

### **What About The Advent Wreath?**

The word Advent comes from the Latin words, *advenire* (to come to) and *adventus* (an arrival), and refers to Christ's coming into this world. Although widespread in its use, the Advent wreath is of fairly recent Christian tradition. Some claim that the wreath originates with Boniface. It is more likely that it was adopted from pagan Germanic tradition by followers of Luther in the early 16th century about the same time that German Christians began to bring evergreens indoors as part of their Christmas celebration.

Early Lutherans "sanctified" the wreath, by endowing it with Christian symbolism. The evergreen circle represented new life and the eternal nature of God. The four candles did not have any particular meaning other than to signify the light of Christ. Yet as time passed each candle assumed specific significance while a fifth candle was added to the center of the display in some Christian traditions. However, this aspect of the Advent Wreath continues to evolve and there is no standardized meaning (or color), for each candle. For instance, within the Roman Catholic Church the four candles may stand for hope, preparation, joy and love or: faith, joy, love and hope. Protestant churches often adopt the symbolism of the Roman Catholics while adding additional meaning; prophecy, Bethlehem, shepherds and wisemen (in no particular order), also find representation in the four candles. The center candle is always the Christ candle. Some Protestants have even gone as far as adding a sixth candle to the wreath.

The color of the candles also varies from one church to another. Normally there are three purple candles, one rose candle and a white one for the center Christ candle. Traditionally the rose candle is placed in the third position and takes its meaning from the Roman Catholic tradition of lightening the burden of the Advent fast on that day. It was a candle of hope; the Christ is coming - and the fast is nearing its end! The Purple candles may represent a variety of things: royalty, repentance, contemplation and so on. Many Protestant churches have begun to use royal blue candles and a white for the center or sometimes all white or cream color candles.

No matter what Advent tradition we follow (or invent), the unifying theme must be Christ. As trite as it may sound, He truly is the reason for the season. Let us be sure that we do not allow anything to obscure this central truth.

# Cottonwood Community Church

December 2, 2007

Sunday Devotion: 9:30 am

Worship: 10:00 am

[www.cottonwoodcommunitychurch.org](http://www.cottonwoodcommunitychurch.org)

Welcome

Opening Prayer

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 2:1-4

Lighting The Advent Candle

Hymn # 108 O Come O Come Emmanuel

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Psalms 39:3b-6

**(3b) Then I spoke with my tongue: (4) O Jehovah, make me to know my end, and the measure of my days, what it *is*; I know how frail I *am*.**

**(5)** Behold, You have made my days *as* a handbreadth, and my age *is* as nothing before You. Surely every man standing *is* altogether vanity. Selah.

**(6) Surely a man walks about like a shadow! Surely they are in an uproar in vain. He heaps up, and does not know who shall gather them.**

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Hymn # 59 O Come All Ye Faithful

Mystery Box Message

Presentation of Tithes and Offerings

New Testament Reading: Luke 24:44-49

Worship In Song

Congregational Prayer / Lord's Prayer

Our Father Who art in heaven,  
hallowed be Thy name.

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who have sinned against us.

And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the kingdom and the power  
and the glory forever.

Amen.

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**First Sunday In Advent: Prophecy  
Isaiah 11:1-10**

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I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
the Creator of heaven and earth,  
and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord:

Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hades.

The third day He arose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven  
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty,  
whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and life everlasting.

Amen.

Celebration of the Lord's Supper

Closing Prayer

Closing Hymn #58 Joy To The World!

Benediction: Jude verses 24-25

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,  
And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory  
with exceeding joy, To God our Savior, Who alone is wise,  
Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and  
forevermore. Amen.