

Making an Advent Wreath for Use at Home

This Advent, as many people are choosing to safely remain at home, the Prayer and Worship Committee of St. Sebastian would like to invite you to participate jointly this Advent (starting November 29th) with the lighting of the Parish (and your home) Advent Wreath.

As the Priest prays the prayers and lights the various candles of the Parish Advent Wreath, we invite you to also pray at home and light your own candle on your home Advent Wreath just as we do in the Church. We have two points to share with you:

1. **How to make the wreath.** Please know, you do not need to make one since it is possible to purchase ready-made Advent Wreaths in stores and online. However, it could be much fun to include the family in building your own wreath and it need not be complicated. It can be as simple or as decorative as you would like.
 - a. To start, you will need a round wreath of some kind (you can make one, but most people buy these). It is advisable to not use “real” greens but rather a flame-retardant green wreath.
 - b. Next, you will need four candles – three purple (white is OK with purple ribbons) and one rose (pink) and their holders. You may affix the candle holders to the wreath with wire equally distanced from each other, or they may simply be placed inside the wreath in the same formation. That is all you need.
 - c. Some people like to decorate their wreaths with holly, berries, flowers, ribbons, or pinecones. You may tie these to the wreath or, if you have, you may use a glue gun to attach them. Place this in a safe place (center of the family table...) and leave it there until Christmas day.
2. **How to use the wreath.**
 - a. In order to use the Advent Wreath, light the first candle for the First Sunday of Advent, starting with the candle *opposite* the rose candle. You may do this with the Priest as he offers the prayers or you may use your own prayers – see below. This is done at Mass, but you may also do it before dinner or for any special family time on the first Sunday (November 29 (28th, if you celebrate the vigil)).
 - b. Extinguish after Mass or the meal so that you keep enough candle to light for three more Sundays.
 - c. If the candles are large enough, you may light the same candle(s) daily before a main meal. On the Second Sunday of Advent, light the 1st candle again (*opposite the rose candle*) and now, with the Priest’s prayers (or your own), light the 2nd candle (clockwise from the 1st). On the Third Sunday, begin by lighting the 1st and 2nd candles as before, then with the prayers, light the 3rd candle – the rose-colored one. This is “Gaudete” Sunday (“rejoice”). On the Fourth Sunday, light the first three and then, with prayers, light the final candle.

A typical prayer to use (if you don’t do it with the Priest at Mass): (there are many options which can be found online, but here is a simple prayer which may be used weekly)

As followers of Jesus Christ, we wait with hope for his return. As we light this candle (select someone from the family to light the candle), we remember that it was from the manger in Bethlehem that he came and gave light to the world. This Advent season of preparation reminds us to be alert and to be open to the light of Christ in each other. May WE be this Light of Christ to the world! Amen.