



The Vergers Voice

The news blog of the Vergers Guild

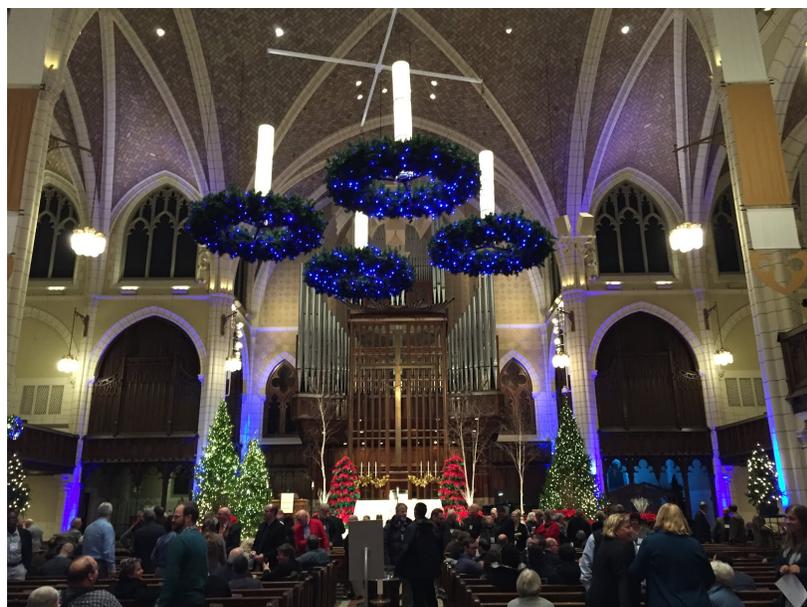
Welcome to the [Vergers Voice](#), the official news blog of the [Vergers Guild of the Episcopal Church](#). Also known as the VGEC, we are located on the web at vergers.org and facebook.com/vergerguild the #1 online resources for vergers world-wide.

For information about submitting news and announcements to the blog, click [HERE](#). Contact news@vergers.org for help.



Saturday, December 5, 2015

Advent Wreaths



Now that's an Advent Wreath!

By Ken Holloway, News Manager, VGEC

In exploring Advent Wreath customs, I found so much written about them that I just had to do what all systems engineers do: decompose the subject to its lowest-level elements, start with those fundamentals and try to pick the best comments and illustrations for this week's blog.

If you google "[episcopal church advent wreath](#)," then click on "[Images](#)," you will see many versions of our wreaths showing the individuality of local parish custom. Clever ideas include using the paschal candle stand to support the wreath, using votive candles, a hanging wreath, and a giant (easily ten feet in diameter) suspended wreath.

The [Episcopal Church](#) says that the [Advent Wreath](#) is, "A circle of greenery, marked by four candles that represent the four Sundays of the season of Advent. An additional candle is lit as each new Sunday is celebrated in Advent. Advent wreaths are used both in churches and in homes for devotional purposes. The candles may be blue, purple, or lavender, depending on local custom. Some Advent wreaths include a white candle in the center known as the "Christ Candle," which is lit on Christmas Eve."

The Rev. William Saunders, a Catholic priest, has written, "The History of the Advent Wreath" for the Catholic Education Resource Center. In it, he says, "The mood of Advent is expressed in the liturgical color, purple. It depicts a feeling of quiet dignity, royalty and repentance. Purple was the traditional color of a king's robe; the coming Christ as King of kings. Advent, like Lent, is a time for solemn and sober thought about one's sins, leading to repentance. It denotes a quiet time for watching, waiting and praying for Christ to come again, personally and universally. An alternate color for Advent is blue, the color of hope."

Search vergersvoice.org

Subscribe to vergersvoice.org by email

All members of the VGEC are automatically subscribed to vergersvoice.org when they join. If you are not a member, visit try.vergers.org to start at 6-month free trial membership.

If you want to subscribe to the blog without joining the VGEC, enter your email address below and click submit:



Contribute to vergersvoice.org

For information about submitting news and announcements to the blog, click [HERE](#). Contact news@vergers.org for help.



vergersvoice.org Blog Archive:

- ▶ [2016](#) (8)
- ▼ [2015](#) (46)
 - ▼ [December 2015](#) (1)
 - [Advent Wreaths](#)
 - ▶ [November 2015](#) (2)
 - ▶ [October 2015](#) (3)
 - ▶ [September 2015](#) (4)
 - ▶ [August 2015](#) (4)
 - ▶ [July 2015](#) (5)
 - ▶ [June 2015](#) (7)
 - ▶ [May 2015](#) (5)
 - ▶ [April 2015](#) (3)
 - ▶ [March 2015](#) (4)
 - ▶ [February 2015](#) (4)
 - ▶ [January 2015](#) (4)
- ▶ [2014](#) (50)
- ▶ [2013](#) (17)
- ▶ [2012](#) (12)
- ▶ [2011](#) (10)
- ▶ [2010](#) (15)
- ▶ [2009](#) (2)



In Advent, we have "...joy in hope. Advent stresses not so much fulfillment as anticipation of fulfillment: the Lord is coming! Christians have great expectations of Christ's coming again. As a family looks forward to a son returning from a war and as a bride anticipates her wedding day, so a Christian looks forward with joy to Christ's coming. It is the quiet joy of anticipation and not the joy of celebration of a past event."

So the fundamental elements of Advent wreaths are the color of the candles (blue, purple, red, white or lavender), using a pink candle for the 3rd Sunday in Advent (or not), adding a white or gold "Christ Candle" in the center, what the base looks like, and how to display the wreath. Can we try to make this a more complex subject than just celebrating Advent? We Episcopalians do try! Read on...

Why the pink candle for the 3rd week? [The Rev. Tim Schenck](#), Rector of St. John the Evangelist Episcopal Church in Hingham, MA, [comments](#), in part, "First of all, we refer to the Third Sunday in Advent as Gaudete Sunday because the introit for the mass begins "Gaudete in Domino semper: iterum dico, gaudete" meaning "Rejoice in the Lord always: again I say rejoice."



While much of the penitential nature of the season has been lost in favor of hopeful expectation, some of the readings still do sound this note. The Third Sunday has traditionally been a respite from the penitential themes of Advent and emphasizes instead the joy of the coming of the Lord.

"Thus many view the pink candle as emphasizing joy. As with most things liturgical, however, there is no consensus. Some associate the candle with Mary and perhaps there's confusion because "Mothering Sunday" — the Fourth Sunday in Lent — is the other occasion for rose-colored vestments. This is a slight misnomer, however, because Mothering Sunday refers not to Our Lady but to an old practice in England where the rich gave their servants the Sunday off to go home and visit their mothers. Indeed, Mary appears in the readings for the Fourth Sunday in Advent, not the third. And, yes, some parishes light a pink candle on the Fourth Sunday of Advent rather than the Third, further muddying the waters."

The [Church of England](#), in its [document addressing Advent](#), comments, "The Advent Wreath has four red or blue candles in a ring around a white or gold candle. Alternatively, there may be three purple candles, reflecting the liturgical colour for Advent, with a pink candle for the Third Sunday, when rose-pink vestments are traditionally worn. The first candle is lit on Advent Sunday; additional ones are lit, one on each Sunday, and the white or gold one on Christmas Day.

"The new candle each week may appropriately be lit during the Prayers of Penitence. In this case the material entitled 'Prayers of Penitence at the Advent Wreath' is used. Alternatively, the candles may be lit after the Gospel Reading, before the Peace, or after Communion, where the prayer(s) used at the lighting becomes a natural Post-Communion prayer. All five candles may appropriately be alight during services through the Christmas season.

"There are several traditions about the meaning or theme of each candle. The scheme that accords best with the Common Worship Principal Service Lectionary is:

- Advent 1 The Patriarchs
- Advent 2 The Prophets
- Advent 3 John the Baptist
- Advent 4 The Virgin Mary
- Christmas Day The Christ

"Each of the four Sundays then reminds us of those who prepared for the coming of Christ. 'The Patriarchs' can naturally focus on Abraham, our father in faith, and David, the ancestor in whose city Jesus was born. 'The Prophets' gives an opportunity to reflect on the way the birth of the Messiah was 'foretold'. John, who proclaimed the Saviour, and Mary, who bore him in her womb, complete the picture."

You can observe that there is not a succinct summary of the church lore around the subject of Advent Wreaths! Our sincerest prayer is that your parish family embraces Advent with anticipation of the coming of Christ, no matter what color your candles.

Abstract: What is the history of Advent wreaths? What do they symbolize? Does it matter what color the candles are? What about that pink candle? For a simple seasonal symbol of faith, the Advent Wreath is much discussed and opined upon. Let's take a look at our traditional ellipse of evergreen, adorned with candles (of many varieties and meanings).



- [2010 VGEC Archives](#)
- [2009 VGEC Archives](#)
- [2008 VGEC Archives](#)
- [2007 VGEC Archives](#)
- [2006 VGEC Archives](#)
- [2005 VGEC Archives](#)
- [2004 VGEC Archives](#)
- [2003 VGEC Archives](#)
- [2002 VGEC Archives](#)
- [2001 VGEC Archives](#)
- [2000 VGEC Archives](#)
- [1999 VGEC Archives](#)
- [1998 VGEC Archives](#)
- [1997 VGEC Archives](#)
- [1996 VGEC Archives](#)
- [1995 VGEC Archives](#)
- [1994 VGEC Archives](#)
- [1993 VGEC Archives](#)
- [1992 VGEC Archives](#)
- [1991 VGEC Archives](#)
- [1990 VGEC Archives](#)
- [1989 VGEC Archives](#)



 +1 Recommend this on Google

No comments:

Post a Comment

Thank you for your comment. We will review your comment and approve to the blog just as soon as possible. We try to get to all emails within a few hours. If you need help, please contact Ken Holloway at ken@vergersvoice.org. Thank you for your interest in the Verger's Voice blog!

Comment as: Eileen Brightw ▼ Sign out

Publish Preview Notify me

Links to this post

[Create a Link](#)

[Newer Post](#)

[Home](#)

[Older Post](#)

Subscribe to: [Post Comments \(Atom\)](#)

