

The Christ Candle: (The Bob and Helen Smith family)

Prayer

Father God, we thank you for providing a way of salvation by sending your only Son, the spotless lamb, to take away our sins and the sin of the world

Today, as we celebrate the birth of Jesus, fill our hearts with the joy and hope that comes from accepting the precious gift of your son as our personal savior.

Help us to come to a fuller realization of all that you have given us and fill our hearts with love so that when all the holidays are over, we will continue to radiate the Light of Christ every day, in all that we do and in all that we say.

In Jesus' precious name we pray, Amen.

Introduction

The white candle reminds us that Jesus is the spotless lamb of God, sent to wash away our sins. His birth was for his death, his death was for our birth.

Scripture: John 1:29

The Next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

Bob and Helen's story

As we light the Christ Candle Helen and I are reminded that we have always been guided by God. We ask him first, and then He tells us what to do. One of the greatest suggestions he made was for us to get married. We married on the 20th of Dec. 1952. We were a Christmas present to each other! And that event began many others which stand out as beacons in our lives.

We remember medical school, and then the military as an Airforce Flight Surgeon moving from San Antonio to Spokane and then to Pittsburg.

We remember thinking we would never live in the south and then we vacationed in Banner Elk.

We remember the births of each of our dear children Ruthie, Paul, Steve, Mark and Rebekah.

We remember the years when Helen saw the need for a kindergarten in Banner Elk and taught many of the area children.

We remember Jeannie, a little girl from Grandfather Home. Jeannie used to come to our home to visit with our daughter Rebecca. When we were building our new house, our children loved to stand in the hall and talk about which room they would occupy once the house was finished. But when they did this, Jeannie cried because she would not have a room. God guided us to adopt Jeannie as our own.

We remember the day I was coming up the hill and --- as a doctor --- I knew I was having a heart attack. My brave wife drove me to the hospital and I remember the comforting face of Bill Tate. And I also remember a great light that told me I was going to be ok

Today our family will gather at our house, move into our traditional circle and pray. And we will be reminded of all these things and how the love that Helen and I have shared for 63 years has expanded into an astounding and wonderful family of men and women who think deeply about our world, are servants in the community and are faithful to God.

And God is faithful to us. The light that He sheds on our path is true, and as the Smith family gathers in our circle we shall remember the candle lit here today and be reminded that it shines for all of us. The light of Christ is here. It has illuminated our family's journeys for over sixty years and we celebrate tonight with thanksgiving. Thanksgiving for what He has done for our family. Thanksgiving for what he has done for you.