

As some of you know I am a SAD person. For as long as I can remember I have suffered from Seasonal Affective Disorder and whilst I am lucky to have relatively mild symptoms, which are often described as 'the winter blues' I still benefit from the use of a light box. What this does is help replicate the restorative powers of natural light that is missing at this time of year, and this type of light therapy has proven effective in over 80% of diagnosed cases, and it certainly works for me as does getting out into the daylight when I can.

Light matters to our world, it was the first spoken command at creation "Let there be light," and our world would be a different place if our relationship with the Sun was ever changed.

As Jesus begins to gather disciples Matthew records for us The Sermon on the Mount and Jesus invites those listening, and us today, to consider our role as community "You," he tells us "are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."

So my monthly musing is this: **How, as we enter this New Year, can we keep shining God's light?**

Like costal lighthouses we, as a gathered fellowship, have a role in shining into dark places. To offer a reassuring presence and to be reflecting and refracting our central light: Jesus the light of the world, who invites all into God's radiant presence with warmth and love.

However in order for a light to be seen it must be willing to go where the darkness exists, to engage and walk through it, so that in time, the light can overcome it. No matter how small we may think our own light shines it is enough to bring light to all with whom we share that space with. In each and every act of love, mercy and justice that we undertake we shine God's restorative and unending light a little further than it was before. Light enables us to see things more clearly, and offers energy that helps things like vegetation to grow, some of you may even recall the 2018 All We Can harvest campaign which featured communities in southern Malawi who were able to overcome failed harvests with the introduction of solar powered irrigation facilities which was transforming not only the daily lives of the farmers, but also their children's futures.

Whilst the fireworks of New Year brought a brief light to the dark skies I wonder if you might like to consider leaving your lights up and on until the church calendar brings us to Candlemas (2nd Feb) which marks the moment when Simeon and Anna meet Jesus, the young baby who is being dedicated to the Lord as is the Jewish custom. I know that for many the twelfth night is the traditional time to take down all thing Christmassy but maybe this year most of all we need to be the ones who continue to shine the light of Christ into our homes and into the hearts of others who might ask us why we have not yet packed away Christmas offering us the opportunity to talk about our experience of seeing God's light in our lives today.

On this hilltop, here within the Nene Valley let us commit to being people of light once more, a people of hope in times and places of despair and darkness, let us **Go Light Our World** as we daily look to and follow Jesus our light.



## About The Light

It's always been about the light with you,  
hasn't it, Jesus?

Magi, braving distance and desert to find you,  
and bewildered shepherds, compelled by an angel's invitation,  
allowed light to be their guide,

And it is still the light that calls us to you;  
the light of beauty that whispers its truth  
in surprising ways and places;  
the light of compassion that kneels,  
and washes road-soiled, life-battered feet;  
the light of joy that glows  
even in the darkness of grief and suffering;  
the light that seeks to shine within us,  
and through us into the dark corners of our world.

It's always been about the light with you, Jesus;  
and it's always about the light for us.  
Please lead us, now and always, out of darkness  
and into your marvellous light.

Amen.

— John van de Laar,  
<https://sacredise.com>

*Kim Shorley*

