

One story which explains this tradition is that in 1839, a Lutheran minister working at a children's mission in Germany created a wreath out of the wheel of a cart. The minister placed 20 small red candles out of the wheel's outer ring and four larger white candles inside the ring, lighting the red candles on weekdays and the four white candles on Sundays as a way for the children to count down the days until Christmas. Advent wreaths were eventually fashioned out of evergreens, twisted together in a circle to symbolize continuous life across the seasons, from the death of winter to the new life of spring. Naturally, this earthly symbolism also points to the spiritual symbolism of newness and the promise of eternal life (John 3:16). As well as the unending love of Christ. Holly leaves and berries are also added to the Advent wreath to represent the crown of thorns placed on Jesus' head during his crucifixion. Red berries also point to Christ's sacrifice and the blood shed for sins. Together, the elements of the Advent wreath reflect the new life and eternal salvation offered through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

*-Sue Wilson*

**Entrance antiphon: O people of Sion, behold, the Lord will come to save the nations, and the Lord will make the glory of his voice heard in the joy of your heart.**



**First Reading: Isaiah 11:1-10**

**Psalm 71: Response: In his days justice shall flourish and peace till the moon fails.**

**Second Reading: Romans 15: 4-9**

**Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia!**

**Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight, and all mankind shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia!**

**Gospel: Matthew 3:1-12**

**Memorial Acclamation: When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.**

**Communion Antiphon: Jerusalem, arise and stand upon the heights, and behold the joy which comes to you from God.**



## Second Sunday of Advent

### Cycle A, 2022 Weekly Reflection

**ADVENT:** Derived from the Latin word "adventus", the word Advent means "arrival" or "coming". In this instance, it is used to indicate a set time to commemorate the coming of the Messiah in Jesus Christ. Advent, like Christmas, is a season of expectation, celebration and hope, connected to the birth of the prophesied Messiah and the promise of Christ's ministry.

A few historical accounts put the inception of Advent as a church tradition somewhere around the 4th or 5th century. Other traditions use Advent to anticipate the Parousia, or second coming of Jesus. However, most of what we know and practice today can be traced back to the Middle Ages and the 19th century. The Eastern Orthodox Church has advent too, but calls it the Nativity Fast. It lasts 40 days, so a bit longer than Advent in the Western Churches. The 'fast' involves not having red meat, chicken, eggs and dairy, fish, oil and wine. The 6<sup>th</sup> January is a strict day of fasting. The Nativity Fast does not mark the start of the Christian church year, as Advent does in the west. There is no emphasis on the Parousia. The church colour is red, not purple. During the Nativity Fast, a number of feast days celebrate Old Testament prophets who prophesied the coming of Jesus, the incarnation.

**The symbols of Advent** The candles on the Advent wreath have their own special significance. The four candles represent the four weeks of Advent and one candle is lit each Sunday. Three of the candles are purple because the colour violet is a liturgical colour which signifies a time of prayer, penance, and sacrifice. The candles also represent hope, love, peace and the pink candle is the candle of joy. The Candle of Hope is linked to the Old Testament prophets - Hope is like a light shining in a dark place. "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light." (Isaiah 9:2) The second, sometimes known as the Bethlehem candle, is the representation of faith, the faith of Mary and Joseph. The third is the candle of joy; "The shepherds went back singing praises to God...". The fourth, or angels' candle, is the candle of Love.