

**Advent is a holy season in the Christian calendar.** It is the beginning of the Church Year and the liturgical calendar. It is a very special time, as Christians wait and prepare for the coming of our Lord Jesus, whose birth we celebrate on Christmas. While Santa Claus' arrival is a big, big event in our modern culture, we must that remember Jesus' birth on earth is much bigger, and the real cause for Christmas, for God chose to become Man.

In the early days of the Church, Advent was a time of prayer and confession. Today, Advent is more a time of preparation and expectation of the coming of the Lord.

**The Advent Wreath** is an important symbol of Advent of the season. It usually sits on the dinner table and is a constant reminder of the holy season. The wreath is of German origin and consists for **an evergreen wreath**, and four Advent candles. **Three candles are Purple (or Blue) and one is Pink.**

**The lighting tradition**– On the fourth Sunday before Christmas (the first Sunday of Advent), the first Advent candle is lit at dinner and a short prayer is said. The first candle is lit each night along with a short prayer. On the second Sunday of Advent, a second purple/blue candle is lit. On the third Sunday the pink candle is lit. Finally on the fourth Sunday of Advent, just a few days before the birth of Christ, the final purple/blue candle is lit.

### **The Advent Wreath's Meaning:**

The wreath is made of evergreen, either real or artificial. It's circular shape represents eternity, for it has no beginning and no end. The evergreen was chosen as it symbolized growth and everlasting life.

There are **four candles**, three: purple/blue and one pink. They represent the four weeks of preparation. As another candle is lit each week, we are reminded of the growing light of Christ's presence. [You may use real candles or tea lights]

**First Purple or Blue candle:** represents **HOPE**.

**Second Purple or Blue Candle:** stands for **LOVE**.

**Third, Pink candle:** represents **JOY**.

**Fourth purple or Blue candle:** is a symbol of **PEACE**.

**A WHITE Candle may be placed in the Center of the Wreath at Christmas, this is called: "the Christ Candle."**

## *Prayers for Advent*

Each week as you and your family light the candle & recite the short prayer.

### **Week 1, Hope**

“Dear Jesus, you are the hope in our messy world. This Advent, help us slow down, listen to your voice, and focus on what’s really important. We place our hope in you as we prepare our hearts to celebrate your birth on Christmas.” *Amen.*

### **Week 2, Love**

“Dear Jesus, may the light of your love always shine in our hearts. As Christmas draws closer, we marvel at your great love for us. Let your love transform every aspect of our lives and touch everyone we encounter. Our hearts are open to you, Jesus.” *Amen.*

### **Week 3, Joy**

“Dear Jesus, help us focus on you during this busy season. May we stay aware of the joy you bring into our lives. We want to find you in the everyday moments and come with hearts of gratitude to your manger on Christmas.” *Amen.*

### **Week 4, Peace**

“Dear Jesus, you entered our world on Christmas as the Prince of Peace. This Advent, as we strive to become the-best-version-of-ourselves, fill us with a deep and abiding peace. Help us share that peace with everyone we encounter, especially those who need it most.” *Amen.*