The Advent Wreath
Tony Cosentino, Renfrew County CDSB
Virtue Link: Faith, Hope, Love, Justice, Temperance, Fortitude

The Advent wreath is rich in Christian symbolism. It is made of evergreen boughs formed in a circle. The Advent wreath holds four candles: three purple and one pink; some wreaths also have a white candle in the centre.

Green: The Colour of Life and Hope
The wreath is made of evergreen boughs. Green is the colour of life. It reminds us of the newborn life of Jesus our Saviour. It also reminds us of the gift of new and eternal life we received at baptism. The colour green is also the colour of hope. Christian hope tells us that we can build a better world by living the Good News of Jesus’ Gospel. Christian hope also tells us that nothing can overcome God’s love for us in Christ.

Candles: Light of the World, Faith
The candles represent light: Jesus, the Light of the world, who shines in our darkness, and shows us the way to the Father. The candle also symbolizes God’s gift of faith. By faith, we say “I trust you” to God; by faith, we know we are God’s beloved children; by faith, we walk with Jesus as members of his body, the Church.

Purple: Royalty and Penance
There are three purple candles: one for the first, the second and fourth weeks of Advent. Purple is the symbol of royalty and penance. Purple reminds us of Jesus’ coming as Prince of Peace, and King. Our Advent prayer, acts of kindness and self-denial help make our hearts ready to welcome Jesus our Lord, as he comes to us on Christmas Day.

Pink: Joy
Pink is the colour of joy. The pink candle is used in third Sunday of Advent, called Joyful Sunday (Gaudete Sunday in Latin). On this day, people traditionally relax their penances and joyfully sing the Gloria at mass as a foretaste of the coming joy of the Christmas season.

White: Jesus
The white candle at the centre of the Advent wreath is lit on Christmas day. The white candle represents Jesus, the pure and spotless Lamb of God, born of Mary to lead us to the house of the Father. He is the fullness of our Christmas joy!
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