

THE ONE TRUE STORY

We're people drawn to stories and shaped by stories. Whether a book, podcast, movie, TV show or song, it's hard to find a human being who isn't moved or captivated by a good story. This is because we are created to live in a story—the Christian story.

But given our bent toward sin, away from the one true story, we often find ourselves caught up in the false stories of our culture. Amid the chaos and busyness of everyday life, we buy into narratives like consumerism, secularism, nationalism, progressivism and cynicism. Though we may not confess these stories to be true with our mouths, we act as if they are true with our lives. They sink deep into our bones, shaping and forming our longings and desires, disorienting and distracting us from the gospel.

The Church Calendar—also called the Liturgical Year—seeks to redeem our time and space through the seasons of Advent, Epiphany, Lent, Easter and Pentecost. Through readings, prayers, songs, fasts and other practices, these seasons help to reorient our hearts and minds away from the false stories of the world and back toward the one true story of the Bible—the **Christian story**.

WHAT IS THE CHURCH CALENDAR?

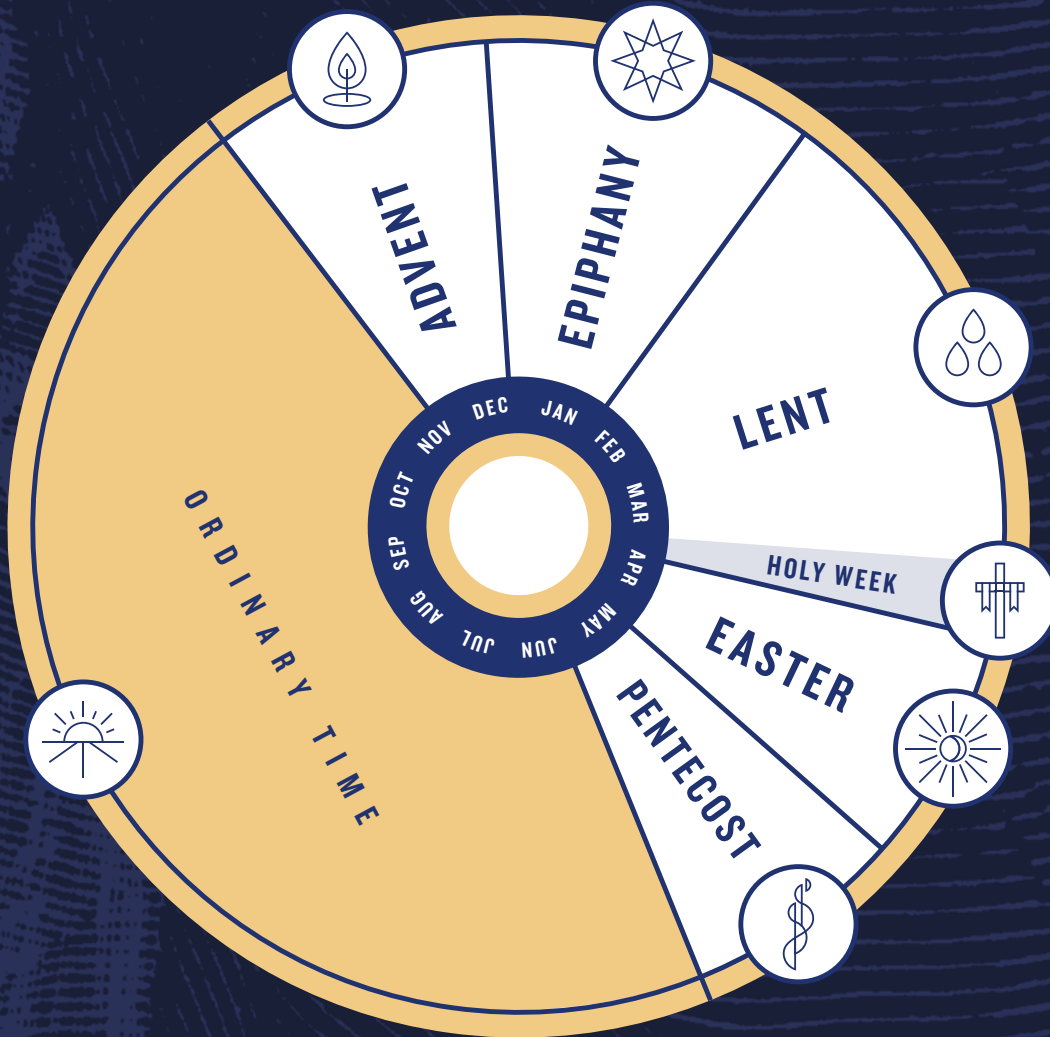
Practiced for over 1,500 years, the Church Calendar serves as a way to order our lives around the Christian story. Inspired by the annual feasts and celebrations of God's people throughout the Old Testament, the calendar can be traced all the way back to the early Church, when Christians began establishing rhythms and rituals based on the one story of Scripture.

Despite its details and approaches changing over time and looking different across traditions, the Church Calendar has almost always hit the same plot points and themes with the seasons: **Advent** (the birth of Christ), **Epiphany** (the manifestation of Christ), **Lent** (the temptation and death of Christ), **Easter** (the resurrection of Christ) and **Pentecost** (the Spirit of Christ).

The Church Calendar can come across to many as legalistic or as empty ritual, given some of the abuses we've seen throughout Church history. It can also feel strange and foreign to those who are new to church or who grew up in churches that didn't follow this calendar. But the seasons of the Church are really just a way to center our lives around the gospel by entering the story of Jesus each year. It's a practical way to follow the words of Paul in Romans 13:14: "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires." While we should always make sure we're not falling into meaningless routines and simply going through the motions, it's hard to think of a better way we can spend our time each and every year.

The gatherings, the practices and the traditions of the seasons help us remember the one true story of the Bible—who God is and what He has done in Jesus Christ—and help us to live in that story every day as the people of God.

THE SEASONS





ADVENT

Advent is about the coming of Jesus Christ.

It begins with a time of waiting and longing and ends with celebrating the birth of our Savior, the Messiah, on Christmas. This season progresses from dark to light.



EPIPHANY

Epiphany is about the manifestation of Jesus Christ.

The season focuses on Christ revealing His divinity and His saving plan for the nations. It establishes a time of renewal for the believer to recommit a life of faithfulness to Christ.



LENT

Lent is about the temptation and death of Jesus Christ.

The season begins with 40 days of prayer and fasting and ends with Holy Week, which includes Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and His death on the cross on Good Friday. It is a time of examining and repenting of sin.



EASTER

Easter is about the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

As the culmination of the Christian story, this season marks a time of ongoing celebration and consideration of the future hope we have in Christ.



PENTECOST

Pentecost is about the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

This season ends the official Church Calendar by reflecting on the sending of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Church. It reminds us of our unity with Christ and our call to share Christ by the power of the Spirit.