

**Crawfordville United Methodist Church
Hanging of the Greens Service
December 2, 2020**

ADVENT WREATH

Isaiah 40:3-5

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill made low. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed.”

The Advent Wreath is a vivid symbol of preparation. The lighting of a new candle each of the four weeks before Christmas reminds us that something is happening, but more is yet to come. The circle of evergreens reminds us of the everlasting covenant offered in the birth of Jesus. The four candles symbolize HOPE, PEACE, JOY AND LOVE. May the light sent from God shine in the darkness to show us the way of salvation.

PARAMENTS

Jeremiah 23:5-6

“The days are surely coming says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous branch, and He shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In His days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which He will be called: “The Lord is our Righteousness.””

We have placed the Advent paraments, which are purple, a royal color to remind us of the King of Kings, who came to be the "Light of the World."

HOLLY AND IVY

Isaiah 53:3a, 4a, 5-6

“He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; Surely He has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases. But He was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; Upon Him was the punishment that made us whole. And by His bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”

In ancient times, holly and ivy were considered signs of Christ's passion. Their prickly leaves suggest the crown of thorns, the red berries the blood of the Savior. As we place the holly and ivy, let us rejoice in the coming of Jesus our Savior.

WREATHS AND GARLAND

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, among them a light has shined. For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given. And the government will be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

From ancient times, evergreens have been considered a symbol of eternity, a sign of God's everlasting nature. Isaiah tells us that there will be no end to the reign of the Messiah. Therefore, we hang wreaths shaped in circles, and place garlands of green, as a sign of everlasting life. These are symbols of Christ's gift of eternal life and of the celebration of Christmas itself.

EVERGREEN TREE

Micah 5:2, 4

“But you, O Bethlehem, from you shall come forth one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from ancient days. And He shall stand and feed His flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God. And they shall live secure, for now He shall be great to the ends of the earth; and He shall be the one of peace.”

In ancient times the cedar was revered as the tree of royalty. It also signified immortality and was used for purification. We have placed this tree in the sanctuary as a symbol of Christ, who reigns as King forever, and whose coming will purify our hearts.

TREE LIGHTING

John 1: 1-5, 9-14

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the Beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and without Him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in Him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through Him, yet the world did not know Him. He came to what was His own, and His own people did not accept Him. But to all who received Him, who believed in His name, He gave power to become children of God, who were born not of the blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen His glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.”

As our final preparation for the coming of Jesus, the Light of the World, we will light the Chrismon tree. And in this time of Advent, whenever you see a lighted tree, let it call to mind the One who brings light into our darkness, healing in our brokenness, and peace to all who will receive Him. May this tree, arrayed in beauty and splendor, remind us of the life-giving cross of Christ, that we may always rejoice in the new life that shines in hearts.