

All About Advent

Advent is a time of expectation and hope. The word, Advent, comes from the Latin word *adventus*, which means "coming." Advent ushers in the beginning of the Christian year, offering us a time to prepare for the coming of the Messiah. The season proclaims Christ's anticipated coming again, as well as the coming of Christ as the infant Savior whose birth we celebrate at Christmas. The color for Advent has traditionally been purple and can still be used. Churches also use blue for Advent, the color of hope.

Advent marks the beginning of the church year. It begins with the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day and ends Christmas Eve. This year, Advent begins on November 29.

The Advent Wreath

The wreath and candles are full of symbolism. The wreath itself, can be made of various evergreens, signifying continuous life. The circle of the wreath, which has no beginning or end, symbolizes the eternity of God, the immortality of the soul, and the everlasting life we find in Christ.

Advent candles shine brightly in the midst of darkness, symbolizing and reminding us that Jesus came as Light into our dark world. A new candle is lit on each of the four Sundays before Christmas. Each candle represents something different- typically hope, peace, joy (usually pink) and love. It has become customary to have a larger white candle in the center of the Advent wreath. This is often called the "Christ candle" and is lit at Christmas Eve services and on Christmas Day.

Wreaths made at home can be made with whatever you have on hand. The color of the candles or whether you have a wreath or not is not important. The important part of lighting an Advent wreath is to take time out for a devotion and a short prayer.

