

Advent 2017

Week three

Tuesday, December 19

Witness to the Light

Prayers for candle-lighting

The true light, which enlightens everyone, is coming into the world.

[Light three candles]

*I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
my whole being shall exult in my God.*

The true light, which enlightens everyone, is coming into the world.

John 1:6-9

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

Interpretation

Because we live at a time and place in history when electric lights are ubiquitous, there are very few times when we are truly in darkness. But even so, most of us know how confusing it can be to try to make our way through a darkened hallway or room, even a familiar one. And most of us have probably lived long enough to have spent some time in metaphorical darkness, a time when we weren't sure how to move forward in our lives, or how to move toward the light.

- In the very simplest way, the Gospel of John is teaching us to understand Christ as our light, a candle in the darkness, the light that helps us to find our way.
- John the Baptist points to Jesus as the *true light*, the embodiment of God's wisdom, the same bright wisdom by which the whole creation came into being.
- In every gesture and action, Jesus showed us what God's wisdom looks like, at human-scale.
- And then the Gospel goes on to say that, "the true light, *which enlightens everyone*, was coming into the world."
- For the light of Christ is not only outside of us, but for those of us who have joined our lives to his, Christ is also shining forth from among us and within us.
- Christ enlightens us, guiding us by his own patterns of life, so that when we seek for wisdom we may find it and live it.

Reflection

If you have an Advent wreath and are lighting the candles each day, choose at least one day when you will light the candles when it is otherwise dark in the room. Pay particular attention this week to the flaring up of the light in the darkness. Light cannot help but share itself, just as Jesus could not help but share the light of God that was within him.

As you go about your tasks today, pay attention to people who radiate the light of Christ to you. Are there also times when you are aware that the light of Christ shines out from you to someone else? How does this light help to guide you toward what is most true?