



ADVENT



CHRISTMAS

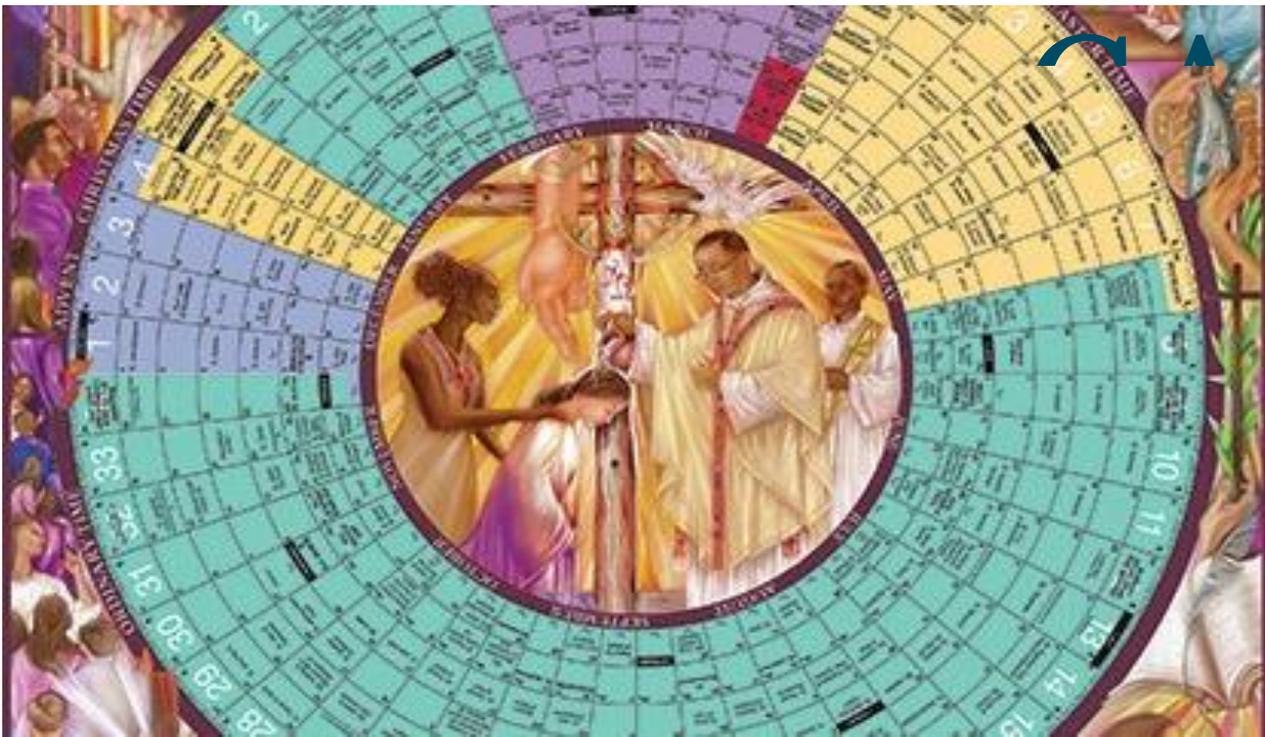


EPIPHANY



LENT

# THE BIBLE AND CHRISTIAN SEASONS



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"anno Domini  
nostri Jesu  
Christi"

***Once we understand why we do certain things in worship we then grow stronger in our spiritual lives.***

### **Importance of the Liturgical Calendar**

While the Bible does not list a liturgical calendar, there are several events that we learn from scriptures to understand God and what He wants for and from us. The Liturgical Calendar allows us to celebrate the Christian season or events. Even from very early text we find the importance of sacred time. It was a vehicle of teaching about the faith (Exodus 12-13).

Examples:

- Nehemiah 8 The story of the community gathering to hear the word followed by a great celebration.
- Matthew 28 -The sermon on the Mount
- Luke 4:14-21- The synagogues carried on the tradition of gathering to hear the word.

### **Meaning Behind Celebrations**

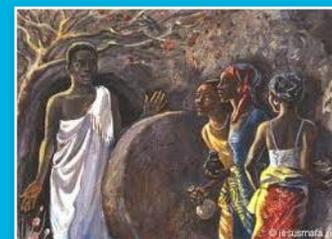
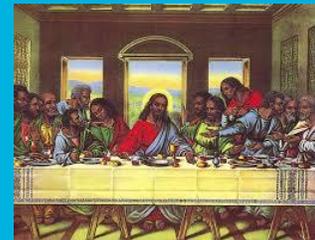
-Jewish Celebration- Focus on Exodus and Deliverances from Egyptian.

-Christian Calendar-The life of Jesus and ministry of Jesus.

Why Jesus? (*Isiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23 Micah 5:2*)

- God sent His son Jesus Christ.
- The Messiah- the promised deliver of the Jewish Nation. Redeemer!

## *Holy Week*



- Emmanuel or Immanuel- God with us! Jesus was the incarnate of God.

### **Liturgical Calendar-Christian Season**

Celebrates the life of Christ.

Brings before us the life of Christ and his impact to the world.

Removes the distance of the past to the present.

Provides new meaning to our worship.

Provides opportunities to reflect on scripture.

Gives reflection of Jesus life in the world today.



### **Historical Elements of the Liturgical Calendar**

Christians use time as a language through which to express worship.

It is through actual historical events in which God revealed Himself.

Time is revealed by concentered acts of God.

“Time talks-” Time reveals what is most important and most significant in our lives.

The Liturgical Calendar allows us to remember the gifts that we cannot create but can only accept.

The Christian seasons help us to sought out our real responsibilities.

The priorities of the early church faith were seen through the Christian’s of the of second, third and fourth centuries organized time.

The calendar evolved over centuries.

Several prominent Christians and Theologians influenced the reshaping of the Liturgical Calendar: Examples: Martin Luther John Wesley and Vatican II

Post Vatican II started the ecumenical lectionary. The Lectionary for mass is the most carefully prepared in all Christian history. Many protestant churches use the lectionary.

The Common Lectionary was published only in 1983 and was revised in 1992 (Revised Common Lectionary). It’s used in English speaking protestant churches throughout the world. It allows Old Testament narratives to unfold during the season after Pentecost.

The latest calendar is the result of careful attempts to recapture the structure and meaning of the oldest calendar of the fourth century.

# Christian Seasons

## **Advent**

*Awaiting the coming of a Savior*

*(Isiah 61)*

Advent is the First day of the Christian Calendar.

It's both a time of giving thanks for the gift of Christ to us in past time and a time for anticipation of his second coming.

The celebration helps people see Jesus as not only a divine being but as a normal person too.

Example: a baby born to a family with animals.

During Advent we use our senses to awaken our recollections of what Christ did for us.

The advent means the coming. It includes the four Sundays before Christmas. It's a time of waiting and preparation. What are we waiting for?

Themes reflective of who Christ was- Hope, peace, faith, joy and love.

The first Advent celebration began in the middle of the sixteen century.

The color used in Advent is purple. Why? Purple was a rare and very expensive dye in early Christian times. Color of royalty. At Advent, the color represents Christ as the King.

Evergreens- symbolize new life and life that does not die.

Red - symbolize the drops of blood Christ shed for us.

Wreath- reminds us of God's eternal love.

## **Christmas**

*(The birth of the Savior)*

*Mathew 1:18-23, Matthew 2:1-12 , Luke 2:1-4, Luke 2:7,Luke 2:11-14 , Luke 2:21 and Revelations 12:1-5)*

In the King James version of the Christmas story, Christ is referred to as the dayspring which means start of a new day or the start of a new era. (Luke 1:78)

The Christmas season begins December 25 until January 6. (12 Days) Time between the birth and the visit of the wise men.

Evergreen- remind us that as evergreen stays green during the cold times of the year, God's love is forever with us even during cold winter times in our lives.

Lights on the tree-Christ has come as the light of the world to a troubled world. We are reminded to be a light to others.

Wreath -remind us that like a circle God's love is endless

### **Epiphany**

*(Matthew 2:1-12)*

Epiphany means to go forth. The wise men set out their epiphany to find Jesus Christ, When they found him, they left to return home going forth and began spreading the good news.

It's time to remind us that Christ is for people of all nations.

Color- Green symbolize growth and hope

Lasts until Ash Wednesday.

### **Lent**

*(Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13 and Luke 4:1-13)*

A forty day event with the period of preparation for the highlight of our celebration, Easter.

Easter begins on Ash Wednesday and ends with the Easter service.

In the past, Lent was observed with a very strict fasting.

The forty days do not include Sundays.

Sunday is considered mini feast or feast days.

The period of Lent includes forty days weekdays and six Lord days.

40 is significant in the Bible:

The rain fell on Noah's ark for 40 days.

Israel was at peace during the last 40 years of Gideon's c life.

Twice Moses was on the mountain for forty days.

Goliath challenge the Israelites army for 40 days before David killed him.

The Kings Saul David Salomon and Joash were reported to have ruled for 40 years each.

Eli was judge of Israel for 40 years.

Ezekiel predicted that Egypt with lie in ruins for four years.

The Hebrews were in exile for 40 years.

Jesus fasted 40 days in the wilderness.

After the resurrection there was 40 days when Jesus was revealed.

The number 40 indicated an amount of time it took for accomplishing what was needed to be done.

Therefore, 40 days was set aside for converts to make special preparation for baptism which took place on Easter Sunday.

The 40 days represented the time of preparation of Jesus in the wilderness.

### **Holy Week** (*part of Lent season*)

*(John 13:1-19, Mark 11:1-110, Luke 23:43: John 19:26-27: Matthew 27:46 & Mark 15:34 John 19:28: John 19:30: Luke 23:46)*

Holy week includes Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.

Palm Sunday helps us to remember when Christ rode into on the donkey into Jerusalem.

When King's came into a city war they rode a horse, when they came into a city in peace they rode on a donkey.

Christ came into Jerusalem as the king in peace.

Some churches choose to call the Sunday before Easter "Passion Sunday" to celebrate the beginning of Jesus agonizing journey to the cross.

Passion comes from the Latin word that means to suffer this is the same word that is the root of our word 'patients.'

Many churches include a taste of Christ suffering in this Sunday experience for those who cannot be part of a Good Friday service.

On Thursday of holy week we celebrate Maundy Thursday.

Maundy comes from the Latin word *mandarin*.

This is the same word that is the root of *mandate* the Latin word meaning to trust or to order or command.

John 13:34 -35 we learned after the meal Jesus gave his disciples a new commandment "to love one another so that people would know that they were his disciples.

The arrest of Jesus after his meal with his disciples was actually on Friday according to the Jewish custom of counting days from sundown to sundown.

Any remembrance of the arrest comes on Friday.

Friday of Holy Week is called Good Friday.

We can call it good because we live on the resurrection side of the day. We know the outcome and what Christ did and went through for us.

Good Friday for us is the time to reflect on the suffering of Christ, building the contrast between Jesus death and the resurrection.

We cannot fully appreciate the resurrection until we have gone through the suffering.

Churches usually don't celebrate communion on this day.

### **Easter Season**

*(Matthew 28:1-20; Mark 16:1-20; Luke 24:1-49; John 20:1-21:25.)*

Easter season begins with Easter Sunday and extends to Pentecost Sunday. it needs a whole 50 days to celebrate properly.

Christians begin our celebration of the resurrection of Christ on Easter

Easter is actually a borrowed season and the name from the pre-Christian days.

People have always adapted symbols from surrounding villages and made them their own.

Many of the Old Testament practices were adaptations of preexisting counterpart in the Canaanite religion. Examples animal sacrifice, temple worship, circumcision, priest and prophet.

Passover may have been adapted from two Canaanite festivals- the spring birthing of livestock and celebration of early barley harvest.

The name Easter has an uncertain origin.

Many believe that it comes from the Anglo-Saxon goddess of renewal of life and spring named Eastre or Eostre.

Christian resurrection signifies our renewal of life. Thus, it would not be surprising for us to adapt the name in celebration for our purposes.

Many Christian adopt the name Resurrection Sunday instead of Easter.

We can date the resurrection to the spring because it followed the celebration of Passover in the spring.

Passover may fall on different days of the week.

The early Jewish Christians celebrate the day of the resurrection on the third day after Passover regardless of the day of the week but the Gentile Christians insisted that it be celebrated on Sunday.

In 325 C. E. the Council of Nicaea set the date of celebration as the first Sunday after the full moon is the spring equinox.

That date may vary by as many as 35 days. So, sometimes Easter comes in March and sometimes in April some Christians and other parts of the world use different dates.

### **Pentecost** (*Act 2:1-13*)

Pentecost is sometimes called the birth of the church.

The time when the followers of Christ really bonded together into a body ignited with the Holy Spirit and prepared to spread the word.

The Hebrew celebration of Pentecost came at the close of the early harvest. Remember that this was a subtropical climate and Harvest came early.

People from many countries were in Jerusalem for the celebration.

In the midst of the disciples searching for direction, the Holy Spirit came to their aid just as Jesus had promised.

Peter urged people to repent and be baptized, which was the start of a tradition to baptize a person at Pentecost and some churches use this day for confirmation day.

In some places particularly England, Pentecost goes by the name of Whitsunday or White Sunday because of the practice of baptizing new members is on this day.

In the early church new members wore white robes when they were baptized and many churches still carry on this tradition.

The Hebrew celebration of the now called Pentecost had several names.

-The Day of First Fruits

-The Week of Shabuoth- Biblical reference to this festival is found in Leviticus 23:15- 16.

The Day of Pentecost is determined by the cycle of the moon. Therefore, like Easter it changes every year.

The color for Pentecost is red.

The seasonal color for Pentecost is red as the indicator of the flame of the holy spirit.

### **Ordinary Time**

*(Mark 16:15, Matthew 24:14, Psalms 96:3 and Revelations 14:6-7)*

The Use of the word “ordinary” for the time frame does not mean mundane or common.

Comes from the word ordinal which means simply counted or chronological time, the time in order.

It begins on the Sunday after Advent (or Christ the king Sunday).

This season after Pentecost places emphasis on spreading the gospel.

Why? Since the Holy Spirit brought communication skills to the disciples at Pentecost.

Christians remember their mission to carry the message beyond Pentecost and into the world.

They must come down from the mountaintop and live in the real world with their Christianity.

It's a time for exploring peace, forgiveness and building community, not only in the churches in towns, but around the world as well.

This is also a time when they explore creation and what it means to be created by God and to be co-creator's with God.

Some churches break up this time into two sections

1. Pentecostal season lasting until the next Sunday of August
2. Kingdomtide or Dominiontide -the last Sunday in August until Advent

Kingdomtide is the time when we work to build up the kingdom.

## **Other special Days**

### **All Saints Day**

*(Ephesians 5:8-13)*

Started in 9th Century

Many Christians see Halloween as the dark side of a holiday, symbolizing life without Christ.

All Saints Day (November 1) is the bright side, symbolizing those persons who live in the past and those living today who follow Christ.

Most Pentecost churches consider “saints as all those who follow Christ rather than only those determined so by the official church body.”

We (AMEC) do not celebrate this day.

Celebrated by the United Methodist Church.

### **Bible Day**

On this special day,

Church members recognize their children by presenting Bibles to them.

The Bible is presented to the parent first. The parent then presents it to the child.

Reason: the parent has responsibility with the help of the church in sharing Faith with the child.

### **Reformation Sunday**

During the 16th century the church doors were used as a community bulletin board.

On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther posted his statements that begin the Protestant Reformation.

### **Thanksgiving**

Biblical roots extend to Old Testament where Hebrews celebrated three feasts of

Thanksgiving: Passover (released from slavery to Egypt):

Pentecost (feast of first of first fruits)

Feast of Tabernacle's or Booths (Sukkoth or inter gathering, an eight day end of fall harvest festival.)

### **Trinity Sunday**

*(Matthew 28:19)*

Celebrated the Sunday after Pentecost.

Recognizing the way that we celebrate God and three persons, revealed to us as our creator or parent. as in human form to Jesus and as the Holy Spirit of God within us.

### **Worldwide Communion**

(1 Corinthian 10:17)

The first Sunday in October is celebrated as world wide communion Sunday .

Christians everywhere celebrate communion as we recognize our unity in Christ throughout the world.

Is a good opportunity reflect on our role in the community around us as well as the well.

### **Key Vocabulary**

**Liturgy** - a eucharistic rite. A rite or body of rites prescribed for public worship. A customary repertoire of ideas, phrase or observances. We call the form that we use in a worship service “liturgy” which means the work of the people. Clergy and laypersons are the people.

**Chancel**- the area at the front of the sanctuary is raised symbolizing that we lift God above anything else.

**Narthex**- the entrance room to the sanctuary. It helps us to make the transition to into a spirit of worship and reminds us to prepare for worship.

**Nave**- the place where the congregation sits in the church. This word stems from the Latin word for ship; Navis. The ship or boat is a symbol for the church. The church helps us to sail safely across the rough seas of life.

**Benediction**- Not a prayer but a sending forth. Its appropriate to lift your head to receive the blessing and acknowledge the word being sent forth.

**Baptism**- the baptismal font remains n the chancel even when there isn't a baptism as a reminder each Sunday of our baptism vows. Water is used reminds us that God can remove past sins,

Three forms of baptism:

1. Sprinkling-God's love showers down on us like rain
2. Pouring- God's love is poured down on us
3. Immersion- we are totally immersed in God's love

**Bible**-Large bibles sit at the alter or communion table to reminds signify the importance of the Bible in or lives.

**Communion**- symbolize us accepting christ into our bodies. There are several names we use. Eucharist, communion, Last Supper or Lord's Supper. The words “Do This in remembrance of me are inscribed on the front of the communion table or alter as remembrance that Christ instructed us to celebrate this meal as he did with the disciples.

**Creed**- List of statements and belief. Apostles Creed -written 2000 years ago to identify the beliefs of the early church.

**Congregation** - The word is derived from a verb meaning to “flock together.” The word church comes from a New Testament word translated as assembly. Thus, the people, not the building are the church. The building is the space for the true church to meet as it gives reminders of our vocation as Christians.

**Hymns**- Many of the hymns come from scripture. The scripture references are on the pages of the hymn. Charles Wesley- founder of the Methodist church wrote many hymns. Psalms were the Hymns of the Hebrews. We use them as songs, readings and in responsive readings.

**Candles**- were used for reading scripture during early Christian services as light. Today, candles are recognized as a symbol of Christ bring light into a world of darkness. Two candles at the alter remind us that Jesus is both divine and human.

**Lectionary**- A list or books of Bibles appointed to be read in church worship service. May focus on special day of theological uses. It may also follow the liturgical calendar.

**Passing the Peace** - In our corporate or congregational worship it is important to relate to other Christians. We cannot do that without knowing them this is why we have time of greeting in the service. This reflects the early church's custom of “Passing the Peace.”

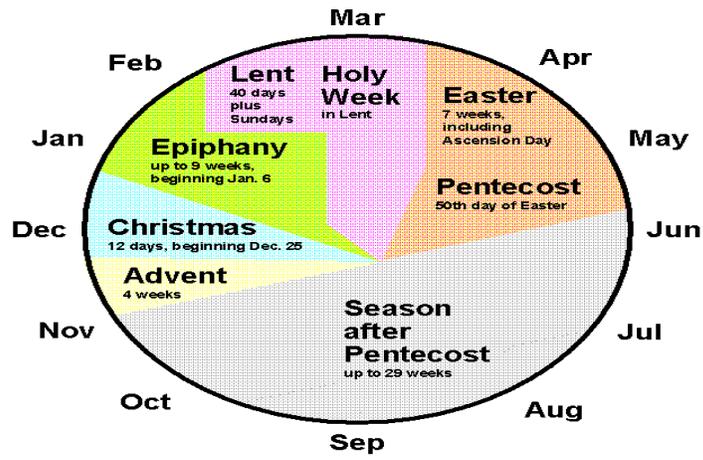
**Sacraments**-the word actually means sacred moments. A time when humans come in contact with the divine.

**Sanctuary**- Means a safe space or holy space. The ceiling are high symbolizing us reaching upward to God and recognize that God is above us and all around us.

**Symbols**- flowers, plants, bible, colors. IHS, processional,

**Worship**-Worship is dialogue. At times we talk to God. Sometimes God talks to us. Sometimes the worship leaders and the choir talk for us through their words and sometime God talks through them through words. The worship service is a model of how we should relate to God and to others throughout the week. All of life should be worship, no matter where we are or what we do, It's not just a Sunday morning thing.

## Colors and Symbols



By Chaplain Mark @<https://internetmonk.com/archive/church-year-spirituality>

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## COLORS FOR THE A.M.E. CHRISTIAN YEAR

In the Christian year of our church, we recognize two cycles: the Christmas Cycle (Advent-Christmas-Epiphany) and the Easter Cycle (Lent-Easter-Pentecost). Within each cycle are a preparatory season symbolized by the color purple and a festival season symbolized by the color white. Between each cycle follows an ordinary time of growth symbolized by the color green in the Seasons After the Epiphany and After Pentecost. Therefore, there is a sequence of seasons using purple, white, and green in that order twice each year.

**PURPLE** is a color of both penitence and royalty used during the preparatory seasons of Advent and Lent. Alternative colors of royal blue or violet may also be used during Advent.

**WHITE** and **GOLD** are joyous and festive colors used during the Christmas and Easter seasons (except on the Day of Pentecost) and in other seasons on festive days such as Baptism of the Lord, Transfiguration, Trinity, All Saints, and Christ the King. White may also be used at weddings. At services of Holy Communion white linens on top of the Lord's Table are the tradition of the A.M.E. Church, and are used on the first Sunday, regardless of the Holy Season that is celebrated. Therefore, even if the first Sunday of the month is the first Sunday of Advent, the color used in the pulpit remains white.

**GREEN** is a color of growth used in the Seasons After the Epiphany and After Pentecost, except when special days call for white or red.

**RED** is a color of fire, symbolizing the Holy Spirit. It is used on the Day of Pentecost and at other times when the work of the Holy Spirit is emphasized. Red is also the color of blood - the blood of Christ and the blood of martyrs. Because of its intensity, red is most effective when used occasionally rather than continuously for a whole season. It is appropriate for evangelistic services, for ordinations and consecration, for church anniversaries and homecomings, Founder's Day, and for civil observances such as Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, and Thanksgiving. It may be used during Holy Week, beginning with Passion/Palm Sunday, to symbolize the blood of Christ.

**BLACK** is a color of death used on Good Friday and Holy Saturday and for funerals. Gray is its alternative.

Although the use of these colors is based on broad ecumenical tradition, other colors have been and are being used in Christian churches. Creativity and use of alternates with colors bring new meaning to the worship experience. Examples include African prints or variations, pink during the third week of Advent and black on Good Friday.

It is always a good policy when in doubt, to seek guidance from a presiding elder, senior pastor, Christian education director, or other person designated by the pastor. These persons will be helpful in providing information on appropriate colors for preparing the sanctuary.

## 2018 LITURGICAL COLOR CALENDAR

Additional information about the colors is listed on the back of this card.

JANUARY							JULY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
28	29	30	31				29	30	31				
FEBRUARY							AUGUST						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3				1	2	3	4
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
25	26	27	28				26	27	28	29	30	31	
MARCH							SEPTEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3							1
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	23 <sup>30</sup>	24	25	26	27	28	29
APRIL							OCTOBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
29	30						28	29	30	31			
MAY							NOVEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5				1	2	3	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31			25	26	27	28	29	30	
JUNE							DECEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2								1
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	23 <sup>30</sup>	24 <sup>31</sup>	25	26	27	28	29

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Take Aways...

When we celebrate the Christian season we bring the life of Christ into to our lives each month, week and day... beginning with every Sunday!

Our spirituality will grow.

*The seasons remind us that salvation is gift, offered to us in all its different aspects."*

*James White*

The Liturgical Calendar is, “ *The Churches year of Grace*”

*Picus Marsch*

We must remain careful not to worship gimmicks rather than God. When must be focused on meaning rather than the dressing up the service. Our focus should center around GOD!

When we celebrate the Christians seasons, events no longer become detached data from the past.

We relive salvation history through our Worship.

We begin to focus on the graces of God for us not our own efforts.

The whole year calls attention to God’s word not ours.

God’s work is made known in different ways due to changing events and needs every time and place in which Christians worship.

Time brings us closer to God

The Christian year is the means by which recognize all that matters of salvation history

When we recall the past events of salvation they come alive in the present power today.

Remembrance brings the original events back to us with all their meaning.

So -we continue to proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes. (1 Corinthians 11:26)

The various acts of rehearsing salvation history give us anew the benefits of what God has done for us in this past events.

Christ’s birth, baptism, death and resurrection and so on are all given to us again for our own appropriation to corporate reenactment of them.

These events no longer become detached data from the past but part of our own personal history as we live Salvation history by rehearsing it in our worship.

Worship is important! It reflects our living out our faith in light of what we value. The Liturgical Calendar is the foundation of Christian worship

The good news of the gospel is too wide and deep to be encompassed by a single service...even a whole season.

Each time a congregation gathers worship it is different.

Never exact, never the same people assembled in the same context of worship.

Christian worship reflects this and it's affirmation that every Sunday or special day is a different occasion event.

The entire organization of the calendar calls for attention.

We are called to proclaim the gospel by every means. The Christian year and the lectionary are two vital resources in keeping time with the church to make us better Christians.

## **Resources**

Teaching and Celebrating the Christian Calendar by Dela Halverson (Chalic Press, 2002)

Introduction to Christian Worship by James F. White (Abington Press, 2000)

<https://ameced.com/free-resources/>

[https://mattstone.blogs.com/photos/african\\_christian\\_art/jesus\\_africa.html](https://mattstone.blogs.com/photos/african_christian_art/jesus_africa.html)

<https://www.patheos.com/blogs/markdroberts/series/the-colors-of-the-christian-year/>

[www.jesusmafa.com](http://www.jesusmafa.com)

[https://www.santegidio.org/pageID/30040/langID/en/nPag/7/preghiera/en\\_2017\\_0409/EVERYDAY-PRAYER.html](https://www.santegidio.org/pageID/30040/langID/en/nPag/7/preghiera/en_2017_0409/EVERYDAY-PRAYER.html)

