

Advent Devotional

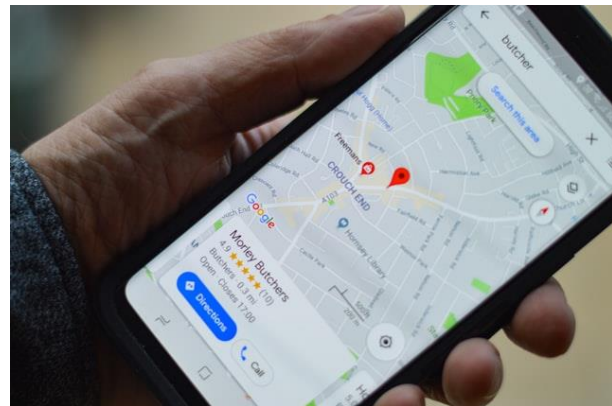
by Rev. Jules Christian

We All Need Direction

Everyone needs direction—in life, in relationships, and practically speaking, in traffic! If you are not from DC and moved here at some point, having a GPS is essential. Driving the city streets isn't like my home in North Carolina where you can circle the block or conveniently and safely stop and ask for directions. Likely you remember writing down directions from Map Quest, before GPS was as simple as downloading an app to your phone.

Shortly after moving to DC, I needed direction and was searching for a spiritual community. I picked a few places and was visiting one each week. Unfortunately, the car I had at the time did not have a working plug for my GPS, so I reverted back to the old school way. With directions in hand I set out to my destination. Even with those handwritten directions, I got confused and missed my exit. I was frustrated and had no way of knowing how to get back on the path to where I was headed. So, I drove until I recognized the highway to lead me home.

After more than five years of living in the DMV, I do a much better job, but I still use the GPS every week. There are many choices out there to help you get where you are going. Personally, I use Waze, and if you haven't tried it, I recommend it. Waze gives directions using live traffic patterns. Not only does it help you find the fastest or preferred way of traveling, it also warns of potholes, hazards and police, helps monitor speeds. It even gives a choice of voices to guide you, such as my current companion, Boy George, who has a cup of tea with me on the drive.



As I think about our theme of Follow the Star, and look back over the pages of Scripture, God has always used GPS-like phenomena to guide

us. God led Israel through the wilderness with a cloud and fire. God used a talking donkey to give direction to a wayward prophet. God used an angel to send word to Mary of her destiny, and used dreams to comfort, confirm and caution many in the Christmas story. And yes, God used the Star!

Imagine seeing the light, moving towards something you had been waiting for and finally reaching your journey! I often wonder about what those brave souls learned as they followed the star and if they too experienced the star recalculating because of a wrong turn. I also wonder who else saw the star, talked about the star, or even followed the star that we don't know about.

God sent the star for all who would see, but only those who were seeking found direction. God is still speaking today! God is still using "Stars" all around us to guide us. Although that church I missed that week years ago turned out not to be the one for me, God certainly used many stars to guide me to this spiritual community.

What about you?

- Can you identify the stars that God has sent in your life to help guide you?
- In what areas or situations in your life do you need direction? Try and be specific and think about it or even write out your thoughts and feelings.
- Spend some time in prayer and worship with what you have reflected on.