

**PARISH CHURCH of ST SAVIOUR'S
CLAREMONT**



ADVENT 2020

Dear Friends in Christ; Advent greetings!

The year 2020 has been a significantly different year for all of us, we have spent many days in isolation and separated from our loved ones and our community. As the calendar year draws to close, we remain mindful of the lurking virus(COIVD 19) and the many social and financial devastation it leaves in its trail.

By no means should we be naive and rush towards '*back to normal*' or even try to swiftly and blindly create a '*new normal*', rather we are called to be present in the moment; to make the best of where we are with what we have. For some we have enough, for some we have too little, and for others we might have too much, let us heed to the call to live out the gift of **LOVE** in the midst of being physically separated from each other by sharing the gift of LOVE during this season of Advent.

Advent, offers us the opportunity to take a moment to pause and reflect on the year that was and the year which lies ahead. As everything around us gets busier and busier in anticipation of the festive season, as Christians we encouraged to practice the discipline of pausing and reflecting and listening to that still small voice.

As we then recall the birth of Jesus at Christmas, we do well to prepare sufficient room in the inn(our hearts).

This booklet is resource for individuals and families to guide your reflections during the season of Advent.

I pray this may be a season of refreshment and deep reflection, and that each of us may experience the refreshing and renewed love of God in our lives.

God Bless.

Revd. Chesnay Frantz

Advent is a time for all believers and families to commemorate the arrival of the Messiah, prepare for his second coming, and celebrate the joy of Christmas together.

As a people we are captured by symbols and traditions. One such symbol and tradition is the Advent wreath.

Advent wreaths were eventually fashioned out of evergreens, twisted together in a circle to symbolise 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 and salvation offered through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The circular nature of the wreath, similar to a wedding ring or band, is further meant to reflect the unending love of Christ and eternal life offered through salvation.

An Advent wreath typically uses four candles. Each candle is lit on one of the four Sundays leading up to Christmas.

The colour of these candles can vary, but it is common that the first, second, and fourth candle is purple, while the third candle is rose-colored, red, or a pinkish, often, a fifth white candle is placed in the middle of the wreath and lit on Christmas Day itself.

Catholic tradition names the four candles; the prophets candle(hope), the Bethlehem candle(faith), the Shepherds candle(Joy), the Angels candle(Peace).

Making your own Advent wreath: A FAMILY ACTIVITY

Directions

There are five elements to the wreath: 1) Base, 2) candleholders, 3) greens, 4) candles and 5) ribbons and decoration. Your wreath can either be live or permanent. Below are several different ideas for each element, so you can create a wreath of your own.

1. The Base:

a) Sphagnum moss wreath form The form needs to be pre-soaked and full of moisture for the evergreen. This should be done overnight, excess water allowed to drip off. This pre-soaked form then needs to be wrapped with green florist wreath wrap.

b) Oasis or some type of wet florist's foam shaped into a wreath form This foam usually comes in blocks, and you must find some round waterproof container to cut and shape your form in. If you do some searching, there are Oasis wreath forms available.

c) Vine Wreath form You can put attach live or artificial greens to a vine wreath. The vine wreath can either be purchased, or handmade using vines from wisteria, grape arbor, cane or willow. Presoak or moisturise the vine ahead of time, because the vine must be pliable to be able to curl into a wreath.

d) Styrofoam, straw, or some other type of wreath form At any craft store you can find a variety of wreath forms available in different materials. Styrofoam is the most readily available and the least expensive. There are also straw forms, either wrapped in plastic or wire bound to keep the straw from falling out. Any of these forms do not provide any moisture for the live evergreens. Unless you are using permanent greens, expect to either change the greens every so often, or have a very dead wreath by Christmas!

e) Wire frame There are several types of ready-made wreath wire-forms you can purchase, or you could form your own out of strong wire, or even coat hangers. You could also purchase an actual Advent wreath form, consisting of a simple ring and candleholders.

f) Ready-made Christmas Wreath You can purchase a ready-made Christmas wreath, either artificial or live. Usually the purpose of these wreaths is to hang on doors, so if you are suspending your wreath, make sure the underside is as attractive as the top.

2. Candleholders

a) Florist Candleholders

These are usually inexpensive plastic green holders, available at any craft or garden store or florist shop. If using foam or moss type form, these can be inserted directly into the form. Otherwise, these need to be securely fastened to the wreath with florist wire or hot glue.

b) Spikes For the moss or foam forms, large nails or spikes can be inserted on the underside of the wreath so that the pointed side comes through the top, high enough to put your candles. The spike cannot be too wide, otherwise it will split and break your candle. If you use a large pillar candle, this option would be ideal.

c) Wire Use heavy florist wire and twist around the bottom of the candles (about 2 inches), then fasten the ends to the form. This has to be very tight, with no movement for the candle.

d) Other ideas There are such a large variety of candles and candle holders available in almost every store. There might be different types of attractive holders that could be attached to a wreath form. Just make sure you get something that will hold the candle and prevent the flame from coming too close to the evergreens.

3. Greens

a) Live Evergreens For live evergreens, the choice is endless: yew, any type of pine, cedar, fir, laurel, holly, boxwood, spruce, hemlock, balsam twigs, even magnolia leaves can give an interesting look. Use what is available in your area, what is easy to manage, and what appeals to you.

The way your greens are cut depends on what type of form. If you just have a wire frame, you need to have branches that you can wire together and attach by florist wire onto the frame. If using forms, like foam, you can have small twigs or leaves and attach them to florist pics and insert throughout, or if the branches or leaves are sturdy enough, insert them without pics. Check with your local craft store to see if there is a spray or preparation you can add to your leaves to make them non-flammable.

b) Permanent or Artificial Greens There are a variety of types of artificial greens. You can buy prepared florist "pics" and insert them into your form. Or with smaller branches, attach each piece to the form with strong florist wire.

Another option to consider, especially with smaller frames, like wire, is to purchase an artificial garland. Measure the garland around the form, and cut the garland just a little longer than the ring. Attach the garland around the wreath form with florist wire. Shape the branches around to hide the form.

4. Candles

With the surging popularity of candles, this by far is the easiest item to find. Usually the candles are tall taper candles, 3 purple or violet and 1 pink. These can be found almost anywhere. If you plan on burning the candles everyday, it helps to have a few extra to replace the first and second weeks of Advent candles as they burn down.

If you absolutely can't find these colours, use white or ivory candles and attach ribbons (don't let the flames come to close) to the candles—three with purple bows, one with a pink bow.

5. Ribbons and Decorations

Keep in mind that although Advent is joyfully awaiting Christ's arrival, there still should be some element of penance. The wreath should not be elaborately decorated, to show the difference between the Advent Season and Christmas season. Pine cones, seed pods, red berries can be added to the greens. You could attach purple bows to the wreath, and suspend the wreath with Purple ribbons. But besides these type of decorations, the wreath should be kept simple to remind us of the penitential nature of Advent.

For the Christmas season, the greens can be refreshed, the candles changed to white, red or gold and the ribbons changed to joyful Christmas colours. Other options: add some Christmas balls or other decorations inside the greens.



First Sunday of Advent: 29 November 2020

Readings: *Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80:1-7,17-19; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37*

Theme: Hope

The first Sunday of Advent, we light the candle of Hope. As a Christian people, we are a people of Hope, our Hope is founded on the wonderful moment of the resurrection, where the power of the love of God, raises Jesus Christ to new life. Our Advent hope, is so too a Hope of new life, Advent calls us wait, and to wait in Hope.

The candle of Hope, is the first candle we light, as it challenges us to bring a flicker of light to spaces in our lives which might seem very dark. As we prepare for the coming of Christ we are challenged to look at those dark spaces in our daily lives, and allow the light of hope to shine brightly. Advent Sunday, calls us to new beginnings, and that new beginnings ought to be grounded in hope, a hope for renewal and refreshment.

Task:

1. Colour/decorate the cover page of this booklet, using it as a canvas of your life, filling the dark spaces, with bright colours.
2. Reflect on how you understand hope.
3. How do you live out hope?
4. Write down your commitment to shining the light of hope in your own life.
5. Write down 2 practical things you are able to do, to bring hope to life in the lives of others.

Second Sunday of Advent: 06 December 2020

Readings: *Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2,8-13; 2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8*

Theme: Faith

The second Sunday of Advent invites us to light the candle of Faith; the Bethlehem candle. As we light the candle of faith we reflect on the word of God, calling us to prepare the way of the Lord. Preparation remains pivotal to our Advent journey, for as the journey comes to a climax at Christmas, it does so with the ushering in of a new order, we welcome the Saviour into the world, and for this we need to be prepared.

We are reminded that faith without action is dead...As a Christian people we are called to live out this gift of faith, and we do so in community. Through the Sacrament of Baptism each of us are inheritors of this wonderful gift of faith, as those who inherit, we have a duty to be good custodians, sharing the abundance thereof with the stranger, with the unloved, with those living on the margins. We have been gifted with faith in good measure.

As we light the candle of faith, we are challenged to move away from spaces of doubt and live out the gift of faith, confidently aware that we are worthy heirs.

Task:

1. Recall moments where you have enjoyed the gift of FAITH.
2. How can faith be lived out in your daily living?
3. How has the Faith of someone else inspired you?
4. What do you regard as an act of faith.
5. If faith was a picture, what would it look like?

Third Sunday of Advent: 13 December 2020

Readings: *Isaiah 61:1-4,8-11; Psalm: Magnificat; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8,19-28*

Theme: Joy

The third Sunday is traditionally known as *Gaudete* Sunday, it is the Sunday which we light the pink candle. *Gaudete*, is the latin word for rejoice, and also the root word for JOY.

The third Sunday therefore, encourages each of us to rejoice and enjoy the gift of JOY. As the psalmist reminds us; joy cometh in the morning. Light is a symbol of the new morning, darkness having passed and light coming to bear.

As we light the candle of Joy, let us embrace the gift of newness, let us shift our gaze from darkness to light, may the light of joy fill every dark space of our lives and the World.

Today we are called to rejoice in the joy of preparing for the coming of Christ, it should not be a laborious or duty filled task, but it should be a joyful tasks.

Task:

1. Spend sometime recalling the joy experienced this past year.
2. Reflect on how you have brought joy to life.
3. Remember those who add joy to your life
4. Consider the joy of the Lord, and how it manifests in your everyday tasks.
5. Spend time rejoicing with your loved and together start decorating your Christmas tree with homemade symbols of joy.

Fourth Sunday of Advent: 20 December 2020

Readings: *2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Psalm 89:1-4, 19-27; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38*

Theme: Peace

The final Sunday of Advent calls us to light the candle of **PEACE**. As we know, peace is not merely the absence of war.

Peace calls us to acknowledge the many disruptions and disturbance we may be encountering or causing. Peace is usually preceded by conflict. As human beings we are prone to conflictual moments as we live in communities made of different individuals with different value systems, which many times disturb our peace. As we light the candle of Peace we are called to acknowledge that as we are different we also the same, we have all been created in the image of God. Today we are called to seek what holds us together rather than what drives us apart.

Peace is a gift we have been given by God through Jesus Christ, Peace is also a gift we are called to share. Peace might not always need us to agree, but it does challenge us to acknowledge the image of God in the other.

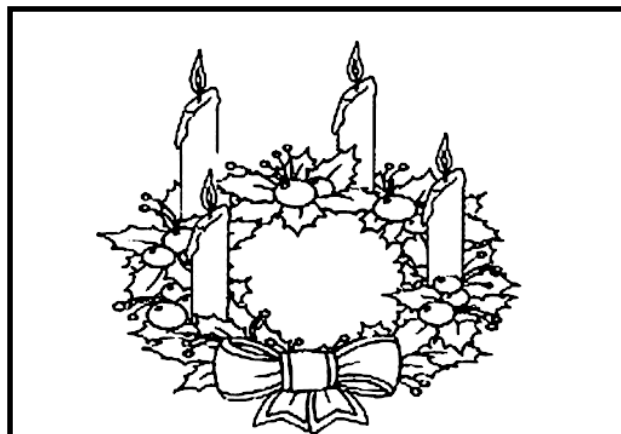
Task:

1. Reflect on your understanding of peace.
2. What image comes to mind when you think of PEACE?
3. Create a symbol for peace, which you can place in prominent space in your home or office, for moments when you feel disturbed or have disturbed others, to help you recall the gift of peace.
4. How can you live out the gift of PEACE?
5. How can others bring about a sense of PEACE in your life?

ADVENT PARISH PRAYER

God of life and light,
as we pause and prepare
for the coming of your
Son; Jesus Christ,
renew our hearts and our minds.
May the light of your love
shine brightly in our lives,
May we be a community of light,
sharing our gifts with each
generously.
Fill us with Hope, faith, joy
and peace.
This we ask through Jesus Christ
our Saviour and Redeemer.

AMEN



Resources Consulted:

<https://www.christianity.com/wiki/holidays/advent-wreath-meaning-of-advent-candles.html>

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Word and Worship 2018, Ekklesia, CLF Publishers.

PERSONAL NOTES:

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