Seasons of the Church Year

During the year, we take a deeper look at different understandings of God and his son Jesus Christ that we learn in scripture. The seasons of the church year are helpful ways of focusing church attention on different aspects of the Christian story. The practice of keeping the church year dates back to fifth century Jerusalem. Here are the seasons with a brief word about each:

Advent
From the Latin word Adventus, meaning “coming,” Advent is the first season of the church year. It begins four Sundays before Christmas and is set aside as a season to prepare for Christmas, Christ’s first coming, and to remember that he will come again.

Christmastime
This is the eleven days from Christmas Day until January 6, the start of Epiphany. It is a time for remembering Jesus’ birth and the idea of the Incarnation—God becoming human.

Epiphany
From January 6 until Ash Wednesday, which begins the season of Lent, is the season of Epiphany, which means “revealing” or “showing forth.” Epiphany is the season for remembering that Jesus came to be the savior of the whole world.

Lent
This is the season of preparation for Easter, which starts on Ash Wednesday and goes 40 weekdays and six Sundays to Easter. Lent is a time for self-examination and reflection.

Easter
This is the oldest and greatest day of celebration in the Christian Church. Easter is the day and season for remembering that Jesus not only died, but that he was raised from the dead. The season of Easter lasts 50 days from Easter Day to the Day of Pentecost.

Pentecost
The day of Pentecost celebrates the birth of the Christian Church as it is the day when the disciples felt the Holy Spirit come upon them and empower them to go out and tell Jesus’ story. The season lasts all through the summer until Advent.
An Introduction to this Annotated Holy Eucharist

This booklet is designed to provide a running commentary on the Eucharist Service. The center section contains the text from the Book of Common Prayer, while the shaded side column contains the commentary.

This service is known as communion, for in it we commune with God and also with each other as the Body of Christ. It is also known as Eucharist, which is the Greek word meaning “Thanksgiving.” In the Eucharist, we give thanks for what God has done for us in Jesus Christ.

The Eucharist is a service that sets aside time as we know it. The Eucharist brings both the past and the future to present reality as we remember Jesus life, death and resurrection and await his coming again. The service is like a drama that we all enter. The first act of the drama is “The Liturgy of the Word.” This first half of the service is based on Jewish worship, which preceded Christianity. God’s mighty acts in history are recalled through scripture and applied to our lives in the sermon. The second act of the drama will be “The Liturgy of the Table.”

The liturgy is not something that the clergy do and the congregation watches. This can be seen in the word “Liturgy” itself. Liturgy is a Greek word that comes from the root words for “people” and “work,” so the Liturgy is “the work of the people.” The liturgy is something that we all do together. The Greek leitourgia also means “the work for the people” and it is something God does for us as we gather to worship.

Catholic
The Nicene Creed describes the Church as catholic, which means universal. The Church is catholic when it proclaims the whole faith to all people. This does not imply any direct connection with the Roman Catholic Church.

Collect
A collect is a particular form of prayer, which names some attribute of God or something God has done, asks for something specific in response to this attribute of God and then closes with praise to God.

Eucharist
Also known as Communion or The Lord’s Supper, this comes from the Greek word meaning “Thanksgiving.” In the Eucharist, we give thanks for what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. All baptized Christians, from any church background, are welcome to receive communion.

Liturgy
The public prayer and worship of God, liturgy is a Greek word that comes from the root words for “people” and “work,” so the Liturgy is “the work of the people.” The liturgy is something that we all do together, not something the priest does on our behalf. But the Greek leitourgia also means “the work for the people” and it is something God does for us as we gather to worship.

Redemption
This refers to the way that God has worked to reconcile all creation to Godself through the person of Jesus Christ.

Sacrament
An outward sign or symbol through which we receive God’s unmerited favor, or grace. The Eucharist itself is a sacrament. But sacraments are not limited to the Church. God can use other ways to convey his grace to us.

Here are a few words that people often ask about. If you have other questions about either the words or the actions of the worship service, please feel free to ask, it’s the easiest way to find out the answer and we’ll be happy to help.

Glossary
Almighty and everliving God, we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and for assuring us in these holy mysteries that we are living members of the Body of your Son, and heirs of your eternal kingdom. And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord.

To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

The prayer said by the celebrant at the bottom of this page is known as the collect for purity. A collect is a particular form of prayer, which names some attribute of God or something God has done, asks for something specific and then closes with praise to God. For centuries, this collect for purity was said silently by the priest. The Prayer Book of 1552 made this prayer a public one said aloud by the priest for all the people gathered.

As the celebration ends, we are charged to “Go in Peace to love and serve the Lord.” The Eucharist is therefore not an exclusive gathering that separates us from the world, but a challenge to reach out beyond our own church to the world around us.

The Bishop when present, or the Priest, may bless the people.

The Deacon, or the Celebrant, dismisses them with these words:

Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

People: Thanks be to God.

or this

Deacon: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

or this

Deacon: Let us go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

People: Thanks be to God.

or this

Deacon: Let us bless the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

From the Easter Vigil through the Day of Pentecost “Alleluia, alleluia” may be added to any of the dismissals.

The People respond: Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.

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When appointed, the following hymn or some other song of praise is sung or said, all standing

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

On other occasions the following is used

Lord, have mercy. [Kyrie eleison.]
Christ, have mercy. [Christ eleison.]
Lord, have mercy. [Kyrie eleison.]

or this

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy upon us.

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and may add Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

The ministers receive the Sacrament in both kinds, and then immediately deliver it to the people.

The Bread and the Cup are given to the communicants with these words
The Body (Blood) of our Lord Jesus Christ keep you in everlasting life. [Amen.]
or with these words
The Body of Christ, the bread of heaven. [Amen.] The Blood of Christ, the cup of salvation. [Amen.]

During the ministration of Communion, hymns, psalms, or anthems may be sung.

When necessary, the Celebrant consecrates additional bread and wine, using the form on page 408.

After Communion, the Celebrant says

Let us pray.

Celebrant and People

Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

or the following

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a blessing, please cross your arms over your chest in an “X” to signify your intention.

Some of our communion is set aside each week to take to the sick and shut-ins. If you or someone you know would like to have communion brought to them, you can ask the priest to make arrangements. When you can’t come to church, the church can come to you. We partake in the Eucharist and are spiritually nourished, but it is not for our benefit alone. Communion enables us to return to the world with renewed vigor for proclaiming the Gospel in our words and in our lives. In the Eucharist, Christ’s presence both nourishes us and challenges us.
The Collect of the Day

The Celebrant says to the people

The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Celebrant Let us pray.

The Celebrant says the Collect.

People Amen.

The Lessons

The people sit. One or two Lessons, as appointed, are read, the Reader first saying

A Reading (Lesson) from ____________.

A citation giving chapter and verse may be added.

After each Reading, the Reader may say

The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

or the Reader may say

Here ends the Reading (Epistle).

Silence may follow.

A Psalm, hymn, or anthem may follow each Reading.

Then, all standing, the Deacon or a Priest reads the Gospel, first saying

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to ____________.

The Gifts of God for the People of God.

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The collect is written to go along with both the season of the church year and the readings for the day. It summarizes the attributes of God as revealed in the scripture for the day.

Reading and commenting on scripture goes back to the earliest services of Christianity. Following the pattern of Jewish synagogue worship, readings follow a set pattern for what will be read when. This is known as a lectionary. The Christian communities began to add letters of Paul and others to their service. It was these readings that became in time our New Testament. Our pattern is to read a portion of the Old Testament, followed by a portion of a Psalm and then a reading from a New Testament epistle, or letter.

Communion is taken by first receiving the bread by placing your right hand over your left and extending it to the priest. You may then either eat the bread at once and then partake of the wine, guiding the chalice to your lips, or you may hold the bread to dip it in the wine. Dipping the bread in the wine and consuming them together is called intinction. Anyone who has not been baptized, or who does not wish to receive communion, may either wait in your seat, or come forward for a blessing. If you do wish to come forward for
We stand for the Gospel reading to show the particular importance we place on Jesus’ words and actions.

Having someone comment on the scriptures read goes back to the earliest days of Christianity and to the Jewish Synagogue worship which preceded it. Preaching was rare during the Middle Ages, but was put back into a place of honor in the reformation of the Church in the 1500s. Since 1549, a sermon has been required at every Eucharist service.

Originally the entire service was viewed as our confession of faith. But, since the Sixth Century, the church has recited the Nicene Creed at the Eucharist. The word creed comes from the Latin *credo* for “I believe.”

*After the Gospel, the Reader says*

The Gospel of the Lord.

*People* Praise to you, Lord Christ.

The Sermon

*On Sundays and other Major Feasts there follows, all standing*

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

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After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, “Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me.”

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

*Celebrant and People*

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

The Celebrant continues

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts. Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. AMEN.

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say, As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray, presence of Christ is a full statement of our belief in God as a Trinity of persons.

This real presence is not the result of a magical incantation on the part of the priest. No set of words makes Eucharist happen. It is the whole action taken together that effects the Eucharist: the gathered community of faith remembering Jesus’ last meal with his disciples and calling on the Holy Spirit to transform the gifts of bread and wine into spiritual food and drink. It is God’s action that makes the Eucharist.

The Lord’s Prayer follows in either traditional or contemporary language. The link between our daily bread and the spiritual food we receive in the Eucharist is an ancient connection. In the Lord’s Prayer we ask for daily bread.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son.

He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Prayers of the People

Prayer is offered with intercession for

The Universal Church, its members, and its mission
The Nation and all in authority
The welfare of the world
The concerns of the local community
Those who suffer and those in any trouble
The departed (with commemoration of a saint when appropriate)

See the forms beginning on page 383.

If there is no celebration of the Communion, or if a priest is not available, the service is concluded as directed on page 406.

Confession of Sin

A Confession of Sin is said here if it has not been said earlier. On occasion, the Confession may be omitted.

One of the sentences from the Penitential Order on page 351 may be said.

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Now we pray for ourselves and particularly on behalf of others. The prayer book offers different forms for these prayers, but the Prayers of the People always contain six elements listed at left.

The Prayers of the People are followed by the confession of sin. We ask God’s forgiveness for things done and things left undone. Private confession is not required in our church. However, for those particularly in need of unburdening themselves of past wrongs, private confession is offered. It can be an especially comforting way to turn away from past wrongs and set out on a new path. But most of the time we only need this time of prayer together as a community to recall our sins and to ask for God’s forgiveness.
The Deacon or Celebrant says
Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Silence may be kept.

Minister and People
Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.

The Bishop when present, or the Priest, stands and says
Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins
through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all
goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in
eternal life. Amen.

The Peace
All stand. The Celebrant says to the people
The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People And also with you.

Then the Ministers and People may greet one another in the
name of the Lord.

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The Holy Communion

The Celebrant may begin the Offertory with one of the sentences on
page 376, or with some other sentence of Scripture.

During the Offertory, a hymn, psalm, or anthem may be sung.
Representatives of the congregation bring the people’s offerings of
bread and wine, and money or other gifts, to the deacon or cel-
ebrant. The people stand while the offerings are presented and
placed on the Altar.

The Great Thanksgiving
Alternative forms will be found on page 367 and following.

Eucharistic Prayer A
The people remain standing. The Celebrant, whether bishop or
priest, faces them and sings or says

The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

People We lift them to the Lord.

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Then, facing the Holy Table, the Celebrant proceeds
It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and every-
where to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of
heaven and earth.

Here a Proper Preface is sung or said on all Sundays, and on
other occasions as appointed.

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Now we come to the second act in the
drama with the
Liturgy of the Table.
It is based on Jewish
Fellowship meals,
particularly the
Passover observance.
But this second half
of the service is not
communion in and of
itself. It is the whole
service, both acts of
the drama, that make
up the Eucharist.

This second act
begins with the
offertory. Here we
give back to God
from the gifts God
has given us. That is
what is meant by the
offertory sentence,
“All things come of
thee O Lord, and of
thine own have we
given thee.”

Our offering is the
first of four actions in
the Eucharist. Just as
scripture tells us that
Jesus took, blessed,
broke and gave the
bread and wine. So
this first of our four
actions is for the