



## ADVENT WREATH FAMILY CELEBRATION

The custom of the Advent wreath was started by Lutherans in the sixteenth century as a way to prepare for Christ's coming. Advent means, "coming"—the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a time of getting ready for Christmas—a time for spiritual refreshment and renewal. We are waiting for the little baby Jesus to be born.

The Advent wreath helps us to get ready for Jesus. The candles represent God's presence and remind us that Jesus Christ is the light of the world. Evergreen trees and branches represent the eternal life that is found in Jesus. The holly oak with its thorny leaves and red berries recall Christ's crown of thorns and blood. The round circle of Advent and Christmas wreaths which have no beginning or end, suggest the never ending love of God.

Traditionally, there can be three different color variations used for the candles:

- . purple/violet signifying royalty, or
- . red signifying celebration, or
- . Dark or royal blue, the color of hope.

The season of Advent begins on the Sunday closest to November 30 and marks the four weeks before Christmas. Use the Advent wreath as a part of your devotions during Advent. You may want to make or purchase an Advent calendar to serve as a focal point for your family devotions. Lighting the candles on an Advent wreath adds anticipation to worship in the home, as each Sunday in Advent another candle is lit in the wreath. The time that you spend in devotions during these four weeks will possibly be the best gift you could give or receive. These activities might help keep the "holy" in the holidays. The candles in the Advent wreath remind us of what happened when Jesus was born.

- ◆ The first blue candle is called the PROPHECY candle in remembrance of the faithful promises of the prophets that came true. Zechariah 9:9-10; Romans 15:4,13.
- ◆ The second blue candle is called the BETHLEHEM candle. It reminds us that the holy family could not find room in the Bethlehem inn, so the Son of God was born in a stable. During the week, we search our hearts to find if we have room for Jesus. Isaiah 40:3-5; I Peter 1:13.
- ◆ The third candle, the SHEPHERD candle, reminds us of the shepherds who came to see Jesus. The color is rose/pink signifying rejoicing—we rejoice with the shepherds as they share the Good News. Malachi 3:1-2; Philippians 4:4-7.
- ◆ The fourth candle, blue, is called the ANGEL candle. We remember the good news that the angels brought to the shepherds. Jeremiah 33:14-16; Matthew 2:1-15.
- ◆ The fifth candle, white, is called the CHRIST candle. It reminds us of Jesus our Savior. Isaiah 9:2-3,6; Luke 2:1-20.

Advent tells us Christ is near! CHRISTMAS tells us Christ is here!