

## **Candles**

Candles are a great feature of our worshipping life at St. Paul's, not only at the Eucharist but also in processions, funerals, baptism and the votive candles lit by those who come into the church during the week and on Sunday to pray.

Candles symbolise the light of God in Christ, perhaps most familiarly encountered in the Biblical texts of St. John's Gospel – *'the light shines in darkness'* (John 1. 5) and *'I am the light of the world'* (John 8.12).

If you are in church early on Sunday morning you will see the server lighting the 'big six', he will start by lighting the right nearest the centre. This symbolizes Christ sitting at God's the right hand. This is the last candle to be extinguished after the service (except in Eastertide when the Paschal candle is the last).

During the Eucharist you will see servers process with lighted candles they are known as acolytes. Their candles illuminate and flank the processional cross and light the Gospel as it is read amongst the people.

During the Advent season five candles amongst evergreen are displayed in the sanctuary, symbolising aspect of the imminent coming of Christ – three purple, one pink and one white. They are lit sequentially on the four Sundays of Advent, with the white candle, representing Christ, lit on Christmass Day.

Here at St. Paul's the Blessed Sacrament is reserved in the Tabernacle in the Lady Chapel, there is a veil which hangs over the door. To mark its presence a white light is kept burning.

### **Paschal Candle**

This candle is renewed each year and is the focus of the service of light at the Easter Vigil. Those who have attended this service will recall the new Paschal Candle a symbol of the Risen Christ being processed though the church. At the Easter Vigil the sacred minister traces a cross on the candle, the Greek letters Alpha and Omega and the year – Christ yesterday and today, the beginning and the end. Five incense grains are inserted symbolising the five wounds of Christ. The candle is then lit from the fire and processed into the church.

The candle is then placed in a stand in the Sanctuary where it remains for the 50 days of Eastertide, until the feast of Pentecost. It is then placed in the Baptistry.

It is then lit for all baptisms and funerals (when it is placed near the coffin). From it at every baptism is lit a candle given as a sign that "you have received the light of Christ".

### **Votive Candles**

Candles are a symbol of an offering of pray to God – at St. Paul's we have an area before the statue of Our Lady where prayer can be offered and candles lit at any time the church is open.