

Advent Candle Litany

Advent 1

In the beginning, there was chaos. There were troubled dreams, uncertain sounds, and fear in the darkness. Then, when the chaos was most threatening, when uncertainty seemed the only certain thing, the cup seemed perpetually half empty, and the light at the end of the tunnel turned out to be just our imagination, God said, "Let there be light."

And there was Hope.

[light first Advent candle]

The light of Hope lifts our eyes and calls us forward in Advent. To our uncertain and timid world, it proclaims brazenly that there is a tomorrow. It asserts that hope for the future is not to be found in improved financial portfolios or better self-affirmation. The candle of hope reminds us that there is something to cling to:

God is and God will.

Advent 2

In the beginning, there was the chaos of trouble and fear. Then, when uncertainty seemed the only certain thing, and the light at the end of the tunnel turned out to be just our imagination, God said, "Let there be light."

And there was Hope.

[light first Advent candle]

In the course of time people became agitated. There were uncertain intentions, hostile actions, conflicting motives, restless hearts, and everywhere busy-ness and noise. Then, when the agitation was at its height, when it seemed that conflict was everywhere and the noise was unbearable, God said, "Let there be light."

And there was Peace.

[light the second Advent candle]

The light of peace is in the midst of Advent. In a world where the fragmentation of pieces is more frequent than the wholeness of peace, and hostility or clatter seem to fill every waking moment, this candle brings us again to the longing of our hearts - to our God who says:

"Be still and know Peace."

Advent 3

In the beginning, there was the chaos of trouble and fear. Then, when uncertainty seemed the only certain thing, and the light at the end of the tunnel turned out to be just our imagination, God said, "Let there be light."

And there was Hope.

[light first Advent candle]

In the course of time people became agitated, and there was no space for quietness. Then, when the agitation was at its height, when it seemed that conflict and noise was everywhere God said, "Let there be light."

And there was Peace.

[light second Advent candle]

By this time people had learned not to care. They became skilled at loving ice cream, but not other people. Love had turned to hatred, to lust, to infatuation. There was animosity and rejection, hero-worship and self-hate. Then, when hate and apathy seemed to rule the hearts of people, and lust and control were confused with genuine relationships, God said, "Let there be light."

And there was Love.

[light third Advent candle]

The light of love calls our hearts into life during Advent. To a world which struggles to love, it declares that the power of love is greater than the love of power. This candle speaks a protest against the falseness of lust, infatuation, and power games in relationships. It pronounces that we cannot go on living with hatred, animosity or ambivalence toward each other. The candle of love blazes with the words:

God so loved the world that he gave, and gave, and gave.

Advent 4

In the beginning, there was the chaos of trouble and fear. Then, when uncertainty seemed the only certain thing, and the light at the end of the tunnel turned out to be just our imagination, God said, "Let there be light."

And there was Hope.

[light first Advent candle]

In the course of time people became agitated, and there was no space for quietness. Then, when the agitation was at its height, when it seemed that conflict and noise was everywhere God said, "Let there be light."

And there was Peace.

[light second Advent candle]

By this time people had learned not to care. Love had turned to hatred, to lust, or to infatuation. Then, when hate and apathy seemed to rule the hearts of people, and lust and control were confused with genuine relationships, God said, "Let there be light."

And there was Love.

[light third Advent candle]

And so it was that people forgot how to laugh. There was gloom of deep sadness and fear. Happiness was pursued in the accumulation of things as people paid to be happy. And the words “joy” and “contentment” were replaced with “Me!” and “Mine!” Then, when smiles seemed to have been forgotten, frowns and scowls seemed a normal dress accessory and the shadows of gloom were almost tangible, God said, “Let there be light.”

And there was Joy.

[light the fourth Advent candle]

The light of Joy tickles our hearts in Advent. This candle is the “party candle” of Advent. In the light of Joy, faces are lit with gladness, frowns and scowls are left at the door, and the eye's of “me!” flicker with a renewed wonder found in “us”. In its light, we learn again to delight in simple things – a smile on the face of a stranger, the sparkle in a friend's eye, the birth of a baby, the song of a mother at night, and the echo of an angel's voice.

When all around would declare “Joy to ME!”, the candle of Joy sparkles with:

Joy to the World!