

ADVENT

Advent in the Church Year

Advent, an important season for the church, begins our church year. The word Advent means “coming.” We prepare for the celebration of the coming of the Christ Child as well as Jesus’ return at the Second Coming. Advent is always the four Sundays prior to Christmas Eve. This year, the Sundays of Advent are December 1, 8, 15, and 22.

Advent Colors

The traditional color of Advent is purple, a royal color for Christ the King. Purple is also the color of penitence, and we see it again in Lent. However, many churches now use the color blue, a symbol of hope and the truth of Christ. Here at All Saints, we use both blue and purple in our banners, paraments and vestments. You will see five candles on our Advent wreath. The blue candles are used for all the Sundays but the third Sunday. In a remembrance of the historical use of a color symbolizing penitence, a rose (or pink) candle was used on the third Sunday of the season as a symbol of joy. The meanings of the four Advent candles are hope, peace, joy, and love; the white candle in the center is the Christ candle for Christmas.

Symbols

Advent is rich in symbolism. The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet are the Alpha and Omega, meaning the beginning and the end. These are often used together as a symbol for Advent. An angel symbol is a reminder of the angel who visited Mary and told her she would be the mother of Jesus. The candles used on our Advent wreath have also become symbols for Advent. Each Sunday during Advent another candle is lit, adding more and more light as Christmas draws near. The trumpets that will blow when Christ comes to earth again symbolize the hope for Christ's return. A crown symbolizes Christ as Ruler. John the Baptist prepared people to hear Jesus' message and called him "the Lamb of God," so the lamb carrying the banner of victory over sin and death is also used as an Advent symbol. Take time to browse through the Chrismon tree at the front of the sanctuary. You will find symbols of Advent and Christmas in traditional white and gold: white for purity because Jesus was pure and perfect, gold that symbolizes His majesty and glory.

Grant us steadfastness and patience, faithful God, as we wait in joyful hope for the fulfillment of your promises in Jesus Christ our Lord.