

COUNTING DOWN THROUGH ADVENT

22 December 2016



On our First Sunday of Advent, Pastor Riitta Granroth lit our candle. This was the last Sunday that she was with us before heading back home to her home country of Finland for a new position as pastor of a church there.

The Advent wreath, or crown of Advent, called a *Couronne de l'Avant* in French, is a Christian tradition that symbolizes the passage of the four weeks of Advent in the liturgical calendar of the Western Church. It originated as a Lutheran practice, although it has spread to many other Christian denominations including Anglicanism.

It is usually a wreath of Evergreens, placed flat on a table or tilted on a special support with four candles, sometimes with a fifth white candle in the centre. Starting with the first Sunday of Advent, a candle can be lit and the lighting can be accompanied by a reading from the Bible, a devotional prayer, or singing. Additional candles are lit during each of the following weeks up to a total of four for the last Sunday before Christmas. Many wreaths include a fifth candle, as a Christ candle, which is lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas day.

The custom may be observed by families at their home and by congregations in public worship services at church.

At All Saints', to avoid fire concerns or the wreath drying and dying during the week, we have used an artificial plastic wreath which is stored and reused from year to year. Our candles are fitted into glass candle holders which sit just inside the wreath which sits on one of our credence tables.

The Advent wreaths candles may be purple or blue depending on the colour used by the church for

Advent. The Roman Catholic Church uses purple candles as their colour for Advent is a reddish purple quite different from the bluish purple of Lent. Some Anglican churches use purple candles. Some Anglican churches use deep blue candles as well as blue alter frontals and paraments. This choice of colour is based on the old Serum rite which used a deep blue colour – the medieval colour of expectation – for Advent.

Often a pink or rose coloured candle is used for the third week of Advent. The third week of Advent is a time when the readings and collect prayers speak of joy and rose was the medieval colour of Joy. The third Sunday of Advent is often called *Gaudeamus Day* since the old Latin prayer for that Sunday started *Gaudeamushodie* or "We pray with Joy this Day".

This year, as the candles of our Advent wreath were lit, the congregation sang the song "A Candle is Burning" by Sandra Dean with an increased number of verses each week.



For our Second Sunday, Robin lit our two candles. Robin takes up the offering each Sunday and staffs the hospitality table during our after worship fellowship time. He frequently reads scripture in church and is a member of our Parochial Church Committee.

For our third Sunday of Advent, Roxana and Andre Teleman were invited to light our Advent candles. Roxana is our faithful musician for worship and secretary of our PCC. She also prepares our weekly worship sheets and is our chaplaincy Safeguarding Officer. Roxana started formal theological studies this past autumn as our All Saints sponsored candidate for ordination in the Church of England for the Diocese of Europe.



Andre and Roxana Telemen light two blue candles and one rose coloured candle for Gaudemus Sunday.

For our final Sunday of Advent our friend and frequent cellist Aidan Hamilton lit all four of our candles. Aidan had just returned that weekend from a three-month teaching assignment in China and we were glad to have him safely back with us and were quick to put him to work on this task.



Aidan Hamilton lights three candles on the last Sunday of Advent.

On Christmas Eve evening, a service was held at the Oratoire in Aix-en-Provence and our Reader Christine Portman and her husband, the Rev'd Canon David Pickering lit our candles on the home Advent wreath provided by our Reader Jane Quarmby.

On Christmas Day at All Saints, former warden Elizabeth Bernasconi and our Honour Assistant the Rev'd Eddie Farrow lit the four candles of

our wreath for the last time. Our theological enquirer, Jules Ngangue, as altar server, lit the Paschal Easter candle as our tall Christ candle for the holy day.



Elizabeth Bernasconi and Father Eddie Farrow light the four advent candles for our Christmas Day worship.



Jules Ngangue, as altar server, lights our Paschal candle to serve as our Advent Christ Candle. This Paschal candle was blessed by Pastor Riitta and set up by our Reader Stéphane Javelle last Easter.



Reader Christine Portman and the Rev'd Canon David Pickering light the candles in Aix.