

# A Season of Hope

Preparing our hearts—what does it mean? Our heart is where we hold what we believe, which affects our choices, our emotions, our passions. So the question

really is — do we let Jesus be the center of what we believe at Christmas time and do we let that change our life?

Advent is a time to focus on who Jesus is, what he has done, and how that has changed our lives. If we are to be sincere in preparing our hearts for the coming King we need to keep in balance the physical aspects of our celebrations with the spiritual.

- ◆ Is our to-do list so long that we don't make time for maintaining our personal relationship with Jesus?
- ◆ Is it so important to have everything right, that we forget to share the real story with our children?
- ◆ Do we get too focused on food, the decorations, and the gifts that we forget about Jesus in the true celebration of Christmas?

***This Advent, help prepare your heart for Jesus by praying:***

***Dear Lord, in this season of Advent, inspire us to be a people of hope.***

***Encourage us not to be greedy for material possessions, but for justice and truth.***

***Enflame us with a love for others, which crosses boundaries of race, religion and nationality.***

***Stir within us an appreciation of the immense beauty of the earth.***

***Be with us, Lord, at this time, that we may be a people of hope. Amen***

## ADVENT WREATH

"Customarily the Advent Wreath is constructed of a circle of evergreen branches into which are inserted four candles. According to tradition, three of the candles are violet and the fourth is rose. However, four violet or white candles may also be used.



The rose candle is lit the third Sunday of Advent, for this color anticipates and symbolizes the Christmas joy announced in the first word of the Entrance Antiphon: "Rejoice" (Latin, Gaudete). For this reason the Third Sunday is also called Gaudete Sunday, and rose color vestments are permitted.

The Advent Wreath represents the long time when people lived in spiritual darkness, waiting for the coming of the Messiah, the Light of the world. Each year in Advent people wait once again in darkness for the coming of the Lord, His historical coming in the mystery of Bethlehem, His final coming at the end of time, and His special coming in every moment of grace.

**Prepare Your Hearts  
Prepare the Way of the Lord**

# Advent Sacrament of Confession

**St. Peter the Apostle Church  
Thursday, 15 December - 10 AM to 8 PM**

**Experience the Mercy & Forgiveness of God**

## How to Prepare for Advent

- ◆ Re-order your life's priorities. Don't over commit.
- ◆ Add more time to your prayer life and take time away from other activities such as T.V., computer games, the internet, shopping.
- ◆ Start an Advent tradition with your family. Pray together. Use the advent wreath and pray before meals.
- ◆ Make plans to attend our Day of Confession (see above) - convenient times to fit all schedules. Make regular use of the sacrament of reconciliation—Saturdays at 3:00 PM in the Cathedral.
- ◆ Follow the scriptural readings for the season of Advent, you can find them on the front page of the bulletin.
- ◆ Attend mass when possible.
- ◆ Spend time in Adoration with Jesus

**Longing - Watching - Waiting!**