

The Fourth Candle – Love (Bill and Donna Dicks)

Prayer

Our heavenly Father, show us ways in which we can share your love and the gift of Your Son in our hurting world. Give us grace to reach out to those who are difficult to love. Give us joy to embrace those who are easy to love. Help us always to remember that You are our God and that Your love is unending. In Christ's name we pray, amen.

Introduction

Today, we relight the candle of joy, the candle of hope and the candle of peace. We now light the candle of love which reminds us of the great love of God.

Scripture: John 3:16-17

For God so loved the world that he gave His only Son, that whosoever believes in Him, shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.

Donna and Bill's story

At Christmas, we are brought to the heart of the gospel by remembering that God, in infinite love, sent His son, Jesus Christ, as our gift of salvation. Because of this miraculous act, we can reflect on how we love and are loved by our dear families and friends, our co-workers and bosses, the members of our congregation, and those in this community who help to make people's lives better. Because of God's great gift, we are also called to love those who are different from us in skin color, language, economic status, culture and beliefs.

Many of you know that Bill and I feel blessed by our work with international students at Lees-McRae College over the past ten years. Our love and concern for the "stranger in our midst" led us to experiences and relationships we never could have imagined. Because of our many blessings, we felt compelled to share our home and hearts with these amazing young people from regions of the world which have limited views of Christian faith in action. Our time together continues to reinforce our belief that most people are more alike than different. We all ache for unconditional love and peace.

Therefore, at this season of the year, let us focus on sharing the love that God has poured out on us. We must reach out in love to people who are marginalized or forgotten. We want to love those who seem to care only for themselves. We strive to love the "unlovable" because that is what God has done for us.