



SOME BACKGROUND INFORMATION **ABOUT THE ADVENT WREATH:**

*This can help you answer the questions:
“Why is this leaflet purple?” and
“Why is my leaflet pink this week?”*

Advent wreaths are a tradition used by Christians to mark the passage of the 4 weeks of Advent. Its usual form is of a horizontal evergreen wreath holding four candles. Starting during the first week of Advent, a candle is lit while prayers are said. An additional candle is lit during each of the following weeks until all four candles are lit during the last week before Christmas. Advent wreaths are used in both private, family services and at church services.

Symbolism:

There are several interpretations of the symbolism of the Advent wreath. The underlying symbolism is the accumulation of light as an expression of the growing anticipation of the birth of Jesus Christ, who is seen as the light of the world in Christian faith.

The circular wreath is meant to represent God's eternity as it has no beginning or end. The evergreens are also a symbol of everlasting life.

Three candles are purple and one is rose. The purple candles in particular symbolize the prayer, penance, and preparatory sacrifices and goods works undertaken at this time. The rose candle is lit on the third Sunday, Gaudete Sunday, when the priest also wears rose vestments at Mass; Gaudete Sunday is the Sunday of rejoicing, because the faithful have arrived at the midpoint of Advent, when their preparation is now half over and they are close to Christmas. The progressive lighting of the candles symbolizes the expectation and hope surrounding our Lord's first coming into the world and the anticipation of His second coming to judge the living and the dead.