

# The Calendar of the Church Year and Sections of the Rule of the Order of the Ascension

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## The Calendar of the Church Year (BCP)

The Church Year consists of two cycles of feasts and holy days: one is dependent upon the movable date of the Sunday of the Resurrection or Easter Day; the other, upon the fixed date of December 25, the Feast of our Lord's Nativity or Christmas Day.

Easter Day is always the first Sunday after the full moon that falls on or after March 21. It cannot occur before March 22 or after April 25.

The sequence of all Sundays of the Church Year depends upon the date of Easter Day. But the Sundays of Advent are always the four Sundays before Christmas Day, whether it occurs on a Sunday or a weekday. The date of Easter also determines the beginning of Lent on Ash Wednesday, and the feast of the Ascension on a Thursday forty days after Easter Day.

### 1. Principal Feasts

The Principal Feasts observed in this Church are the following:

Easter Day	All Saints' Day, <i>November 1</i>
Ascension Day	Christmas Day, <i>December 25</i>
The Day of Pentecost	The Epiphany, <i>January 6</i>
Trinity Sunday	

These feasts take precedence of any other day or observance. All Saints' Day may always be observed on the Sunday following November 1, in addition to its observance on the fixed date.

### 2. Sundays

All Sundays of the year are feasts of our Lord Jesus Christ. In addition to the dated days listed above, only the following feasts, appointed on fixed \ days, take precedence of a Sunday:

The Holy Name  
The Presentation  
The Transfiguration

The feast of the Dedication of a Church, and the feast of its patron or title, may be observed on, or be transferred to, a Sunday, except in the seasons of Advent, Lent, and Easter.

All other Feasts of our Lord, and all other Major Feasts appointed on fixed days in the Calendar, when they occur on a Sunday, are normally transferred to the first convenient open day within the week. When desired, however, the Collect, Preface, and one or more of the Lessons

appointed for the Feast may be substituted for those of the Sunday, but not from the Last Sunday after Pentecost through the First Sunday after the Epiphany, or from the Last Sunday after the Epiphany through Trinity Sunday.

With the express permission of the bishop, and for urgent and sufficient reason, some other special occasion may be observed on a Sunday.

### 3. Holy Days

The following Holy Days are regularly observed throughout the year. Unless otherwise ordered in the preceding rules concerning Sundays, they have precedence over all other days of commemoration or of special observance:

#### *Other Feasts of Our Lord*

The Holy Name	Saint John the Baptist
The Presentation	The Transfiguration
The Annunciation	Holy Cross Day
The Visitation	

#### *Other Major Feasts*

All feasts of Apostles	Saint Mary the Virgin
All feasts of Evangelists	Saint Michael and All Angels
Saint Stephen	Saint James of Jerusalem
The Holy Innocents	Independence Day
Saint Joseph	Thanksgiving Day
Saint Mary Magdalene	

#### *Fasts*

Ash Wednesday	Good Friday
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Feasts appointed of fixed days in the Calendar are not observed on the days of Holy Week or of Easter Week. Major Feasts falling in these weeks are transferred to the week following the Second Sunday of Easter, in the order of their occurrence.

Feasts appointed on fixed days in the Calendar do not take precedence of Ash Wednesday.

Feasts of our Lord and other Major Feasts appointed on fixed days, which fall upon or are transferred to a weekday, may be observed on any open day within the week. This provision does not apply to Christmas Day, the Epiphany, and All Saints' Day.

#### **4. Days of Special Devotion**

The following days are observed by special acts of discipline and self-denial:

Ash Wednesday and the other weekdays of Lent and of Holy Week, except the feast of the Annunciation.

Good Friday and all other Fridays of the year, in commemoration of the Lord's crucifixion, except for Fridays in the Christmas and Easter seasons, and any Feasts of our Lord which occur on a Friday.

#### **5. Days of Optional Observance**

Subject to the rules of precedence governing Principal Feasts, Sundays, and Holy Days, the following may be observed with the Collects, Psalms, and Lessons duly authorized by this Church:

Commemorations listed in the Calendar

Other Commemorations, using the Common of Saints

The Ember Days, traditionally observed on the Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays after the First Sunday in Lent, the Day of Pentecost, Holy Cross Day, and December 13

The Rogation Days, traditionally observed on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Ascension Day

Various Occasions

Provided, that there is no celebration of the Eucharist for any such occasion on Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday; and provided further, that none of the Propers appointed for Various Occasions is used as a substitute for, or as an addition to, the Proper appointed for the Principal Feasts.

## **Sections of the Rule of the Order of the Ascension**

Our worship tradition as Episcopalians is based on a three-part structure. Martin Thornton calls it the Catholic Threefold Rule, Michael Ramsey refers to it as the Benedictine triangle.

The three elements, Eucharist, Daily Office, and Personal Devotions, comprise the fundamentals of a disciplined Christian spirituality in the Anglican tradition.

The use of this threefold Rule can help us move away from the attempt to base our prayer life on a self-made, unintegrated list of "rules" toward an integrated Rule grounded in the Book of Common Prayer.

It is as a parish, as a local expression to the Body of Christ, that we may fully participate in and offer this threefold pattern. As individuals, we will at times participate in and offer this pattern and so carry others in prayer. At other times we will be carried.

The Threefold Rule of the Church: All Professed Members will live within the Threefold Rule of the Church. We are each to be at the Holy Eucharist every Sunday, say the Office daily, and have a fruitful pattern of reflection/personal devotions. All Professed Members who are also priests-in-charge of parishes will establish, and fully participate in, that pattern in the common life of their parish. All who are not in a position of such responsibility will be supportive of efforts in their own parish to shape the pattern. Novices will establish the pattern in the first two months of their novitiate.

We celebrate the Church's feast days with the Holy Eucharist and often some form of fellowship. The Eucharist is the principal act of worship on all Sundays, Ascension Day, All Saints' Day, Christmas, the Epiphany and the Feast of Saint Benedict. All Members participate in the Holy Eucharist on those days. On January 8, when the Order was founded in 1983, and January 30, recollecting the first taking of the Promise in 1988, we engage in intercession for the Order.

The Fasts of Ash Wednesday and Good Friday and the Days of Special Devotion are observed. In as much as we have influence these days are posted in our parish calendars.

The Daily Office is offered in an appropriate way each day. All Members say the Office daily. Priest in charge of parishes provide for, and participate in, a public office in their parishes.

In these matters and all others having to do with our prayer life we look to the Book of Common Prayer as a gift of our Lord for the sanctification of this community and our parishes.

Worship is to have priority attention among our efforts. We strive to prepare carefully in solitude and hospitality. We shape a climate of calm and order in the time prior to worship. We gather without delay. All is done in a manner that encourages the

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participation of the congregation; provides for the special ministries of laity, bishops, priests and deacons; and is offered in a gentle and orderly liturgy that participates in the divine mystery.

In the Office we maintain a moderate pace, allowing silence after the readings. We sit for the psalm, which is read alternately with a distinct pause at the asterisk, concluding with "Glory to the Father" during which we rise or bow "in honor and reverence for the Holy Trinity."