

# A Thrill of Hope

*The Weary World Rejoices*



Reflections for the Season of Advent

*A devotional created by and for  
the people of Faith Lutheran Church  
Glen Ellyn, Illinois  
2020*

# Physically Distant, Prayerfully Close

The leaves have changed and fallen. The heavier coats and jackets are out. The sun rises later and sets earlier, leaving us with more and more darkness outside.

These changes signal a shift toward Advent, toward winter, toward the end of the calendar year. One way we acknowledge these changes is by spending more time indoors, less time out and among people.

In this difficult year, we've already been doing that—staying in and staying away—for eight months now.

As Christians, our faith grows, is challenged, is nourished by life *together*. Unable to gather in person, we are finding new ways and rediscovering old, familiar ways to sustain our community life. This Advent devotional booklet is an example of both. On these pages you will find new stories, new testimonies, new God sightings, even in this troublesome year. You will find familiar verses, familiar names, familiar feelings that we all share as we live this life *together*, even when we are apart.

For all the ways we cannot be together as we wish, this devotional is one way we *can*. We pray that in these pages you find yourself drawn into the Spirit's loving embrace, closely connected with your entire family of Faith.

*Pastor Shelly Satran & Pastor Joe Yucha*



Your light sparks hope.  
The weary world rejoices.

*Amen.*

Thursday, November 26, 2020

# This Is Hard

*He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.” (Revelation 14:7 NIV)*

I’m not sure I’m up to this. What day is it anyway? I’m weary and disheartened. I wish I had a relational experience to impart on this page. But in the year of COVID-19, I don’t.

People are living with incredible fear, whether it be fear of illness, loss of job or income, civil unrest, or the current political divide. There is a general lack of trust in political leaders, educators, the media, and the scientific community.

For all the angst I have, none of this really makes much of a difference in my life. Why should I care? Well, I care deeply. We tend to look for our answers from man, and it is clear by now that man is flawed. For all of the rhetoric around “hope,” we keep looking in the wrong place! The gospel is proclaimed to all! Yet, hope in Jesus Christ is missing from public discourse, and Christianity is looked down upon.

But take heart! The sun rose today and I am experiencing the stunning beauty of God’s creation. All glory to God!

*Your light sparks hope.  
The weary world rejoices. Amen!*

# Shared Prayer

*O Shepherd of Israel, lend an ear. (Psalm 80:1 NABRE)*

Sitting by candlelight, I read Psalm 80, then close my eyes. I'm taken back to a day, long ago, that I will never forget.

As first-time visitor to Paris, I climbed the famous Montmartre with its majestic basilica, feeling the exhilaration of standing at the panoramic overlook of the city below, amidst the hustle and bustle characteristic of the mount dedicated to a martyr. They were all there—the balloon man, jugglers, vendors, laughing couples, yelling children, and, of course, the organ grinder with his monkey.

It was overwhelming! Turning away, I saw a refuge: Sacre Coeur, the Basilica of the Sacred Heart! As the large portals closed behind me, I entered a world of darkness, dotted by countless flickering lights. Once my eyes adjusted, a sea of people bent in prayer emerged, their faces lit by the tapers in their hands. Their murmured individual laments blended into a chorus of different languages, none of which I understood. But I *recognized* those prayers.

Even in our time of COVID, we are not unique. Our needs, our fears, and our aspirations are part of our common human condition, as voiced so long ago in the poetry of the Psalms.

*Your light sparks hope.  
The weary world rejoices. Amen!*

Saturday, November 28, 2020

# Signs of Your Coming

*Then, if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Messiah!' Or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. (Matthew 24:23 NRSV)*

Have you ever yearned for someone to come and save you from the noise of the world? I admit I have, many times.

There was a show on Netflix awhile ago, "The Messiah," where the main character was thought either to have godly powers or to be a conman engaging the world in the biggest grift of all time.

I remember watching this ethereal, peaceful, and loving being and so wishing he *was* the returned Messiah. I wanted to feel that warmth and utter joy from just being in his presence. I wanted to follow him, for him to take away the pain and stresses of my daily life.

Well, the series was cancelled, so I guess I will never really know if the character was based on a returned Messiah or if he was just another modern conman.

So, I pray: Fill my heart this Advent season with the assurance that even as we await the coming Christ Child, we know you are embracing us always with your love and peace.

*Your light sparks hope.  
The weary world rejoices. Amen!*



Your light conquers fear.  
The weary world rejoices.

*Amen.*

Monday, November 30, 2020

# Safe and Secure

*Many nations 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.” (Micah 4:2a,b NIV)*

I grew up in the church. My Dad was a Lutheran minister. He made me and my brother feel safe, just like the people felt when they were on Mount Zion, “the mountain of the Lord.” Dad was in charge. He was the provider, the one we went to when we had problems. He knew the answers! We felt loved, secure, safe, no worries. No one could penetrate our family. It felt good! There was a warm glow, a bright light surrounding our family.

As I grew up, I took what I learned from my Dad, and his teachings have helped shape my life and my brother’s life, too. The way that a child is raised matters ... big time! When you’re going through it, you have no idea how your parents help shape you as an individual. Their caring, love, and concern keep the light bright.

My Dad is gone now, but I still see his light, feel his glow, and when I think of him I still feel safe—like I’m on Mount Zion. If I could only go to the Temple of the God of Israel and see my Dad one more time, just talk to him! That would be soooo nice!

*Your light conquers fear.  
The weary world rejoices. Amen!*

# Awaiting a Greater Masterpiece

*Then I heard another voice from heaven say: “Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues ...” (Revelation 18:4 NIV)*

The greatest masterpieces of my youth have all been lost. My greatest artworks were never permanent. Maybe they are my greatest works because they live only as a memory, like that prized fish that gets an inch longer each time you tell the story.

More likely, they are my greatest works because I shared them with loved ones. Driveway chalk murals were rained on, sandcastles washed away, snowmen melted, Lego sets dropped, and pillow forts met Mom’s unwavering resolve for a clean family room at least once each month.

I look back on each childhood masterpiece fondly. I am proud, and I know each had beautiful worth.

So why am I still so resistant to change? Why do I hold on so tightly to the tangible, the mortal, the Earthly? God gave us this beautiful planet to name, populate, explore, and take care of. It is the most beautiful masterpiece we can fathom. Yet we have faith that an even more beautiful and unfathomable masterpiece awaits. While we wait for the Messiah whose sacrifice made that eternal life possible, we can cherish God’s tangible masterpiece, assured of an even more beautiful future ahead.

*Your light conquers fear.  
The weary world rejoices. Amen!*

Wednesday, December 2, 2020

# Important Work to Do

*But be on your guard. Don't let the sharp edge of your expectation get dulled by parties and drinking and shopping. (Luke 21:34 MSG)*

Even with a pandemic, my life is full and busy. With all I do, I joke that I am a failed retiree. I do this to myself, to keep from boredom and despair. In my 70s, my body reminds me that my end approaches. New knees, new hip, hearing aids. My body wearing out.

As I wait, I wonder what important work is left for me to do.

Since being asked to write this Advent devotion, I've started to sit in a dark room with a lit candle. Focusing on the candle, I think of those I've touched and those who've touched me. Remembering the love between us restores my hope. The love of God returns to the center of my life.

I realize I am not alone. With those around me I am with Christ. With this crazy world trying to get my attention, it is easy to be distracted from what is important: faith, family, friends, and community.

As I age, I know the work left for me to do is to bring love into the world.

*Your light conquers fear.  
The weary world rejoices. Amen!*

Thursday, December 3, 2020

# Let It Shine!

*We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers.  
(1 Thessalonians 1:2 NIV)*

My mood matched the gray, damp September morning. The weariness of months in relative isolation, due to Covid, enveloped me with a lingering sadness—a growing despair. Will life ever return to normal? Even a “new normal” seemed better than the endless waiting (for a vaccine) that permeated this season of restless discontent and fragility. How long will this darkness shade every action, thought, and word?

Then, a car pulled up in front of my house and out emerged one of my friends—a person I hadn’t seen for months. Staying socially distanced, we shouted our greetings, virtually hugged, and celebrated the next hour in animated conversation and laughter!

The physical presence of my dear friend pierced my bleak mood with a light that brightened my heart and lifted my spirit. It was a candle in the darkness. Hope was renewed, my spirit reignited.

My friend had carried Christ’s candle to me. This dazzling LIGHT had soaked into my soul and driven out the darkness. I again felt Christ’s presence, thankful for our eternal hope that would never be extinguished.

Who will you share Christ’s light with today?

*Your light conquers fear.  
The weary world rejoices. Amen!*

Friday, December 4, 2020

# Are You an Encourager?

*And they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. (Acts 11:22b-23 NIV)*

Many years ago, I heard a sermon that centered on Barnabas. Barnabas was described as an “encourager.” For example, he encouraged Paul on his missionary journeys, and he gave encouragement to new, struggling groups of Christian churches that were being formed.

Since hearing that sermon, I have often thought about ways we are encouraged and also give encouragement.

Most of us have, at some time, received encouragement from our parents, our teachers, our friends, and even our children. We have often given encouragement to others by a kind word, by a friendly smile, or by being an attentive listener.

Have you ever felt a nudge from the Holy Spirit to call someone and find that they were lonely or needed a sympathetic ear or perhaps they had good news they were happy to share?

In this time of darkness, when we are looking forward to the light of Jesus’ birth, it is great to be an encourager.

*Your light conquers fear.  
The weary world rejoices. Amen!*

# No Place Like Home

*I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. (Ezekiel 36:26 NIV)*

One of my favorite movies is *The Wizard of Oz*. When I was growing up, I would look forward to watching *The Wizard of Oz* when it played annually on the television around Thanksgiving ... because back in the day (technology has aged me quickly), we did not have movies on demand.

I would watch the movie, loving how it started in black and white and then turned colorful once the story landed in this new world. The four main characters go on a dangerous journey in which they encounter many challenges, become sidetracked and have doubts in themselves. However, in the end, the characters discover that they possess a brain, courage, a heart, and a home, and they are celebrated.

Much like the characters in the movie, the Isrealites needed to be reminded of who they were and who God was. God restores God's beloved people and returns them to the land of their forefathers. Even if we stray and stop being true to ourselves, God finds us, restores us, and lights our way home.

*Your light conquers fear.  
The weary world rejoices. Amen!*



Your light shows the way.  
The weary world rejoices.

*Amen.*

# The Good Lord

*I believe I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.  
(Psalm 27:13 NRSV)*

“The good Lord.” My Mother always said that. “The good Lord knows.” “The good Lord sees.” “The good Lord has mercy.” She believed that the good Lord gives good things; that Christ’s light overcomes darkness.

Sunday, December 7, 1941 was “a day that will live in infamy.” Seventy-nine years ago today, the bombing of Pearl Harbor plunged the world into darkness, suffering, and death. As Mom and her three sisters were preparing the family meal, they heard the bulletin over the old Cathedral radio.

They really heard just one word: “war.” Around the table that day were the young men of our family, and they would all go to war. All would survive except my Mom’s brother, Buddy, who was killed on a beach in New Guinea. Dark times indeed.

Today we are enduring the darkness of a pandemic and racial strife. And yet, because of our faith, we can still say “the good Lord.” We believe that we shall see the goodness of the Lord—because of Emmanuel, God with us, who is light, glowing dimly on the horizon, even before the breaking of the dawn.

*Your light shows the way.  
The weary world rejoices. Amen!*

Tuesday, December 8, 2020

# Shall I Fear?

*The LORD is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid? (Psalm 27:1 NIV)*

Fear is not something we often associate with Advent. But right now, this verse from the Psalms strikes a strong chord. Why? It describes my state of mind.

Over the past several months I have often been fearful, and I know many others have too. Our daily news presents endless conflict, violence, civil unrest, but mostly the presence of a deadly virus, the possibility of suffering and dying alone and not seeing loved ones ever again. Much to be fearful of, to be sure.

So what is the link to Advent, and why is this passage relevant? I think of the conditions leading up to the birth of Jesus. Just think: so many sources of fear. The fear of a young virgin told by an angel that she is going to bear a child, of her betrothed on hearing this same news, of traveling so close to the pending birth, of where the child would be born.

So yes; for all the joy engendered by the Christmas story, fear also applies. This Psalm tells us not to fear, a message Joseph and Mary accepted, and one we should keep in our hearts as we forge ahead through unknown territory and begin this holy season.

*Your light shows the way.  
The weary world rejoices. Amen!*

# Christmas Eve

*The Lord is my light and my salvation. (Psalm 27:1a NRSV)*

Worshipping at Faith Lutheran Church is wonderful, anytime. But one of my favorite times is December 24<sup>th</sup>. The Christmas Eve services are magical, filled with the lights and sounds and fellowship of the season.

- The glow from stunning stained glass windows on the sides
- Light coming through the beautiful window in front, backlighting the strong, simple metal cross
- Candlelight from the Advent wreath, dancing in the stillness
- The Christmas tree, decorated with lights, sparkling ornaments, and topped by the shining star of Bethlehem

The lights all frame my favorite sights and sounds, which come from you, the people of Faith.

- Joyous/jubilant/happy/cheerful voices of people all around
- Family members and friends motioning to loved ones
- The excitement of little children
- Familiar faces of all generations

A soft glow begins to spread as Christmas candlelight is passed from one to another. These lights and sounds remind us of the One True Light.

*Your light shows the way.  
The weary world rejoices. Amen!*

Thursday, December 10, 2020

# Patient Faith

*For there is still a vision for the appointed time; it speaks of the end and does not lie. If it seems to tarry, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay. (Habakkuk 2:3 NRSV)*

The prophet Habakkuk, waiting for God to deal with his complaints, could be speaking to us in our day.

It is easy for me to become frustrated as I search for answers. Where is God?

We must be patient and have faith that the Lord will come.

I struggle seeking answers. I become impatient in the midst of the pandemic, civil unrest, racism, fire-ravaged earth, loss of livelihood, political malaise, floods and hurricanes. Some answers come quickly, others may be revealed in what seems like years.

But we are reminded to have faith, “that the righteous live by faith.” In the dark days, as I pray, as we come together in community, I can see a tiny flickering flame, a light. It is a light that becomes ever more steady and leads us on the path, to the light of the world: the birth of the Christ child and the promise of the resurrection.

Let us, Faith family, go forth as the communion of saints—toward the light.

*Your light shows the way.  
The weary world rejoices. Amen!*

# But When?

*His splendor was like a sunrise. The ancient mountains crumbled and the age-old hills collapsed—but he marches on forever. (Habakkuk 3:4a, 6b NIV)*

Hope for a weary world. Has 2020 not provided many reasons for our world to look to our faith for hope? This Bible passage reminds us that amidst crumble and collapse, God marches on, that God is with us to bring sunrise to our darkened nights.

But as we have lived more of 2020 with the pandemic than without it, we can't help ask, "But when?"

When? Oh waiting, so difficult. Ironic that as we enter Advent, by definition the season of waiting, we are in effect given a double dose of waiting. Not only the Advent wait for our Lord, but the COVID wait for a vaccine, a cure, a test result, a paycheck.

Christ's coming is our hope. We look for the light of His splendor with faith. This too we must do amidst the pandemic. We wait with the same hope and faith, knowing Christ *is* with us. He is our Candle who will bring the light we so wearily crave from our dark places.

*Your light shows the way.  
The weary world rejoices. Amen!*

Saturday, December 12, 2020

# What is God's Will?

*Tell me now, which of these two sons did the will of his father? (Matthew 21:31a TPT)*



*Your light shows the way.  
The weary world rejoices. Amen!*



Your light brings peace.  
The weary world rejoices.

*Amen.*

Monday, December 14, 2020

# Enough Armor

*Put on all the armor God gives. (Ephesians 6:11a CEV)*

Growing up, I was a skinny kid, so I didn't identify with Paul's advice here: "Load yourselves up with every piece of weaponry and armor available." Even now, as a physically fit older guy, I couldn't carry around that much spiritual armor yet still hope to win any fight against the monstrous evils of our day. Instead, I try to be like David when he faced Goliath: A slingshot and some smooth stones are enough.

I've been a tai chi student for over 20 years. Primarily helpful for physical well-being, tai chi is also a martial art. It defeats aggression by taking advantage of an opponent's clumsy overuse of strength. I take comfort from that way of thinking about how to defeat evil in these times.

The certain advent of God's coming justice also serves as a light for my life right now. Instead of trying to overcome evil with evil—e.g., mockery, threats, intimidation—I look for the small-but-effective ways I can deflect and defeat greed, hate for immigrants or disregard for people who are poor.

My Advent slingshot and smooth stones include personal letters to politicians, conversations with fearful/angry older adults, and fiercely hopeful blogs.

That's armor enough ...

*Your light brings peace.  
The weary world rejoices. Amen!*

# Light in Darkness

*I pray you, let me inherit a double share of your spirit. (2 Kings 2:9b RSV)*

Light in darkness can be found in the indomitable spirit of a faith-filled person. Peggy's spirit was absolutely blinding!

Peggy was a dear friend of my wife. I got to know her after she was diagnosed with ALS—truly a long, slow descent into darkness.

My wife visited often; I joined when I could. But as Peggy gradually lost her mobility and then her speech, I began to dread seeing her. One night I was particularly gloomy about the prospect of going. Apprehension overwhelmed me as we entered the house. What followed was two hours of delightfully laughing at Peggy's jokes and answering her questions about how *I* was doing. She determinedly "typed" into her computer with her eyes. The experience of being with this amazing person who refused to let ALS snuff out the brilliant light of her spirit was life-changing.

Driving home, my wife sat quietly, saddened knowing there wouldn't be many more visits with her friend. I told her, "Peggy's spirit lit a way for me tonight. I didn't want to go, but I'm so glad I did." My wife smiled.

Peggy passed away in 2019. Her spirit continues to shine brightly in our lives.

*Your light brings peace.  
The weary world rejoices. Amen!*

Wednesday, December 16, 2020

## After Dark

*Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever. (Psalm 125:1 NIV)*

We're gathered on the Schulenberg Prairie at the Morton Arboretum at night. The dark around us seems endless. Not even a firefly glimmers. A white bed sheet is strung up between two poles. We wait, wondering. And wait. And wait.

Trevor snaps on an ultraviolet light behind the sheet. Suddenly, a beautiful marbled green moth appears. Then, a white, lacy flier alights on the sheet. An orange-winged moth joins them. *Cecropia!* shouts Trevor, pointing to a gorgeous cinnamon-colored moth as large as my hand that flutters around the UV bulb. Soon the light has drawn all manner of moths, more than 50 different species by midnight. The darkness had seemed so empty. We needed a light to understand what was there all along.

There is mystery in the darkness we find ourselves in. A call to endure. When I feel shaken, I think of the diversity and loveliness of the moths, always there in the darkness, yet invisible. The light illuminates, draws to itself, helps us understand what otherwise is senseless and empty. And when understanding fails—and we grieve our losses—we can trust that following the light will offer comfort and community.

*Lord, be with me in the darkness. Show me your light.*

*Your light brings peace.  
The weary world rejoices. Amen!*

# Shine the Light with Song

*I will sing of the lovingkindness of the Lord forever. (Psalm 89:1a NASB)*

When I was a youngster my Mother said, “If you feel afraid or downhearted, sing a happy song and you’ll feel better.” As an adult, the happy song I sing at such times is *The Lord’s Prayer*, especially when the world’s worries keep me awake at night or in the day when I’m down in the dumps.

To know the Lord is with us and we are cared for is a blessed comfort. This song always lightens my attitude and helps stop negative thoughts of today’s troubles, which can cause conflicts with friends and loved ones. It’s been a comfort while COVID-19 has me concerned and nervous and as politics have left me confused and disappointed.

Music has always soothed my soul, like a mother’s lullaby. It has opened so many doors to usher me into community.

On my first day at Faith Lutheran Church, I enjoyed singing to the wonderful music. A dear new friend sitting behind me asked me to join the Praise Band. I have felt so welcomed and cared for as a part of the church family. It is my fervent hope that someday soon, God willing, the Earth will be healed and we will be back together, lifting up spirits and lighting the church with a joyful noise.

*Your light brings peace.  
The weary world rejoices. Amen!*

Friday, December 18, 2020

# Worn Out, Burnt Out

*They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like clothing; like a cloak you will roll them up, and like clothing they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will never end.” (Hebrews 1:11-12 NRSV)*

For three whole, consecutive months last year, I faced deadline upon deadline, barely had time to see my family or friends, and just kept doing task after task, unable to afford a break in my hectic schedule. The only breathers I took were for my 30-minute lunch and the sleep I managed to get every night.

I felt like I was turning into a machine; meanwhile, work and stress just kept coming. Exhausted and overwhelmed, I felt like worn-out clothing or a burnt-out candle.

I love control, and I felt like my life was spinning out of my hands. What can you do at times like these, except throw all the chaos, stress, and worries up to God? That takes a lot for me, but I'm learning (especially during this pandemic!) to relinquish the sense of control I *think* I have over my life and trust that it will all work out. After all, God is unwavering, always present, and always guiding.

As we become worn out like clothing or run low on candle wax, God renews and revives us.

*Your light brings peace.  
The weary world rejoices. Amen!*

# Staying Faithful

*Your unfailing love will last forever. Your faithfulness is as enduring as the heavens. (Psalm 89:2 NLT)*

Ethan the Ezrahite sings of the Lord's unfailing love.

In times of hardships and feeling hopeless, we seek comfort, protection, and goodness.

I've watched my family take care of my 95-year-old grandpa during tough times. This has shown me what it means to care for people when they're most vulnerable. I can see what a difference it makes by giving a smile, putting a hand on the shoulder, and being there for someone during hard times.

I am studying to be a nurse. During uncertain times, especially this year, I've had interactions at the hospital where patients are unable to see family members. They feel alone. That is truly a difficult situation to go through, but as a student nurse I was able to care for them by talking to them and being their friend.

I hope to remain strong in faith and create a warm environment for patients—and others—during dark times. To care for and protect them. To be a friend.

*Your light brings peace.  
The weary world rejoices. Amen!*



Your light shines forever.  
The weary world rejoices.

*Amen.*

# Baby Hope

*For he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. (Luke 1:48 NIV)*

My senior year of college wasn't typical. I was over undergrad but unsure what I wanted to do after graduation. My mom had been diagnosed with a rare form of breast cancer. It was a time full of emotions and extra unknowns.

When I came home for Christmas, my little sister told me she was pregnant, adding a new layer of unknown to our lives. After she told me, my mom responded calmly, "In a year, you'll be in a job you love, we'll have a little baby, and I'll be closer to being cancer free."

A glimpse of hope.

Mary probably felt the unknown-ness of what had happened to her. She was suddenly pregnant and unwed, destined to be an outcast, and told that she was raising the Savior of the World. I'm sure she took a minute to sit in that before she sang.

But a child was coming, and what's more fun than being hopeful for baby giggles and little toes and tiny human clothes?

To me, hope looks like my year-and-a-half old niece. She's running, talking, and eating solid food now, a moving reminder that light can continue to be found in the dark.

*Your light shines forever.  
The weary world rejoices. Amen!*

Tuesday, December 22, 2020

# A New Song

*Sing to the Lord a new song. (Psalm 96:1a NIV)*

I like the old songs.

I like kids in the classroom, large family gatherings, a packed sanctuary, hugs, dinner out, in-person meetings, and dozens of other things the way they were.

But 2020 has taught us that we have a new song to sing, as we “sing to the Lord, praise his name.” (*Psalm 96:2*) These lyrics are about the blessings we have, not what we are missing; the little things that make us smile, not the longing for what was.

Instead of feeling disappointed for a masked and socially distant baptism, I feel grateful for pastors who helped make this happen and family who showed up safely. Instead of grieving over my kindergartner’s school day looking different, I feel grateful for teachers who work tirelessly to connect to my child. Instead of lamenting about lack of time with extended family, I feel grateful for forced downtime with immediate family.

I like the old songs. But I’m choosing to find joy in our new song, and I look forward to the song of 2021. “Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad.” (*Psalm 96:11*)

What do the verses of your new song sound like?

*Your light shines forever.  
The weary world rejoices. Amen!*

# Light after Darkness

*... wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. (Romans 13:11-12 NRSV)*

Most mornings I find myself awake in the pre-dawn hours.

I often venture outside into the clear, crisp air and raise my eyes to the heavens searching for the moon and Venus. I am comforted by the majesty of the sight before me. The dawn approaches slowly at first, ushering in pink, purple, and light blue hues. The vision fills me with a sense of awe and wonderment; peace and fulfillment.

Each sunrise brings a new day and a renewed promise. It is my choice what to do with this renewed promise.

I choose faith.

I choose light.

I chose hope.

*Your light shines forever.  
The weary world rejoices. Amen!*

# Waiting for Light

Text and music by Philip Spencer 2020

♩ = 86

Gm                      Ab                      G<sup>7</sup>                      Cm

1. Wait - ing for light to il - lu - mine the  
2. Wait - ing for light, we pray streng-then our  
3. Wait - ing for light, watch for this bea - con

4                      F                      Bb                      Eb

night, Be - hold your re - demp - tion, the  
sight To see a - no-ther's need then  
bright: Sal - va - tion be - comes a Boy who

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*Christmas Eve & Christmas Day, 2020*

7            Ab            Fm            G            C

gift of God's ho - ly Son. Wel-come the light!  
love\_ and heal and feed. Walk in the light!  
brings jus-tice, hope, and joy! Wor-ship the Light!

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# Rejoicing in Shared Hope

Many thanks to the Faith members who answered the call to create and contribute stories and prayerful observations to this devotional booklet:

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## AMEN!



*We have referenced the following scripture versions:*

*CEV - Contemporary English Version*

*MSG - The Message*

*NABRE - New American Bible Revised Edition*

*NASB - New American Standard Bible*

*NIV - New International Version*

*NLT - New Living Translation*

*NRSV - New Revised Standard Version*

*RSV - Revised Standard Version*

*TPT - The Passion Translation*