ADVENT WREATH

Sunday, November 29, marks the season of Advent which is the beginning of the Christian year. The word Advent is derived from the Latin *adventus … something is coming.* Advent is observed at Bruton Parish as our "quiet time" as we await the coming of Christ. There are no flowers on the altar, just the natural greens and berries found in the woods or in the gardens of our parishioners.

Each year the Flower Guild creates the Advent wreath in the church, which has five white candles. One candle is lit each Sunday for the four Sundays in Advent and the fifth candle in the center is lit Christmas Eve. There were no candles on the 18th century holy table and did not appear until the 1840's.

Household candles were important to everyday life and precious given the process of gathering beeswax or melting fat/tallow and the dipping process. The most precious were white which came from spermaceti whale oil and was expensive. Only the finest white candles were used in the church. The herbs used in the wreath come from our own Biblical Garden at the Parish House and from gardens of parishioners.

This year, Kitty Burgwyn, Jeanette Martino, Joan Williams, and Melinda Fitzgerald are creating the wreath which will remain in the church until Epiphany. Thank you to Anne Conkling, who contributed to this information.

The herbs used in the wreath hold special significance:

Lamb's Ear – Used as a symbol of Christ based on John 1:29

Lavender – Represents purity and virtue and beloved by Mary

Marjoram – Referred to as hyssop in the Bible and was used to mark doors during the first Passover

Rose Hips – Long used for medicinal purposes

Rosemary – Remembrance. In legend, the herb that changed its flower from white to blue in Mary's honor. Used for centuries to garland churches and on feast days

Roses – The symbol of chasteness and fertility, this flower is dedicated to Mary. They also symbolized the birth of Jesus as foretold in a 16th century hymn

Rue – Known as the herb of grace and repentance

Sage – The herb of immortality

The Advent Wreath – The shape represents eternal life, for in a circle, there is no beginning and no end