

The background of the cover features two lit white candles in the foreground, surrounded by green pine branches and several pinecones. The background is a dark, out-of-focus bokeh of warm and cool colors, suggesting a festive holiday atmosphere. The title text is overlaid on this scene.

JOURNEY
INTO THE
Light

Devotions for Advent

SUSAN M. LANG

For God, who said,
“Let light shine
out of darkness,”
has shone in our hearts
to give the light of the
knowledge of the glory
of God in the face
of Jesus Christ.

2 CORINTHIANS 4:6

INTRODUCTION

Listening to or reading the news we may often feel as if we are living in very dark times where fear and hatred prevail. Yet Advent is a time when we are reminded that Christ is present in our lives throughout all seasons and will never desert us.

Take these weeks prior to Christmas to journey into the light of Christ and to celebrate and explore anew your identity as a child of the light, called to be a light-bearer to a world so desperately in need of holy illumination.

The Guiding Light section after each devotion will give you pause for deeper reflection and action to engage in as you traverse the days ahead.

Live in hope, live in love and live in the light of Christ.
Blessings for the journey ahead.

Susan M. Lang, AUTHOR

THE FIRST SUNDAY *of* ADVENT

Children of the Light

For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light—for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true.

EPHESIANS 5:8-9

We have a variety of ways of explaining our identity to others. We might identify what we do for a living, where we are from or our place within our families.

The writer of Ephesians has a focus in mind when speaking about the identity of followers of Christ. As those who once lived in darkness, we are now “children of the light,” transformed by Christ himself.

It is a good reminder to us as we move into a season where North Americans approach the shortest day of the year and darkness increases. Living as “children of the light” calls us to reflect upon who we are and how we journey into the light of service in Christ’s name.

O Christ, help me to reflect your light to all. Amen.

GUIDING LIGHT

Journal about your identity as a child of the light.

With whom can you share your thoughts?

Preparing in the Light

The foolish said to the wise, "Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out." But the wise replied, "No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves."

MATTHEW 25:8-9

How do you prepare your heart and home during the Advent season? My family has an Advent wreath that we light each night beginning on the first Sunday in Advent. It's a simple way to show the progression of the season. By lighting an additional candle each week, we journey into the light together.

The parable of the bridesmaids reminds us that preparation is necessary in life as we look toward the coming of our Lord Jesus. That's part of what this season is all about: Preparation. We are to prepare not only our homes, but our hearts, as we look to the coming of our Lord.

O God, help us to prepare wisely for your coming. Amen.

GUIDING LIGHT

*Create a simple Advent wreath by using four candles
(three purple or blue and one pink for week 3).*

Light an additional candle each week leading up to Christmas.

The Glory of God

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you.

ISAIAH 60:1-2

These words of Isaiah were spoken to the Israelites who had lost their homes and been driven into exile. Now they were returning. While God had always been working on their behalf, these words shine with hope and promise for the future. God's glory will shine on them!

Advent is a time of looking back to prepare for Jesus' birth and a time of looking forward to his promised second coming. We live in those in-between times, waiting, watching and hoping, much as the Israelites had been during their uncertain time away from home. As the children of God, God's light shines on us, too. We live in that same hope and promise.

**O Lord, may I see and experience your glory
in my life every day. Amen.**

GUIDING LIGHT

*Research local ministries to the homeless.
How can you shine God's light to help these ministries?*

Staying Watchful

Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into.

MATTHEW 24:42-43

As we begin the journey into this season of Advent, we are reminded to be watchful and to pay attention to God's activity. This means being alert to God's past activity on behalf of the people of God and being attentive to God's movement in our lives today. It also means getting ready for Christ's promised second coming, which will come when we least expect it—much like a thief in the night.

Advent unites the past, present, and future into a glorious celebration of God's activity in our lives. Be watchful for the signs even as you celebrate.

**Enlighten me, O Lord, so that I might be
ever alert to your advent. Amen.**

GUIDING LIGHT

How can you stay watchful this Advent season?

Walking in God's Light

He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD!

ISAIAH 2:4-5

When I travel, I've always packed a small flashlight to have on hand in case I am stuck in the dark. Now I have a flashlight on my cell phone which is typically close at hand. It's comforting to have a source of illumination if the electricity were to go out, especially in an unfamiliar place.

Thankfully God is our source of light to guide us as we maneuver the familiar and unfamiliar paths of daily living. We, like Israel, are called to walk in God's light. That means living into that future promised in Isaiah as purveyors of peace during Advent and beyond.

O God, illumine my way so I might walk daily in your path. Amen.

GUIDING LIGHT

How can you be God's flashlight to others around you?

Shining the Light of Justice

*I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness,
I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you
as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open
the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from
the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.*

ISAIAH 42:6-7

We're accustomed this time of year to see bell ringers outside of stores, trees in our churches tagged with gift needs, and opportunities to donate food for holiday meals. It's a season that warms the heart and encourages us to share what we have.

Isaiah reminds us that journeying in the light means being advocates for those whose lives are darkened by need or injustice. We are to walk with them and share not only material items but the word that Christ's coming has made a difference for all time. Shine your light in word and in deed so that all may know of God's love.

Lord, help us to shine our lights brightly in service to you. Amen.

GUIDING LIGHT

Select an organization to support that serves the needy.

“The dawn from on high will break upon us,
to give light to those who sit in darkness,”
so Zechariah prophesies in Luke 1.

Author Susan M. Lang invites us to take a daily journey into the light during this Advent season as we explore what it means to be children of the light. Let us prepare our hearts for the coming of the one who transformed our darkness into glorious light.



This book, along with many other *Creative Communications for the Parish* products, is available on [amazonkindle](#) and [nook](#).

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