

Service of Lighting the Advent Wreath First Presbyterian Church Advent 2010

One of the most widespread and popular customs in both churches and homes during this season is the Advent wreath. For our congregation this may be one of the most visible signs, along with the decoration of the sanctuary, of the Sundays before Christmas. The Advent wreath, which was traditionally suspended from the ceiling, consists of four candles and a larger Christ candle in the center.

A new candle is lit each of the four Sundays of Advent. This short service takes place early in the Sunday liturgy and is designated in the bulletin. Families or individuals lighting the Advent candles should move to the wreath promptly. While one person or family member lights the candle another reads the designated words.

First Sunday of Advent: November 29, 2010

At the start of this ceremony light the first purple candle. Read the following:

**We light this candle as a symbol of expectation.
May the light sent from God shine in the darkness
to show us the way to salvation.**

Let a family member lead the congregation in the following prayer

**Merciful God,
you sent your messengers the prophets
to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation.
Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins,
that we may greet with joy
the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. Amen.**

Let the choir respond by singing: "Of the Father's Love Begotten."

Second Sunday of Advent: December 5, 2010

At the start of this ceremony light a second purple candle. The acolytes will light last week's candle. Read the following:

**We light this candle as a symbol of
Proclamation. May the Word sent from God
Through the prophets lead us to the way of**

salvation.

Let a family member lead the congregation in the following prayer

**God of our salvation,
you straighten the winding ways of our hearts
and smooth the paths made rough by sin.
Keep our conduct blameless,
keep our hearts watchful in holiness,
and bring to perfection the good you have begun in us.
We ask this through him whose coming is certain,
whose day draws near;
your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever.**

Let the choir respond by singing: "Of the Father's Love Begotten."

Third Sunday of Advent: December 12, 2010

Light the third candle—the *pink* one. The acolytes will light the previous weeks' candles. Read the following:

**We light this candle as a symbol of joy.
May the joyful promise of your presence,
O God, make us rejoice in our hope of
Salvation.**

Let a family member lead the congregation in the following prayer

**Faithful God,
your promises stand unshaken through all generations.
Renew us in hope,
that we may be awake and alert
watching for the glorious return of Jesus Christ,
our judge and savior,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever. Amen.**

Let the choir respond by singing: "Of the Father's Love Begotten."

Fourth Sunday of Advent: December 19, 2010

Light the final purple candle, but not the middle Christ candle. The acolytes will have lit the previous weeks' candles.

Read the following:

**We light this candle as a symbol of purity
May the visitation of your Holy Spirit
O God, purify us that we may be ready for
The coming of Jesus, our hope and joy.**

Let a family member lead the congregation in the following prayer

**Eternal God,
through long generations you prepared a way
for the coming of your Son,
and by your Spirit
you still bring light to illumine our paths.
Renew us in faith and hope
that we may welcome Christ to rule our thoughts
and claim our love,
as Lord of lords and King of kings,**

Let the choir respond by singing: "Of the Father's Love Begotten."