

The History of the Christmas Tree

beautifully decorated evergreen tree, with coloured lights ablaze; inspires many warm memories of Christmases long past. The Christmas tree has become one of the most beloved and well known holiday symbols.

Why do we have a decorated tree? In the 7th Century a monk from Devonshire went to Germany to teach the word of God.

Legend has it that he used the triangular shape of the fir tree to describe the Holy Trinity of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

He converted people began to revere the fir tree as God's Tree.

Another legend tells in the early 16th Century, Martin Luther the founder of the Protestant religion, was walking through the woods late one night. As it was clear, many stars were shining through the branches of the trees, giving the impression of twinkling lights. Luther was so inspired by the beauty of the sight that he cut down a small evergreen and brought it home.

He recreated the stars by putting candles on the tree's branches.

Early Christmas trees were often decorated with apples, nuts, cookies, popcorn and candies. The invention of electricity in the early 20th century and the use of electrical Christmas lights helped spread their use.

Gradually the tree has been transformed from a somewhat scraggly and slightly lopsided piece of greenery into a joyful symbol of Christmas.

Advent Prayer

Let us pray:

Loving God, we come with joy to worship you, rejoicing that in Christ you became human and lived on this earth.

We love this Christmas season,

we know the story so well,

yet we get so busy with the many things that need to be done: the gifts to purchase, wrap and deliver;

the cards and letters that need to be written;

the food, the parties, the preparations for Christmas day —

so busy that we forget that your coming is central to all we do. As we come now in this season of Advent,

remembering the story of your birth as we decorate our tree,

remind us of the love you have for us and for all people,

remind us of the reason for your coming among us,

kindle in us a deep desire to make room in our hearts and lives for you,

and let us sense again the wonder of your love and grace. Amen

Our Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,

Hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

Your will be done

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our sins,

As we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation,

But deliver us from evil.

For yours is the kingdom and the power

and the glory forever. Amen.