

# The Christian Year

(August 1, 2017 A.D.)

## How do churches order/organize their service themes on an annual basis?

1. **Lectionary Year** – at the denominational/association level, specific Scriptures (OT & NT) and, often times, prayers are selected to produce **uniformity** among their churches. The “common” lectionary extends beyond one denomination.
2. **Catechism Year** – in order to accomplish **systematic teaching of doctrine** within the church, its year is organized around the great confessions/creeds of the historical church.
3. **Denomination Programs Year** – organized loosely around the programs of a denomination. This calendar order usually seeks **specific familiarity with the denominational history and distinctives**.
4. **Local Church Programs Year** – same as 3 above except at an even greater degree of specificity.
5. **Civic Holiday Year** – organized to **coincide with the major national/state holidays**.
6. **Hallmark Calendar Year** – organized to **coincide with the major Hallmark holidays**.
7. **Christian Year** – organized around the **major events in the life ministry of Jesus**.
8. **Extended Topical Subject Year** – emphasize a **systematic teaching of select topics**
9. **Extended Expository Book Study Year** – emphasize a **biblical/in-context teaching of each book of the Bible**
10. **Hybrids** – combinations of the above

## Structure of the Christian Year:

- **Advent** – 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ
- **Christmas** – birth of Christ
- **Epiphany** – manifestation of Christ (birth, baptism & beginning of His public ministry)
- **Lent** – preparation for Easter/ Christian Baptism (repentance)
- **Holy Week** (Passion Week) – Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, and Good Friday
- **Easter** (Resurrection Sunday) – celebration of the Resurrection of Christ
- **Pentecost** – giving of the Holy Spirit/birth of the Church
- **Ordinary Time** – the time between Pentecost and Advent

## Theology:

All time finds its meaning in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (B.C. & A.D.)

## History of Origin:

- Reinterpretation of the Jewish Feasts to the Christian perspective of belief
- Developed in antiquity (100-400 A.D.)
- Abandoned by the Reformation due to excesses that had developed during the late Medieval Period

## Advent Themes:

- Preparation for the birth of Christ and expectation of the return of Christ (as such it marks the **beginning and end** of the Christian Year)
- Expectant waiting and readiness for Christ
- Christian realization that Christ was born to die and to be raised to new life for the sake of the world's redemption
- Repentance
- Weeks
  - 1<sup>st</sup> – hope, eager anticipation, longing, vigilant waiting, looking toward that Day
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> – personal preparation, godly conduct
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> – Joy (Greening of the Church)
  - 4<sup>th</sup> – Incarnation (Conception/Birth) “God with us”
  - Christmas – Birth of Christ