

### **Prayer of the Day**

P: Holy God, as we walk through the seasons of the church year, remind us of your presence throughout the seasons of our lives, as you live and reign among us, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.  
AMEN

## **JOURNEY INTRODUCTION**

Just as we have calendars on our desks or in our backpacks or purses or on our phones to keep track of family and work and community commitments, so we keep a calendar of the Church Year. This calendar focuses our attention on the life and ministry and teaching of Jesus. Just as our secular year has seasons, the church year has seasons, too. What are the seasons on a regular calendar? Spring, summer, fall, winter. What are the seasons in the church year? Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost. Can you say them with me? Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost. In the first half of the Church Year, we follow Jesus through the first five seasons: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, and Easter. Each year, beginning in late November or early December, we move, with Jesus, from the prophecies of his coming to the manger in Bethlehem, to his baptism at the Jordan River and his temptation in the desert, to his ministry of teaching, preaching and healing, to his suffering and death in Jerusalem, and to his resurrection and ascension. This is the first half of the church year: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, and Easter, in which we review Jesus' life: prophecies of his coming, birth, ministry, suffering and death, and resurrection. These five seasons comprise the first "cycle" of the Church Year; let's say those seasons once more: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, and Pentecost.

During the second half of the Church Year, we reflect on the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives and the growth we experience day after day, year after year. This second half of the church year is the longest season and comprises the whole of the second "cycle," just this one season. Who knows what it is called? Pentecost.

In our service today, on our "Journey through the Seasons of the Church Year," we will travel through these six seasons, reviewing Jesus' life and its meaning for our lives. We will move through the two halves or "cycles" of the church year, following the banners on the left and right walls of the nave, the area of the sanctuary where we sit. Let's identify the banner for each season. Kids, can you show us the banner for Advent? Christmas? Epiphany? Lent? Easter? Pentecost?

# ADVENT

## Introduction

We start with the first cycle—and the first season—of the Church Year. The season of Advent begins four Sundays prior to Christmas Day. What day is that? December 25. We light the Advent Wreath, adding one candle per week, increasing our anticipation of the coming of Christ. We remember that Jesus came long ago, that he comes among us today, and that he will come again at the end of time. The Advent color is blue, the color of royalty. The icons—or symbols—of Advent are the four candles of the wreath and the Alpha and Omega, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, which remind us that Jesus is the first and the last, the beginning and the ending.

**Scripture**                      Mk 13: 32-37

L            The Advent Gospel is from the 13th chapter of Mark.

(Jesus told his disciples) "But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake — for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake."

L            The Word of the One who is to come.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Anthem**                      Light Four Candles

Chime Choir, Congregation

## Prayer

A            Let us pray. Almighty and Gracious God, stir up your power, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that binds us, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **C Amen.**

**Hymn**                      O Come, O Come ELW 257, vs 1            Congregation

# CHRISTMAS

## Introduction

The season of Christmas begins on Christmas Eve, December 24, and ends on January 6. It's twelve days long; hence, we sing "The Twelve Days of Christmas." During this short season we celebrate Jesus' birth, remembering that he was born for people of all times and all places. In the church, Christmas colors are not red and green, but rather white and gold. The icons of Christmas include the manger, the Madonna, the Child, and the Star of Bethlehem.

**Scripture** Mt 1: 20-23

L The Christmas Gospel is from the 1st chapter of Matthew.

But just when [Joseph] had resolved to [dismiss Mary quietly], an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel."

L The Word of the One who lived among us. **C Thanks be to God.**

**Anthem** Silent Night Bell Choir followed by Congregation vs. 1

## Prayer

A Let us pray. Almighty and Loving God, you gave us your only Son to take on our human nature and to illumine the world with your light. By your grace adopt us as your children and enlighten us with your Spirit, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **C Amen.**

**Hymn** Away in a Manger ELW 277 v.1 Congregation

# EPIPHANY

## Introduction

The season of Epiphany begins on January 6, the Festival of the Epiphany, when we remember the wise men who came from the East to worship the infant Jesus. During this season we also celebrate Jesus' baptism and his transfiguration. The theme of Epiphany is manifestation, the manifestation or "showing forth" of Jesus as Son of God to people of all times and all places; traditionally, it's a season in which we feature global mission, in which Jesus is manifested to the

nations. Green is the color for Epiphany, green for growth of life in Christ. The icon for Epiphany is a five-pointed star, representing the head, hands, and feet of Jesus, who is both human and divine.

**Scripture**                      Mk 1: 14-18

L            The Epiphany Gospel is from the 1st chapter of Mark.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near, repent, and believe in the good news." As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea — for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." And immediately they left their nets and followed him.

L The Word of the One with whom God is pleased.

**C Thanks be to God.**

**Anthem**                      We Three Kings

CT Flute (Sat); ES Piano (Sun)

**Prayer**

A            Let us pray. Almighty and Just God, you revealed the incarnation of your Son by the brilliant shining of a star. Shine the light of your justice always in our hearts and over all lands, and accept our lives as the treasure we offer in your praise and for your service, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **C Amen.**

**Hymn**

I Want to Walk ELW 815

Congregation

## **LENT**

### **Introduction**

The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and continues for forty days, until Easter. The forty days of Lent recall Jesus' forty days of fasting as well as Noah's forty days and nights of rain and Israel's forty years of wandering in the wilderness. During these forty days we meditate on Jesus' suffering for us; themes are repentance, forgiveness, and new life in Christ. The color for Lent is purple, for repentance. The icons of Lent are the cross, the crown of thorns, the nails, and the Lamb of God.

**Scripture**                      Mark 15: 33-34, 37-39

L            The Lenten Gospel is from the 15th chapter of Mark.

When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

L The Word of the One who suffers for our sake.

C Thanks be to God.

**Anthem**

Healing Grace

Journey Singers

**Prayer**

A Let us pray. Almighty and Merciful God, you led your people through the wilderness and brought them to the promised land. Guide us now, so that, following your Son, we may walk safely through the wilderness of this world toward the life you alone can give, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **C Amen.**

**Hymn**

I Want Jesus ELW 325

Congregation

## **EASTER**

### **Introduction**

Lent culminates in Holy Week, during which we observe Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. Holy Week is followed by the season of Easter, which begins with a celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord and then continues for seven Sundays and seven weeks. We celebrate Jesus's Ascension on the Thursday between the sixth and seventh Sundays of Easter, marking forty days after Easter. We hear stories of the resurrected Jesus and see images of his life-giving love for us. The color for Easter is white, indicating the purity of Jesus. Easter icons are the lily, the egg, and the butterfly.

**Scripture**

Mark 16: 1-8

L The Easter Gospel is from the 16th chapter of Mark.

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed.

But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you." So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

L The Word of the One who rises that we might have life! **C Thanks be to God.**

**Anthem**                      Because he Lives                      Journey Singers

**Prayer**

A        Let us pray. Almighty and Ever-living God, we no longer look for Jesus among the dead, for he is alive and has become the Lord of life. Increase in our minds and hearts the risen life we share with Christ, and help us to grow as your people toward the fullness of eternal life with you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **C Amen.**

**Song**                      Every Morning Is Easter FH 52                      Congregation

## **PENTECOST**

### **Introduction**

The Festival of Pentecost, the first day of the season of Pentecost, which we celebrated four weeks ago, is a culmination of the Easter season. It's the end of the first cycle of the Church Year, and, at the same time, the beginning of the second cycle. At this festival we remember the giving of the Spirit to the disciples on the Jewish Festival of Sukkoth, which in Greek is called "Pentecost." The color for the day is red, the color of the Holy Spirit. Icons of this Festival of Pentecost are a dove and flames of fire, representative of the Holy Spirit, who descended upon the heads of the disciples on the day of Pentecost. The following Sunday we celebrate the Festival of the Holy Trinity. During the season of Pentecost, which commences after the Day of Pentecost, we hear stories about Jesus' earthly ministry and consider how we, too, enter into Jesus' life and witness and suffering and resurrection. The theme of the season is the work of the Spirit within and among us. Green is the color for Pentecost, green for growth. A common icon of the season of Pentecost is a leaf, representing growing things. The chasuble I wear at communion during Pentecost features leaves made of fabric donated by members of King of Kings.

**Scripture**                      John 20: 20b-22

L The Pentecost Gospel is from the 20th chapter of John.

Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

L The Word of the One who sends the Spirit.

**C Thanks be to God.**

**Anthem**

Every Time I Feel the Spirit

Chime Choir

**Prayer**

A Let us pray. Almighty and Enlivening God, you fulfilled the promise of Easter by sending the gift of your Holy Spirit. Look upon your people gathered in prayer, open to receive the Spirit's flame. May it come to rest in our hearts and heal the divisions of word and tongue, that with one voice and one song we may praise your name in joy and thanksgiving; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **C Amen.**

**Hymn**

Gracious Spirit, ELW 401, v. 1, 2

Congregation

**Conclusion**

Pentecost culminates in the Festival of Christ the King, when we remember Jesus as King in his suffering on the cross and anticipate his coming again as Lord of all at the end of time. The Sunday following Christ the King is the First Sunday in Advent, when a new Church Year begins.

Our journey for today has come to an end. We have moved through the two cycles and six seasons of the church year at record speed. In Advent, we remembered God's promise to come to God's people long ago and again at the end of time. In the Christmas season, we remembered Jesus' birth among us, as God with us. In Epiphany, we remembered that God's favor for God's people was revealed in Jesus. In Lent, we remembered Jesus' suffering for our sake. In the Easter season, just completed, we remembered that Jesus rose from death so that we, too, might have new life. In this current Pentecost season, we are remembering that Jesus sends the Spirit to empower us. In each of these seasons, God is among us, God is with us, God is for us. And so we pray:

God of time and eternity, we give thanks for the yearly round of seasons in the church year: for the promises of Advent, for the good news of Christmas, for the revelation of Epiphany, for the repentance and renewal of Lent, for the new life of Easter, for the inspiration of Pentecost. Throughout these seasons and the seasons of our lives, bless us with your presence, and at the end bring us to life everlasting, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. **C: Amen**