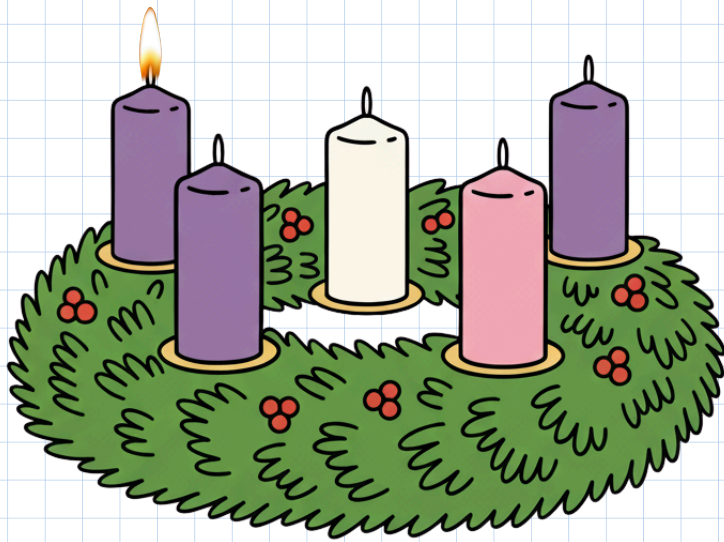


Advent

A D V E N T



Theme

Waiting

Expectant Hope

Peace

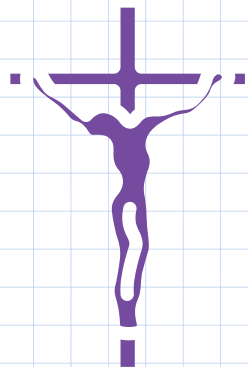
Joy

Love



Isaiah

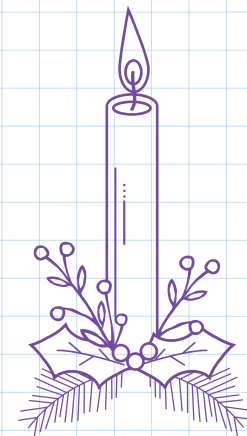
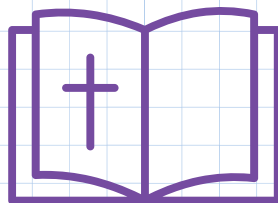
Luke 1-2



Advent

A D V E N T

See 



Through the incarnation - God became flesh - Jesus took on our human form and our inevitable human death. For Jesus, the Son of God, it was not the end and He conquered death and brought about the salvation of all the faithful. During Advent, we prepare to commemorate His birth at Christmas time, the moment that God took on our humble human life. The crucifix reminds us of Jesus' humanity, something that we share with our God. When we see Jesus' sacrifice upon the cross we are reminded that through this great act of love, we are saved and we eagerly await His second coming when we can be united with Him.

And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

Hebrews 2: 27-28

At the start of the Advent season, until the 16th December, the scriptures focus on **waiting in expectant hope for the second coming of Christ**. The readings and prayers at Mass reflect the history of God's people and the first reading at Mass is almost always from the prophet Isaiah.

From the 17th of December onwards, our focus is on waiting to celebrate the **first coming of Christ**, the Nativity of the Lord. The prayers and scriptures focus on our immediate preparations for Christmas and Christmastide. The scriptures for the four Sundays of Advent vary depending on whether it is Year A, B or C but the readings focus on the following themes:

- 1st Sunday - The Lord's coming at the end of time
- 2nd and 3rd Sunday - John the Baptist
- 4th Sunday - the events that prepared for the Lord's birth.

You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

James 5: 8

Throughout the season of Advent we see a move from darkness to light. As we journey closer to the Nativity of the Lord - the celebration of Jesus, the light of the world, being born - we see the lights grow on our Advent Wreath and in our celebrations and preparations for this liturgical season. As the light grows, it shows our own growth in readiness to receive Jesus into our lives.

Jesus came into the world as a light to scatter the darkness and to light the way to righteousness and salvation and we try to follow that light in all that we do.

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

John 8: 12

THE ADVENT WREATH

See 

The Advent wreath is shaped as a circle to remind us of eternity and the infinite love and presence of God in all of our lives.

*Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary;
his understanding is unsearchable.
Isaiah 40: 28*

Evergreen leaves remind us of the everlasting life that Jesus won for us and the hope that this brings to us all. Holly leaves remind us of the crown of thorns that were worn by Jesus when he died to save us all. Red berries or red decorations also remind us of Jesus' sacrifice and the blood He shed for us.

*For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."
John 6: 40*



A new candle on the Advent Wreath is lit on each Sunday of Advent to mark the passing of time through this season of preparation and expectant hope.

The light grows as we journey closer to celebrate the birth of Jesus, the light of the world.

Where a white candle is used on an Advent Wreath - the Jesus candle - it is lit at the celebration of the Nativity of the Lord at Christmas Eve and on Christmas Day.

*The Lord is good to those who wait for him,
to the soul who seeks him.
Lamentations 3: 25*

Week 1 - The violet candle of Hope

Advent Hope not only reflects on God's people as they placed their hope in the prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures, but also reflects on our own hope in God's promise of eternal life when Jesus comes again.

*For whatever was written in former days
was written for our instruction, that
through endurance and through the
encouragement of the Scriptures we might
have hope.
Romans 15:4*

Week 2 - The violet candle of Peace

In Advent we try to convert our lives to be more like the life of Jesus. It is an opportunity for Reconciliation and prayer. Also known as the Bethlehem candle, we are reminded that Jesus came to bring peace on earth and we must continue this mission today.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; ... and his name shall be called ...

*Prince of Peace.
Isaiah 9:6*

Week 3 (Gaudete Sunday) - The rose candle of joy

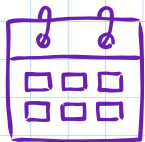
The 3rd Sunday of Advent celebrates the theme of Joy to remind us that we wait in joyful anticipation. The angel told the shepherds that they brought news of great joy and we are tasked with bringing that joy to all people.

*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say,
Rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known
to everyone. The Lord is at hand:
Philippians 4: 4-5*

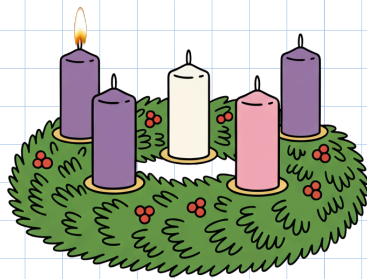
Week 4 - The violet candle of love

Sometimes lit only a day before Christmas, this candle reminds us of the message of love that the angels brought - that God loved us so much that He gave us His only Son.

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.
John 3:16*



HAPPY New Year



The Church's Liturgical year follows the mystery of Christ. We begin the Church's year in Advent with the incarnation (God became man), followed by the celebration of the Nativity of the Lord when Jesus was born in Bethlehem. After Pentecost, we look towards the second coming of Christ and the season of Advent begins by focusing on this joyful expectation. With the start of a new liturgical year, we begin a new cycle of readings at Mass (Year A, B or C). These can be found at the front of the Diocesan Ordo.

Each new year gives us the opportunity to become more like Christ and to renew our efforts to be faithful disciples and ambassadors of hope.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

2 Corinthians 5: 17

Advent

A D V E N T

Violet / Rose

The use of **purple** during Advent shows our state of unfulfilled readiness. We live in a time between the first coming of Christ, when God became flesh and the second coming of Christ, when Jesus will come again to welcome us into eternal life with Him. As we use the season of Advent to prepare ourselves for the second coming of Christ we wait in joyful hope and use our time of waiting to convert our lives to be more like that of Jesus. The use of **pink** for Gaudete Sunday, on the 3rd week of Advent, is a reminder to stay strong in that joyful hope and to trust in the Lord.

The use of these colours in Advent helps to make the change to the joyful white of Christmastide more noticeable and celebratory!

Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Matthew 24: 44



Cycle of prayer during Advent

Migrants and Refugees

Expectant Mothers

Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

Romans 12: 13



The Jesse tree is used to explore the story of God in the Hebrew scriptures. Jesse was the father of King David, an ancestor of Jesus and we reflect on thousands of years of the history of God's people, all the way up until the birth of Christ. From the apple that Adam and Eve ate in Genesis to the manger that

Jesus is laid in in Luke's Gospel, exploring the scriptures help us to prepare to welcome Christ into our lives. By reading scripture and placing symbolic decorations onto our tree, we are reflecting on our shared history, the faithfulness of the people of God and God's everlasting love for us all.

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

Isaiah 11:1

See

See 

Christmastide

CHRISTMASTIDE



Theme

Incarnation

Joy

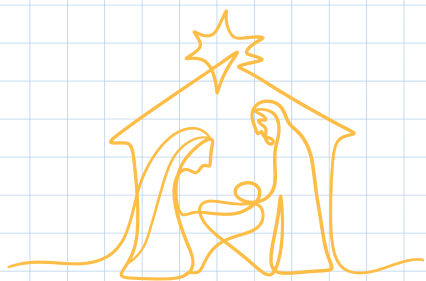
Love

Solidarity and humility



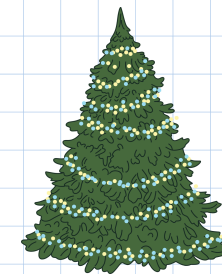
Matthew 1: 18-25; Matthew 2, 3

Luke 2-3



See Christmas tide

CHRISTMASTIDE



St Francis of Assisi created the first live Nativity Crib Scene in 1223 to help those present to understand the humble circumstances of Jesus' birth, and miracles were reported at that first Nativity.

Today, we continue that tradition and Pope Francis explained that the nativity scene: 'evokes a number of the mysteries of Jesus' life and brings them close to our own daily lives.'

Admirabile Signum (2).

And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Luke 2: 7

White / Gold

White or Gold indicates a celebration in our faith. At Christmas time, white reminds us of the joy and glory of the angels' message, the beauty of the child Jesus and the purity of His mother Mary. It also reminds us of the Kingdom of heaven, of which Jesus is king.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest,

and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

Luke 2: 13-14

The first Christmas tree was introduced by St Boniface. He used the evergreen fir tree to teach people about the one true God, who was more powerful than any other thing or belief. Since then, it has been a tradition to decorate Christmas trees in lights and other symbolic decorations to show that Jesus is the light of the world and the one true God.

*Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel
and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts:*

*"I am the first and I am the last;
besides me there is no god.*

Isaiah 44:6

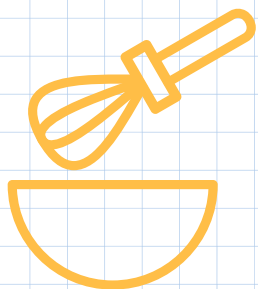
Christmas Pudding

The 13 ingredients of the Christmas pudding represent Jesus and His 12 disciples. During the baking process it is stirred from east to west (symbolising the journey of the magi) and each family member prays for their hopes in the year ahead. The flaming brandy represents the passion of Christ and holly decoration reminds us of the crown of thorns that Jesus wore. This tasty treat helps us to celebrate the feast of the Lord's birth whilst directing us towards a deeper understanding of our faith.

Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good!

Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!

Psalms 34:8

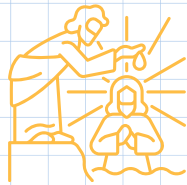


12 Days of Christmas

When it was illegal to be a Catholic, people would use this carol as a secret way to teach the faith. Each line has a deeper meaning that reminds us of an important part of our faith. Singing and sharing in this song is the perfect way to help us to reflect on the meaning behind the things that we see (or hear) and how we can apply them in our own lives to become more like Jesus.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Colossians 3:16



The Baptism of the Lord

The Baptism of the Lord is the final celebration of Christmastide. It marks the start of Jesus' public ministry, when He is revealed to all people as God's Son. In the presence of the Holy Trinity (God the Father; Jesus, God the Son; and the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove), the Baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist is a calling to baptism for all people and calls each of us to take up the same mission as Christ. At this celebration we move from celebrating the incarnation during Christmastide, to the season of Ordinary time when we celebrate the life and ministry of Jesus.

And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

Matthew 3: 16-17



See

Christmastide
CHRISTMASTIDE

The Epiphany

The **epiphany** marks the visit of the magi. Travelling from far away lands, as people who existed outside of the Jewish community of the times, they show that Jesus came, as saviour of the world, for all people and all nations in all places. They came bearing gifts which recognise Jesus' royalty (gold), divinity (frankincense) and His ultimate sacrifice (myrrh). During gift giving at Christmastide, we recognise the things we love about our friends and family and celebrate the gift that they are in our own lives.

At the celebration of the Epiphany, homes may be blessed with inscriptions of chalk that pray: 'May Christ bless this house'

When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

Matthew 2: 10-11



Presentation of the Lord

Mary and Joseph obediently followed Jewish laws and customs by presenting their Son to God at the Temple. God's promises to Simeon and Anna are fulfilled and the evening prayer of the Nunc Dimittis is taken from the words of scripture from this special feast.

Also known as Candlemas, this day is often marked by processions and the blessing of candles used in communities throughout the year to celebrate Simeon's rejoicing that Jesus is the light of the world.



*'...for my eyes have seen your salvation
that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and for glory to your people Israel.'*

Luke 2: 30 - 32