



Advent

Advent comes from the Latin word meaning “**to come,**” or **coming**. It begins on the 4th Sunday preceding Christmas and ends on Christmas Day. It marks the beginning of the church year.

Advent is a time of **preparation and expectation** as we celebrate the coming of Christ – as he came to earth the first time as babe in a manger and as he will come again as the King of Kings.

The **Advent Wreath**, like those we made tonight, was first used by **Protestants in Germany** as a focus for Advent devotions. Each part of the wreath has special meaning.

- The circle represents God’s love that never ends and God’s presence with us always.
- The evergreen symbolizes the hope of eternal life.
- The three purple/blue candles and the one pink candle represent the four weeks of advent.
- The white candle represents Christ as the light that shines in the darkness.
- The color purple/blue represents a time of preparation.
- The color pink (lit during the third week) is the color of joy.
- The color white represents purity.

One candle is lit each Sunday during Advent until all the Candles are lit. As the new candle is lit the ones from the previous week are relit. The Christ candle is lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

The **symbolism of the candles varies** among Protestant traditions. Sometime the candles stand for words that help us understand the season of Advent better: wait, prepare, hope, joy or love. Sometimes the candles are aspects of the Nativity that help us hear the familiar story in a new way: prophets, Bethlehem, shepherds and angels. No matter what names we give the candles each year, the purpose is the same: to prepare our hearts, minds and lives for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.