



## WHAT TO EXPECT

Worship is the gathering of the baptized for the proclamation of the Word and the celebration of the Sacraments... All persons are invited to worship God in the name of Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit in this Church. In worship we lift our voices in song and prayer, we listen to the Word in the scripture and the sermon, we hold out our empty hands and receive Christ in the Holy Meal, so that we are strengthened to live out our baptism in the world.

### **The Liturgy Is the Beginning Point.**

Lutherans call their pattern of worship "the liturgy." At the heart of our liturgy is God. Liturgy comes from the Greek and means "the work of the people." The work of liturgy is the participation in the responses, prayers and singing of the hymns as well as listening to the Word which is done to worship and honor God. The focus is not on the performance of the pastor, choir nor others participating in the service but focuses on God's word and grace. The entire liturgy is based on the word of God from scripture to learn more about why we do what we do, chat with our pastor..

### **A Unique Design**

Lutheran churches have an altar in the center of the elevated area of the church which is called the chancel. This is the area where we meet God and by being in the center reminds us that the point of worship is to praise, honor and be with God. On the altar is a cross as a reminder of the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Candles on each side of the cross remind us that Christ is the light of the world and we are to be lights in the world. The flowers on each side of the altar are a reminder of the resurrection as they come to life after being buried in the ground. The dark red light near the altar is the eternal light or sanctuary candle burns as a reminder that God is always present. The lectern is the smaller speaker's stand and is for reading all the lessons but the Gospel. The Gospel is read from the floor of the Nave, from among the people. The pulpit is the larger stand and it is used for the sermon. The baptismal font along with the paschal candle are at the base of the steps leading up to the altar. The baptismal font holds the water for baptism. The paschal candle is used at baptisms, funerals, and during the Easter Season to remind us that Christ rose from the dead.

### **Standing and Sitting**

You will have a difficult time sleeping during a Lutheran worship service because you are always standing up, then sitting, then standing up and then... There is a reason for each. We stand to express joy such as when we sing hymns, to honor Christ at the reading of the Gospel, and to express our beliefs as we say together the creed. We sit to listen. Our clergy kneel in prayer to show our dependence on God and to show thankfulness as we receive Holy Communion. We use our entire body to worship.

### **Lutherans Are a Singing Church**

The Psalmist said to "make a joyful noise unto the Lord" and we Lutherans believe it. Music composes about 40% of our worship service. Notice that the Psalmist said to "make a joyful noise" and did not say "make perfect sounds to the Lord." That means that we have fun singing, even if we do not hit all the right notes. Organ music is used with most of our service but sometimes we use the piano for hymns and special music. When we sing in worship it allows us to use our entire self to worship.

### **Robes and More Robes**

In many Lutheran churches, the pastor and others who participate in the service wear robes called an alb. By wearing albs, the participants emphasize the action of the participant rather than emphasizing the person. Worship is not a contest to see who can dress the best but is about worshiping and honoring God. The Alb is a white, garments that symbolizes baptism and reminds us of what God did in our baptism. Worship is the gathering of the

baptized. Worship vestments are timeless and remind us that the church is timeless and its message of the gospel is for all people.

### **The Church Has a Calendar**

Just like the calendar from January to December that everyone uses, the church has a church year calendar. The church year calendar (or Christian Year) is divided into two parts. The first part is about the life of Christ and the second is about the teachings of Christ and the Church. Each Season of the Church years has a unique color associated with it. The church's altar, pulpit, lectern and clergy are vested in the appropriate color to mark the season, festival day, or occasion.

**Advent:** The Church Year begins with Advent at the end of November or the first of December. Advent is a time of preparation for the coming of Christ and lasts for four Sundays. Blue is the color of the sky, a color of hope, and is used during Advent.

**Christmas:** Christmastide begins on Christmas and marks the church's celebration of the birth of Christ. The Christmas season lasts for 12 days. (Think about the song, The 12 Days of Christmas.) White is the color of purity and is used during Christmas.

**Epiphany:** The next festival is Epiphany. The season of Epiphanytide begins on the Epiphany on January 6th, it marks the end of the Christmas season and the beginning of Epiphanytide. The scripture reading during this season reveals the signs that Jesus is the Light of the World, the Messiah such as the coming of the Wise Men. Epiphany is marked with the color white and the days after the Epiphany or epiphany tide is marked with the color green.

**Lent:** Holy Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Easter. Lent is 40 days, not counting Sundays. The Lenten season is a journey of preparing for the death of Christ on Good Friday. Lent includes the Palm Sunday Purple is the color of mourning and royalty and it is used during Lent to point to Jesus, our suffering king.

**The Three Great Days:** Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday (Holy Saturday is included) occur at the end of Holy Week.

**Maundy Thursday** (Mandatum Novum) is marked by Jesus' New Commandment to Love one another and His gift of the sacrament of Holy Eucharist, his body and blood for the church. The color for the day is scarlet or red. As a part of worship that day, the altar is stripped of all color, linens and metalware.

**Good Friday** takes us to the cross and to Jesus' death for our sins. There is no color associated with this day as the church should be left bare from the previous day.

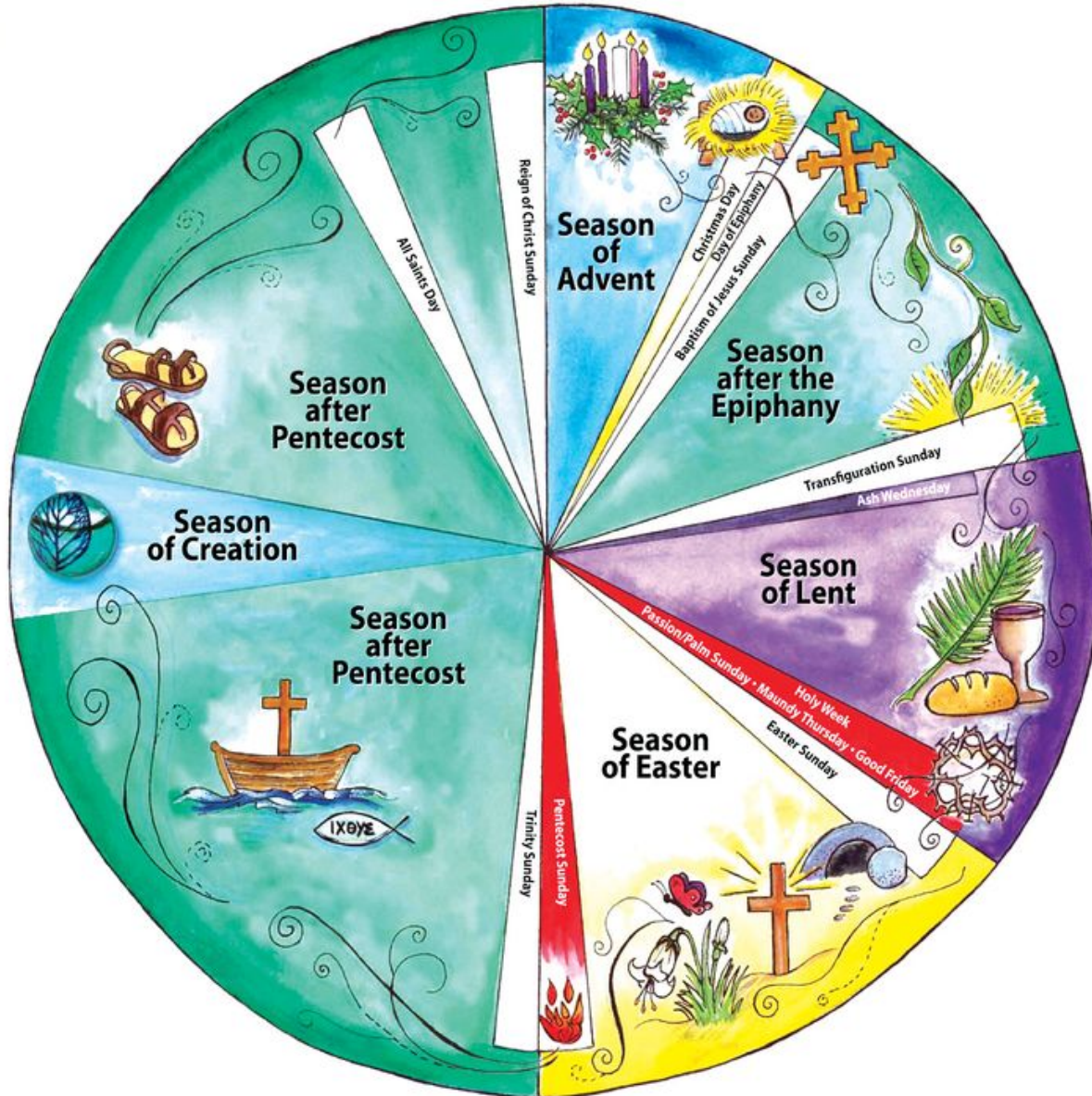
**Holy Saturday**, the world waits in stillness. There is no color (nor singing, metal ware, linens and the Eucharist is not celebrated) until the altar is dressed for the first service of Easter.

**Easter:** Eastertide is the season that follows the feast of Easter as a celebration of the resurrection of our Lord and continues until Pentecost. Easter is the chief festival day of the Christian year, it defines who we are. White is the color of purity and is used during Easter.

**Pentecost:** the festival of Pentecost celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit and marks the end of the easter season. Red is used to mark the Power of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost and Reformation Day. We also use red on festival days for those who have been martyred for their faith.

**Ordinary Time:** The majority of the church year is composed of the Sundays after Pentecost or a period called ordinary time. Ordinary Time ends with the festival of Christ the King which marks the last Sunday of the Church year. This season lasts approximately six months. Ordinary Time is marked with the color green. Green is the color of growth. Green is the color of growth and is used during Epiphany and the Sundays after Pentecost.

The Church celebrates other festivals in the course of the year when they fall on a specific weekday or Sundays such as the Festival of Transfiguration, Reformation Day, The Baptism of our Lord or, a festival for a specific deceased saint and these days also have specific colors associated with them as well.



**Baptism:** Begins our faith journey as we come from the baptismal waters to live a new life as children of God. Marked with the cross of Christ and sealed by the Spirit, we receive a new identity as followers of Jesus, and the story of Jesus becomes our story.

It is often said that we need to be attentive to the words we say, and this is especially true as we examine the words that are said at baptism. Together we hope and pray that those being baptized will be nurtured in the faith, grow into their baptism, learn to trust God, and live as disciples of Jesus, living a baptized life.

What does the disciple's life look like?

The best way to describe it might be to look at the baptismal covenant that is derived from the Baptismal liturgy and declared in the service of Affirmation of Baptism:

You have made a public profession of your faith.

Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in holy baptism:

to live among God's faithful people,  
to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper,  
to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,

to serve all people, following the example of Jesus, and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?  
Each person responds: I do, and I ask God to help and guide me.

Our baptism sets us out on a lifelong journey that is characterized by our relationship to God, our relationship to our faith community, our relationships with various parts of our neighborhood and community, and our relationship to the wider world. The baptismal covenant describes this lifelong journey with God.

### **Holy Communion**

The meal and the celebration of the Lord offering us his body and blood has several names. The name is derived from I Corinthians 10:16-17. We believe that in this sacrament that we are united with Christ and all Christians through the sharing of Jesus' body and blood.

- The Breaking of Bread - This description is from Acts 2:42 and is the oldest name for the sacrament.
- The Eucharist – This word is from the Greek and means thanksgiving. The gospels record Jesus as giving thanks at the last supper.
- The Lord's Supper – Using these words, we acknowledge that the meal is not of human origin but has been instituted and given as a gift by God.
- The Last Supper – Scripture records this meal as the last supper that Jesus shares with the disciples.
- Sacrament of the Altar – This name describes the location where the meal is celebrated. The altar is the focus of worship.

**Do You Use Wine?** Of course, we use wine. That is what Jesus would have used. At the time of Jesus, the area had very few wells so most of the water was not fit to drink. Grapes were abundant so the Hebrews discovered that the grapes would purify the water as the fermentation process took place. All the people, including the young children, drank wine. It was much like people in the south drinking iced tea. We also offer unfermented wine or grape juice because we want to make room for everyone at the table.