

FIRST CANDLE: Anticipation and Hope – Debbi Hagna and Cari Ashbaugh

Prayer

Dear Father in Heaven. Prepare our anticipating hearts for the hope, peace, joy and love that you have given us through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

Lighting the candle

As we light the candle of anticipation we are reminded of what is to come; great joy. We sometimes confuse the anticipation of Christmas with material trappings of life, but if we listen to closely to our Lord, we know that our joy truly comes in the birth of Jesus Christ and in the joyous moments of our lives that fulfil our anticipation. Joy is the result of the great moments God has given to us, and our anticipation and hope make it all the more beautiful.

Scripture: Romans 15: 12-13

And again, Isaiah says, 'The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; the Gentiles will hope in him.' May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Debbi's story

Joy is a gift God that shines through us and it is our Salvation given to us by Jesus Christ. I have so many joys in my life; friends, church --- but what comes to mind first is my family. I am blessed to still have my 88 year old mother who is in remarkably good health and has taught me what it is to be a good Christian. But my most memorable JOY occurred in July of 1986 when my son Will was born.

I'll always need my son, no matter what age I am. My son has made me laugh, made me proud, made me cry, seen me cry, hugged me tight, seen me fall and cheered me up. He is a joyful promise that I will have a friend forever! "Joy" is the settled assurance that god is in control of all the details of my life; the quiet confidence that ultimately everything is going to be all right and the determined choice to praise God in every situation.