

~HOPE~

Happy Advent My Dear Friends,

It is so hard to believe that we are now officially in the season of Advent. I hope and pray that many of you were able to spend some quiet time during the Thanksgiving holiday. I always find it a great blessing to sit around the table sharing memories of the past and looking with great joy to the future. I know some of our celebrations have taken on a different look, being separated “in person” from our families, however we still share in their love and have many blessings to be thankful for.

This weekend we begin the season of Advent, a season filled with tradition. My personal favorite is the Advent Wreath with all of its’ great symbolism. Many people use it in their homes and it has a significant presence in our church.

The Advent Wreath: The wreath is a circle that has no beginning and no end. It reminds us that Jesus came to give us a life that will never end; eternal life with God in heaven.

Candles: There are four candles on the Advent wreath, (three purple and one pink), one for each week of Advent. The Prophecy candle (purple) announces the period of waiting in hope, hope that we can share simply by offering acts of kindness to others. The Bethlehem candle, (purple) symbolizes the preparations being made to receive the Christ child. During this week we hear how Jesus brought “peace” to our world and how we too can be a great sign of Christ’s peace to others. The Shepherds candle (Pink) signifies the act of sharing Christ and the “joy” Christ brings to us. The last candle is the Angels candle (purple), the candle of love. All of Christ’s teachings are centered on the importance of love. These burning candles remind us that Christ is the light of the world and He brightens the darkness that surrounds us. Each week we light one more candle, a sign that the more we let Christ into our lives the brighter our lives will be.

Today we here that powerful message of hope, the message that Jesus will come again and that we shouldn’t be afraid. We are asked to stay awake and try to live so that God will be pleased with us.

Advent is a season of change, a time for us to search our hearts and prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ. The sacrament of reconciliation is a valuable way for us to enter into this wonderful season. Father Francis will have many opportunities for you to celebrate this sacrament throughout Advent.

I pray the coming weeks will bring all of us many opportunities to slow ourselves down and not get caught up in the commercialism of the season, so that we do not lose site of the reason for our celebration. May your season of Advent be filled with God’s hope, peace, joy and love.

Peace and Smiles
Linda Salmons ~Pastoral Associate