

# Looking for the Light

a devotional from  
ST. CHARLES AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Wednesday, April 1, 2020

by Julianne Nice

**Read:** *Matthew 22:23-33*

*That same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. "Teacher," they said, "Moses told us that if a man dies without having children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for him. Now there were seven brothers among us. The first one married and died, and since he had no children, he left his wife to his brother. The same thing happened to the second and third brother, right on down to the seventh. Finally, the woman died. Now then, at the resurrection, whose wife will she be of the seven, since all of them were married to her?"*

*Jesus replied, "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. But about the resurrection of the dead—have you not read what God said to you, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' He is not the God of the dead but of the living."*

**Reflect:**

"We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time."

--T.S. Eliot, from "Little Gidding" in *Four Quartets*

My neighborhood is full of wonderful things to see—even in the dark. Since our gym closed a couple of weeks ago, my husband and I have been taking long walks every evening on the new neutral ground sidewalks on Napoleon Avenue, from our house to the river and back.

My experience seems to be different every time I make the circuit. The path is mainly a straight one, but there are occasional curves—and, of course, we often swerve off the sidewalk to avoid being too close to the occasional pedestrians we meet.



I see new things every night—or, actually, things I never noticed before.

There's the American flag in colored lights on the balcony of one house.



St. Stephen's Church (it has a different name now but nobody calls it that) has wonderful lighting on its façade at night. The lighted cross on top of the steeple looks a lot like a dove to me as I walk by.



Across from Tipitina's at Tchoupitoulas Street, there's a light-hearted statue and mini-park dedicated to Professor Longhair that I don't recall seeing before. Has it really been there for years?



Then we head for home, back on the path with occasional swerves to protect ourselves and the other—very few—pedestrians we encounter.

As we get closer to Holy Week, I'm wondering how I can embrace the Christian world's greatest feast day with the backdrop of the global pandemic we are now experiencing.

In recent years, I have been more aware that, at Christmas--the celebration of a birth--we are looking forward to Easter, with its focus on renewal and re-birth. This reminds me of Christmas again. Today's Lectionary reading from the Gospel of Matthew emphasizes that God is a living God, returning again and again to each generation, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob —“not the God of the dead but the living.” Jesus reminds the Sadducees, and us, that God is here, now.

With Holy Week and Easter approaching, I'm thinking about the challenging journey we are all sharing right now. Could it be that the suffering we are now experiencing will end in a rebirth?



**Ask:**

What feelings do you associate with Easter? With Christmas? How are they similar? How are they different?

How does your experience of normal activities and events change with a backdrop of uncertainty and fear? What if the backdrop is love?

**Pray: ([click here for music](#))**

In our special Christmas musical service in 2018, the SCAPC choir presented one of my favorite cantatas for that season: *Hodie*, by British composer Ralph Vaughan Williams. [This link](#) will play for you a section of that cantata that prays for peace most eloquently. The anonymous poet describes enormous implications of the birth of this particular sleeping baby. I hope you will enjoy it as much as I do.

*No sad thought his soul affright,  
Sleep it is that maketh night;  
Let no murmur nor rude wind  
To his slumbers prove unkind:  
But a choir of angels make  
His dreams of heav'n, and let him wake  
To as many joys as can  
In this world befall a man.*

*Promise fills the sky with light,  
Stars and angels dance in flight;  
Joy of heav'n shall now unbind  
Chains of evil from mankind,  
Love and joy their power shall break,  
And for a newborn prince's sake;  
Never since the world began  
Such a light such dark did span.*

*To send us your prayer requests, click on [this link](#) and our church staff and prayer group will add you to our weekly prayer list. You will have the option to specify your request as confidential.*

*If you would like to contribute to our daily devotionals, please email Pastor Sarah, [sarah@scapc.org](mailto:sarah@scapc.org).*

[www.scapc.org](http://www.scapc.org)

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