

*The Church Calendar and
an Introduction to Prayer*

Class 9 of an Inquirer's
Class about Christianity and
The Episcopal Church

Revised 16 April 2007

Terms for Time

- Chronos
 - People's time
- Kairos
 - God's time

The Church Calendar

- Basic Components
 - The seven principle feasts of the church year
 - Christmas
 - Epiphany
 - Easter
 - Ascension
 - Pentecost
 - Trinity Sunday
 - All Saint's Day
 - Sundays
 - Lesser Feasts or Holy Days
 - Commemorations and Other Special Days

The Solar and Lunar Cycles

- Solar Cycle
 - The date of the birthday of Christ (Christmas), Epiphany (January 6), and All Saint's Day (November 1) occur on the same days each year.
- The Lunar Cycle
 - Easter Sunday is the first Sunday after the first full moon on or after the Spring Equinox (March 21) (BCP page 15).
- Since the solar and the lunar cycles do not start or end on the same calendar days of the year, how does the church calendar work?

The Principle Feasts

Easter

Ascension

Pentecost

Trinity Sunday

Variable Days

All Saint's Day

Christmas

Epiphany

Variable Days

Sundays

- All Sundays are feasts of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- Other specific feasts may be observed on, or be transferred to, a Sunday (see the web page or details).
- All other Feasts of our Lord, and all other Major Feasts appointed on fixed days in the Calendar, when they occur on a Sunday, are normally transferred to the first convenient open day within the week.
- Note that Sundays are not counted as part of that the 40 days of Lent.

The Lesser Feasts - 1

The following special holy days have precedence over other special observances:

- The Holy Name
- Saint John the Baptist
- The Presentation
- The Transfiguration
- The Annunciation
- Holy Cross Day
- The Visitation

The Lesser Feasts - 2

(A) Other Feasts

- All feasts of Apostles
- All feasts of Evangelists
- Saint Stephen
- The Holy Innocents
- Saint Joseph

The Lesser Feasts - 3

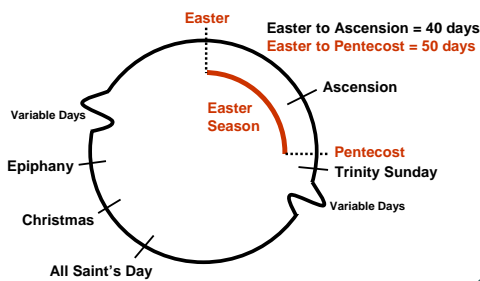
(B) Other Feasts (continued)

- Saint Mary Magdalene
- Saint Mary the Virgin
- Saint Michael and All Angels
- Saint James of Jerusalem
- Independence Day
- Thanksgiving Day

Commemorations and Other Special Days

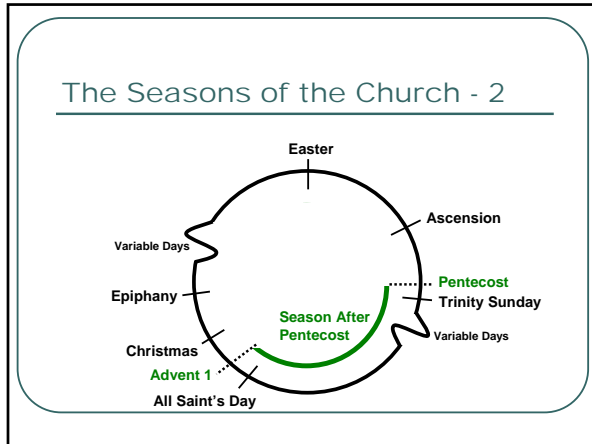
- Ash Wednesday
- Weekdays of Lent
- Holy Week
- Good Friday
- Feasts from *Lesser Feasts and Fasts*
- Feasts from *Lectionary Texts: Various Occasions and Occasional Services*

The Seasons of the Church - 1



Easter

Easter is the feast of Jesus' resurrection. The word probably derives from the Anglo-Saxon spring goddess "Eostre." Christians in England applied the word to the paschal feast. The date of Easter places Spring against the backdrop of lessons about creation and deliverance and the proclamations of the living Christ. The date of Easter always falls between Mar 22 and April 25 inclusive. We follow the Jewish custom of beginning our celebration of Easter at Sundown on the preceding Saturday with the Great Vigil of Easter.



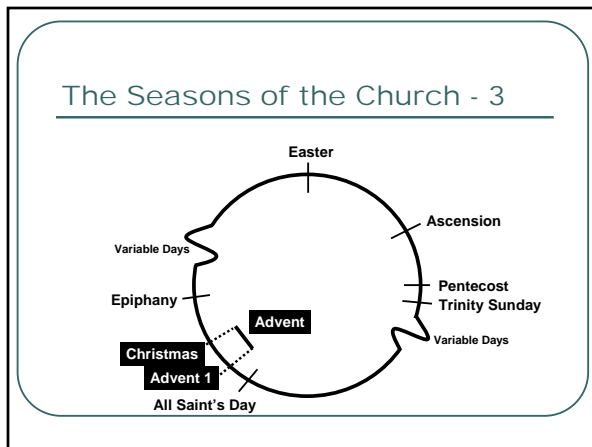
Pentecost Sunday

In recognition of the descending of the Holy Spirit that appeared as tongues of flame upon the heads of the gathered disciples, Pentecost Sunday is commemorated by the use of red. Pentecost Sunday occurs on the Seventh Sunday after Easter. It recognizes that the church is understood to be the body of Christ, drawn together and given life by the Holy Spirit.



The Season of Pentecost

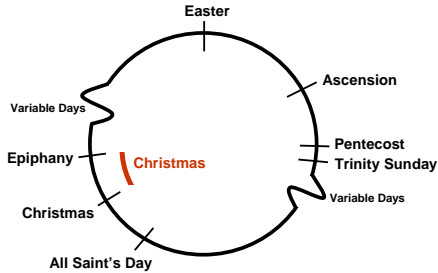
This is the longest season of the church year, spanning the period from approximately May/June through November (ending on the Saturday before the first Sunday of Advent).



Advent

The first season of the church year, beginning with the 4th Sunday before Christmas and continuing through the day before Christmas. The name is derived from the Latin meaning "coming." It is a season of preparation and expectation of the celebration of Jesus' nativity, and for the final coming of Christ in power and glory.

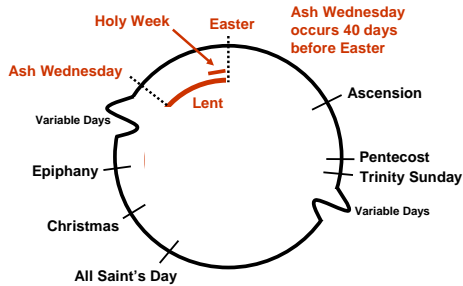
The Seasons of the Church - 4



Christmas

- The nativity of our Lord, December 25. It was first celebrated about 336.
- The date of December 25 as Jesus' birthday has no connection to anything historical.
- The date was probably chosen to oppose the feast of the Sun God (Saturn).

The Seasons of the Church - 5



Holy Week

- Holy Week evolved from the period when many Christians made pilgrimages to the Holy Land to venerate the places where Christ suffered during his final days with us.
- The rites we observe on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and the Vigil all evolved from these pilgrim experiences.
- There are special readings, and other special services and acts of devotion that take place during Holy Week. Holy Week ends at sundown on Holy Saturday (the Saturday before Easter Sunday).

Liturgical Clothing

- Clergy in the Episcopal Church wear a vast array of clothing for different liturgical settings.
- Over the years, the clothing worn for specific kinds of services has changed.
- More information about this is on the web site.

Vestments During Holy Week



Other Vestments - 1



Other Vestments - 2



Other Vestments - 3



Other Vestments - 3



Categories of Prayer

- Adoration
- Thanksgiving
- Confession
- Intercession
- Petition

Adoration

- Adoration is the lifting up of the heart and mind to God, asking nothing but to enjoy God's presence.
- This may be an experience that feels like God taking our breath away. We are humbled by this experience, but it is a short lived one. We only catch glimpses of God, and those glimpses cause us to spontaneously praise God.

Thanksgiving - 1

- We offer thanksgiving is offered to God for all the blessings of this life, for our redemption, and for whatever draws us closer to God. Basically we are grateful for the experience of creation.
- But we are "little" compared to God, and we often feel it is hard to properly express gratitude to God who is so very much bigger.

Thanksgiving - 2

- But if we listen to our inner self, we will find that feelings of gratitude are within us.
- This may be particularly true at meal time. Grace before meals is a great place to start to express thanksgiving for all kinds of things.

Confession - 1

- In confession, we acknowledge our limitations and our inability to follow (or even comprehend) God's will.
- We also acknowledge actions, words, or inaction that have caused harm to others. All of these things collectively fall into that "thing called sin."
- Sin is what separates us from God and from each other.

Confession - 2

- Sin is what separates us from God and from each other.
- When we acknowledge our sinfulness, we are admitting that we are sick, and that God is the source of health.
- When we confess, though, we need to be specific ("I lied to my friend"). The reason this is important, is that it can be diagnostic of a problem, and with good diagnosis, a "cure" is more likely.

Intercession - 1

- Intercession brings before God the needs of others. Prayers of intercession move us beyond ourselves into community. It is tempting to think of intercession as asking God for something, but actually, that is an act of petition.
- When we intercede, we place ourselves before authority (God) on behalf of another.

Intercession - 2

- This is the kind of prayer we do publicly in church each Sunday during the Prayers of the People (in addition to prayers of petition). Guenther believes that intercession is the most vital for solitary prayer because we turn to it when we feel the most anxious or helpless. We cannot stop the demise of a loved one with cancer, but we can name her in our prayers. We cannot undo the effects of a Tsunami, but we can remember the unknown homeless and wounded in our prayers. We pray in this way because we have faith that God will hear us.

Petition - 1

- This is probably the most common kind of prayer, because here we ask God for things for ourselves or others.
- This is not self-indulgence.

Petition - 2

- Jesus himself taught us that we need to be persistent in prayer for our own selves (Luke 11:5-13).
- Petitions are specific prayers in which we present our own needs and the needs of others, praying that God's will may be done.