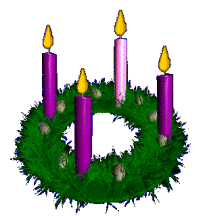
**The Advent Wreath: What do those candles mean?**

The Advent wreath was originally a German and Scandinavian home devotional practice used to mark the four weeks of Advent. Many other ideas have been attributed to it. But, it was intended as a way to mark the Advent season and the weeks leading up to Christmas.

Families would light a candle for each week that had passed and one for the current week. This was done at dinner or evening prayer time.

The configuration of the candles, whether in a straight line or a circle, did not matter. The colors of the candles did not matter either.

What DID matter was the marking of time and the increase of light each week in the face of ever increasing darkness as the Winter Solstice approached.

In the late 19th century some congregations in both Europe and America began the use of Advent wreaths. Adaptations were required for larger worship spaces. The candles needed to be larger and more specialized than the “daily candles” handmade or purchased for home use. They also needed to be more uniform in color to fit in with the décor of sanctuaries. Purple (and more recently blue) has become the basic color of the candles. This was done to co-ordinate with paraments and vestments of the season.

As Advent wreaths changed from private use to the more symbolic context of public worship, it became more important for the candles to have meaning rather than to simply mark time and add light so ceremonies developed around the lighting of teach week’s candle.

As in all things, the church supply houses that sold the special candles and wreaths needed to embellish the custom. It became the practice to ascribe a particular meaning to each candle. Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace became popular concepts. These would be scripturally based, corresponding to the lectionaries used at the time.

But, Advent is far more broad and much deeper than any one-word theme can capture for the Christian.

Today we still draw meaning from the original home use.

Time is marked and the light increases.

Advent, the first season of the Christian year is all about time.

We await the day described in Revelation 21:23 when “The city doesn’t need the sun or the moon to shine on it, because God’s glory is its light, and the lamp is the Lamb.”

In Christmas we celebrate that in Christ’s reality, “The true light that shines on all people was coming into the world.” (John 1:9)

Sometimes it is good to take a moment and look at where our Christian symbols and practices have their origins.

But our Christian faith is not dependent upon doing the “right” cultural things.

Our confidence in what Jesus Christ is and what he shared with us embodies those concepts of Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace.

I wish them for each of you who appreciate the simplicity and depth of this Advent/Christmas Season. God bless us all, Pastor Veronica

**Upcoming Events**

* **December 1 is the first Sunday of Advent** We will have a tree to decorate, and the lighting of the first Advent candle. And the waiting begins…
* **December 12th Thursday 5:30 to 7 pm Community Supper -** Bring a friend or yourself, and enjoy your community! Don’t let food sensitivities keep you home – Each community supper has a gluten-free, dairy-free, and nut-free entrée for our special guests. Bring something canned or boxed for our local food pantry at St Vincent De Paul, and put it in the bin near our side entrance—and thank you.
* **December 14th  3:30pm Nashua Soup Kitchen** Meet in the church parking lot at 3:30 for carpooling to Nashua. We are usually back by 6:30 or 7pm. Share your love and energy in this outreach mission of our community. Contact Kathy Chapman, [chapman.kathy@gmail.com](mailto:chapman.kathy@gmail.com) or 878-4993 if you plan to go or need information. We welcome members of the community in this service mission.
* **December 14th 6:30 pm.** (yes, it’s the second week, not the third this Dec) Living Room Coffee House. Sign up for open mic, for music, or poetry reading, share in the food offerings before the music starts at 7 pmCoyote Bleux is a NH based duo performing original acoustic music featuring strong vocals, harmony and two guitars. Coyote Bleux consists of Richard Chisholm from Sharon NH and Kip Ferguson from Hollis NH. They have been writing songs together for many years. Their most recent CD “Into the Light” is a culmination of their shared experience and dedication to the craft of songwriting. More info is available at their website [www.coyotebleux.com](http://www.coyotebleux.com/) <https://thelivingroomcoffeehouse.wordpress.com/>
* **December 24th Christmas Eve service** 7pm Join in the lessons and carols as we tell the story. Bring friends, all are welcome. We look forward to the circle of lighted candles at the end of the service as we sing Silent Night.

**Community Volunteer Transportation Company (CVTC) is in your neighborhood! Call: get a ride or get information about volunteering to be a driver.** (877) 428-2882 **Just an hour or two of your time per week, or even per month, can make a big difference in a person's life.** When you volunteer to be a driver for CVTC — taking neighbors to nonemergency medical or social service appointments, the grocery store, banking, or pharmacy — you increase the health of the entire region, one person at a time. Volunteer drivers donate their time, at their availability, and can choose to be compensated for their mileage.

Community Volunteer Transportation Co. is a nonprofit providing no-fee rides for individuals without access to transportation due to age, ability, income, and/or life circumstance.

To give or get a ride, visit [cvtc-nh.org](http://cvtc-nh.org/) or call 1-877-428-2882, for more information. Thank you!

 **Remember our church family in your prayers, and in person with a visit, a call, or a card. Loneliness can be relieved, at least temporarily, and price of this “gift” is mostly free!**

* **Halbrooks family** is moving to Jaffrey! They have purchased a larger house with an in-law apartment so Beth’s mother and father can join them. They won’t be moving til mid-January, but we already miss them, just thinking about the move.
* **Curt Dunn** Curt is at the rehab center Courville, 44 West Webster Street in Manchester. Although he has trouble reading, he still loves cards, but of course, enjoys calls and visits even more. As with his many neighbors in Courville, his health is fragile, so don’t bring any germs with you! Courville phone is 647-5900
* **New this year**, Lisa and Brian Charbonneau, 130 Jeds Lane, Mason, NH 03048 878-1502. Welcome to Mason Church!
* **Susan and Jim Suokko** have moved to Leominster, MA. Their new address is: 50 Brooks Pond Rd, Apt 104, Leominster, MA 01453. Packing and unpacking is no one’s favorite activity, but settling in to a new place is something they have been looking forward to!
* **Gwen Whitbeck** had surgery 5 months ago to amputate her leg. This is a huge adjustment, as anyone can imagine. Check with Doug – [dwhitbeck@hotmail.com](mailto:dwhitbeck@hotmail.com) – if you want to visit or call her. This month she has had further surgery on her other leg to help with the circulation. The Whitbecks have given so much to NH and the community in service – many thanks! Now let us help you.
* **Laila Washburn is still 100 years old!** Laila lives at Summer Hill Assisted Living in Peterborough. She loves company and cards. At 100, every day is treasured. Laila Washburn, Summer Hill, 183 Old Dublin Rd, Peterborough, NH 03458. Call ahead if you have questions. 603-924-6238
* **Gretchen and Wally Brown** Always in need of a little cheer, and Gretchen needs contact with the outside world, so stop by with a smile, a meal, or just to pick up syrup and say hello!

Cards to: 421 Meetinghouse Hill Rd, Mason, NH 03048 phone: 878-1481

* **Forty Family Daughter** Meredith and family are moving to Manhattan. We wish them well, and hope they will come home to Mason often.
* **Thank you to everyone who helps with our coffee hour after worship—what great hosts you all are!**

******