

DECEMBER 2017

Dear Friends,

As long as I can remember, a beautiful wreath of evergreens and candles has adorned the church during Advent. We lit the candles, and said the prayers of Advent. It was a sign that Christmas was coming! The air was colder; people bustled with excitement, with errands and activities. We were practicing Christmas music in the choir, but we also sang our beautiful hymns of Advent. Christmas was coming, but we were living in Advent.



The season of Advent is here again. We are preparing for Christmas, but we are living in Advent—a time of preparation, a time of expectation. What a good reminder of what the Christian life can be! We live and grow in a process of preparation, expectation and waiting in an “I want immediate gratification and I want it now!” world. We look forward to a promise as we joyfully live in the here and now. We experience the expectancy of awaiting the light of the world as we work for his kingdom today. This Advent, allow the beauty of expectation to fill your heart. Let the joy of the promise of God guide your steps as you experience

that love with and through the people around you.

May the joy of preparation be yours in this season of love.

Your sister in Christ,

Mother Bonnie+

THE ADVENT WREATH is **circular** in shape, without beginning or end, symbolizing God’s unending love for us.

It is made of fresh **evergreens**, a sign of life in our long, cold winter pointing to the new and eternal life that we find in Christ.

The **candles** contrast darkness and light and assure us that, even as the days grow shorter and colder, the light of Christ shines undimmed and can never be overwhelmed by any darkness.

The **blue** of the candles symbolizes hope and expectation.

A **pink** candle (suggesting the Rose of Sharon) is lit on the third Sunday and represents joy.

Christian tradition has often seen Jesus as the rose described by Solomon:
“I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.” (*Song of Solomon 2:1*)

The fifth candle, the **Christ candle**, is **white** and is lit on Christmas, symbolizing Jesus as the light of the world.