

November 30

**Exodus 13:21-22 (CEB)**

*The Lord went in front of them during the day in a column of cloud to guide them and at night in a column of lightning to give them light. This way they could travel during the day and at night.<sup>22</sup> The column of cloud during the day and the column of lightning at night never left its place in front of the people.*

God used the forces of nature to guide the Israelite people on their journey. God used clouds by day and lightning to lead them by night. God often uses all of creation to speak to us - God's people. God uses the wind and the water and the sea and storms to communicate with us. The seasons of the year with their waxing and waning temperatures and light. We look to the changing of the seasons to tell the story of God's saving work in the world. In the spring, we look at the new life of blooms and brand new leaves to remind us of the new life given through Jesus' resurrection. At this time of the year, the shortening of days and the lighting of holiday candles and Christmas lights remind us of the need for the birth of Jesus, the light of the world. This is all true for those of us who live in the Northern Hemisphere.

I occasionally stop to remember that our neighbors in the Southern Hemisphere celebrate Lent and Easter in their fall, and Advent and Christmas come in their late spring and early summer. As I think about how the light of the Spring shapes my experience of Easter when I think about the sunrise on each new Easter morning, and I think about how the darkening days of December set the stage for me to welcome the light of Christ at Christmas, I wonder what it is like to celebrate these seasons in the southern hemisphere? How would God speak to us if Easter came in the middle of fall when all of the trees are showing off their brilliance in autumn colors? And what would it be like to celebrate Advent and Christmas as we journey through the summer solstice. Perhaps, we would see the light of Christ in the lengthening of days, in the time when there is more sunlight and less need for candles and extra lights.

However we experience God's work in the world through the wonderful, rich creation, may we see and hear, taste and smell God's presence with us in spring, summer, fall or winter and during all of the seasons in the church year.

~ Rev. Suzanne E. Dornsmith