

# Weekly Prayer for the Gloaming

**December 6, 2020** – “gloaming” is an old-fashioned word for evening; as the sun sets

*‘Round and ‘round the Earth is turning  
Turning always ‘round to morning  
And from morning ‘round to night*



When David and Emma were little, they were given candle holders with little handles. In the winter, when the darkness comes early, I would light their candles in the gloaming (at dusk) and walk around the rooms of a darkening house (before we turned the lights on) singing the meditation above. Later, when they were ready for bed, I would re-light their candles and they would take them to their bedrooms to fall asleep by candlelight. As soon as I knew they were asleep, I would tiptoe in to extinguish the flame. We did this most nights, December through about February for quite a few years – until it, and I, became uncool. Just like the darkness and light, I am “turning ‘round” to being cool again, now that David and Emma are getting older.

To embrace this season, our next series of weekly prayers and meditations will center on the early-coming sacred darkness. As darkness descends, so too may peace. May it be so.

Here is a video of the Seattle Girls Choir singing this week’s meditation:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i706YC82QgU>

(Parenting Tip: let your children learn how to handle fire – let them light the match! The mystery is removed, and good safety lessons shared. This simple meditation... helps children learn how to light and extinguish a match; walk carefully with fire; family singing is amazing for all types of development; is a lesson in the relationship of planet Earth to its Sun; it helps highlight the changes... teaches perception and reflection on the wonders of the natural world; it makes holy a time with family.)

**December 13, 2020** – inspired by the traditional Lucia Day song

*Darkness creeps silent and still,  
Casting shadows on hearth and sill,  
We know light will return in time.  
For now, we embrace the dusk,  
While earth rests and all is hushed,  
Till the bells of morning chime.*

When I was going into 4<sup>th</sup> grade, we moved from CT to Upstate NY. My 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade elementary school teacher, Mrs. Spelich was also the children’s music director for the Scandinavian club we belonged to. She had her own translation of the traditional St. Lucia Day song – not a direct translation, but one that rhymed and told the story so non Swedish speakers

would have a sense of the tradition. During our yearly Scanda Club Lucia Day celebrations (procession, Julbord, market), we always started with the English and moved to the Swedish. Her words are, “Deep night and footsteps fall, through houses large and small. Day’s not yet, born, but see; shadows move quietly. In our dark house shines a light, her candles burning bright. Sancta Lucia, Sancta Lucia.”

Hope to see you on Sunday – for the service AND for the Lucia Day Car Parade!

**December 20, 2020** - inspired by The Great Conjunction

*Steadfast God,  
You send us light in many ways,  
To sparkle at night and light our days.  
Thank you for your tender care,  
Revealed in light for all to share.*

The sun. The moon and planets reflecting the sun. The stars - other galaxy's suns. The Milky Way. Nebula. Meteor showers. There are a lot of things to see and celebrate in the sky. This is often best done at night. Do you remember Reverend Jenny talking about the value of darkness? You just can't see the wonders of the universe in the middle of the day. We know they're out there, but it must be dark to see them. Do you have the "Night Sky" app? Or one like it (Star Map, SkyView, StarWalk)? Check them out - and check out the night sky!

**January 10, 2021** – a post-Solstice prayer

*Divine Spark  
Your light comes creeping back  
Now earlier each day.  
We give thanks for the brightening skies  
To live and work and play.*

On the evening of December 21<sup>st</sup>, FPL celebrated the Winter Solstice with a special worship service (very special; thanks to all involved!). In our region, the Winter Solstice is the day when the sun rises latest and sets earliest – it’s the day with the least amount of sunlight. The shortest day. Before December 21<sup>st</sup>, the days felt like they were getting shorter. After the Solstice, it feels like there is more daylight each day.

At first, it’s hard to notice a change. One way you can help see how the days are lengthening is to put an object out on your lawn, where you can see it from a window. Make sure it’s something that can tolerate being outside and which will stick up through the snow (if/when we get some more). Tape a piece of paper to the window. Set a time each day between 4:30 and 5:30 to look at your object. What is the light like at that time? When you remember to look, write the date on your paper and put a 1 if it’s pretty-dark, 2 if it’s a little dark, 3 if it’s a bit

light, and 4 if it's pretty-light out there (and put a 5 if there's a storm and it's so cloudy it's not fair to measure light and dark). Your paper should move from mostly 1s to all 4s.

**January 17, 2021** – inspired by “Little Women”

*Dear God,  
Something made me angry today.  
I wish for peace of mind, body, and spirit.  
Help me to not let the sun set on my anger.  
I turn my angry thoughts over to your care.  
(deep breath)  
Amen*

I read Little Women by Louisa May Alcott every year at Christmas time. I. Love. That. Book. There are some great lessons to be learned in the examples of the March women and the people who orbit around them. There are also some teachable moments from ideas from so long ago.

Marmee tells Jo not to let the sun set on her anger toward her sister, Amy. Anger is a good and useful thing. It can inspire change. Anger taken to an extreme is destructive. A flash of anger tempered and directed to a more constructive expression of emotion, like passion or drive or focus or creativity, can do wonderful things. Don't let the sun set on your anger. Turn the anger to better and higher purpose. Breathing helps.

**January 24, 2021** – a prayer-blessing to share over your child's head

*Protector God  
Here is my child at the end of a busy day.  
Help her/him/them lay aside worries and cares,  
Set their minds to rest, their hearts at ease, their bodies calmed.  
Help her/him/them seek and find your peace.  
Caring God, we turn our troubles to your care.*

Offering a blessing for/over your child helps model prayer and meditation for them. You don't have to use the one I wrote above... what do you believe? How do you express your faith or beliefs? Modeling how you connect with spirit is important for your children. You are giving them a tool, sharing your beliefs, and showing them a pathway to calm and centering.

New? Feels funny? Try this: as they leave to go do something (school, sport, outdoor adventure), briefly hold your hand over their heads or on their heads and... take an intentional breath and tell them you love them; or say, “blessings on your adventure” or, “peace be upon you”. Start small and build the practice with them, for them.