools do we possess to work our way out we can become unmired and work on bettering our lot. That is God sharing His grace and light with us. It also just half of our responsibility.

If we look at a quick, and no doubt poor analogy, we can see how to selflessly share our blessings too. Certainly, it is easy to give the appearance of selflessness. A few dollars in a red kettle, some well wishes on a pretty card, all this is a simple way to share our blessings. That grace God shared with us in selfishly handling our own problems? Let's not forget that is a blessing too. So back to our poor analogy... We are the moon, cold, lost in the dark and alone. Others are the Earth. Sometimes in light, sometimes in dark. God's grace is the sun. Our faith tells us that it is there, even when our perception doesn't allow us to see it. God's grace simply is. Bought and paid for with Jesus' redeeming blood. It is at the store waiting for pickup. He has given us directions. All we have to do is pick it up. I as a moon cannot simply say, "Sun, put me next to you so you may fix everything since this stupid planet is in my way". Selfish right? "Sun, help me learn a way to work as part of this system and do my part," is more selfless. And so, my moon finds itself in an orbit and finds as much of what it needs to do, and what it must do to be part of the solar system. What does this have to do with sharing blessings though?

That moon, nestled in its own darkness, receives the light of the sun. It does not reflect darkness back to the Earth. It reflects light. So, by selfishly embracing our issues and seeking the Lord's guidance we demonstrate to others that even in trials we are blessed and no burden cannot be shouldered and we want to share the love and grace of God.

Our moon will not provide daylight for the planet. It will provide a beacon to those who don't believe in the sun and a reminder to those who do believe that the light is not gone we must find it and reflect it back to others.

The commercialization of Christmas has been around so long and is such a cliché, that saying Christmas isn't about commercialization has become a cliché too. It does not matter. That first gift we all received thousands of years ago cost nothing and is as valuable today as it was then. It cannot be exchanged, it cannot be taken back, it will always fit and will always be the right color and in every way be exactly what you always needed and exactly what you ever wanted. We can consult historians and theologians and many learned persons on the exact birthday of Jesus. The middle of winter on one of the shortest days of the year is perfect though. When better to remind us that we don't have to wait much longer for the light? It has always been there. Own your darkness, reflect the light. Go forth and share it, this reflection of the first, free, true Christmas gift. The Son is here and will light the planet.

**Mike Wachter**



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