There is in each of us something that responds to a candle burning, and especially so in the dark of a winter night. Whether we come from a religious tradition or not, the act of lighting a candle somehow gives us pleasure, restores us to ourselves, gives us relief and hope. Where all was dark, now there glows and shimmers a little flame. And that flame becomes a symbol of all we hope for, all we long for with all our hearts — health and joy for those we love, food and shelter for those among us who are without, comfort for those who suffer, justice for the oppressed and the coming of peace in a world laboring with the heaviness of conflict.

As we light our candles together, may each of us be filled with the light they bring, and may we reach out to one another in joyful resolve to live into our hopes each day.