



The Advent Season

The English word, “Advent”, stems from the Latin word, “Adventus”, meaning “coming” or “arrival”. This word has therefore been applied for centuries to the season of the year when Christians prepare to celebrate the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ – His Nativity, His birth at Christmas. Advent marks the beginning of the Liturgical Year, and spans the four weeks before Christmas.

Traditionally, the Church has taught that Advent is a season of preparation. This preparation means a review of one’s life, achieving a fresh sense of one’s sins and mistakes and shortcomings, and stimulating in one’s self a fresh desire for forgiveness and a new start.

Advent is a time of joy in looking to the approaching celebration of Christ’s birth. Through Christ, God came among us in human form. This great sign of God’s love and grace should make us joyful and thankful.

The Advent wreath is usually made of evergreen boughs, symbolizing everlasting life. The circle represents the continuous love of God, with no beginning and no end, as well as the soul's immortality.

Each of the four colored candles in the Advent wreath represents a week leading to Christmas. Traditionally, three of the candles are purple, and one is pink. The final candle is white and is located in the center of the wreath. It is lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

The Advent Candles

The first purple candle is lit on the First Sunday in Advent and is sometimes called the candle of prophecy because it symbolizes the promises the prophets delivered as messages from God; promises that foretold Christ’s birth. It is also considered to be a symbol of the hope we have in Christ and so it is also called the Hope candle

The second purple candle, lit on the Second Sunday of Advent, shows that Christ is the Way. Christians are lost in sin and Christ is the Light sent into the world to show them the way out of darkness.

The Third candle, a pink candle which is lit on the Third Sunday in Advent indicates that the only lasting joy to be found in life on earth is through Christ.

The fourth candle, lit on the Fourth Sunday in Advent, is a purple candle which reminds that Jesus comes to bring peace to both the world and to people's hearts.

The fifth candle, a white candle which is traditionally lit on Christmas Eve, represents Christ himself who is born to save people from their sins. It is a celebration of the fulfillment of prophecy as represented in Christ's birth and hope in the final fulfillment when Christ comes again and Christians join him.

The progression of the season may also be marked with the tradition of the Advent calendar which is used to count or celebrate the days of Advent in anticipation of Christmas.

Liturgical colours used during Advent are either purple or blue.