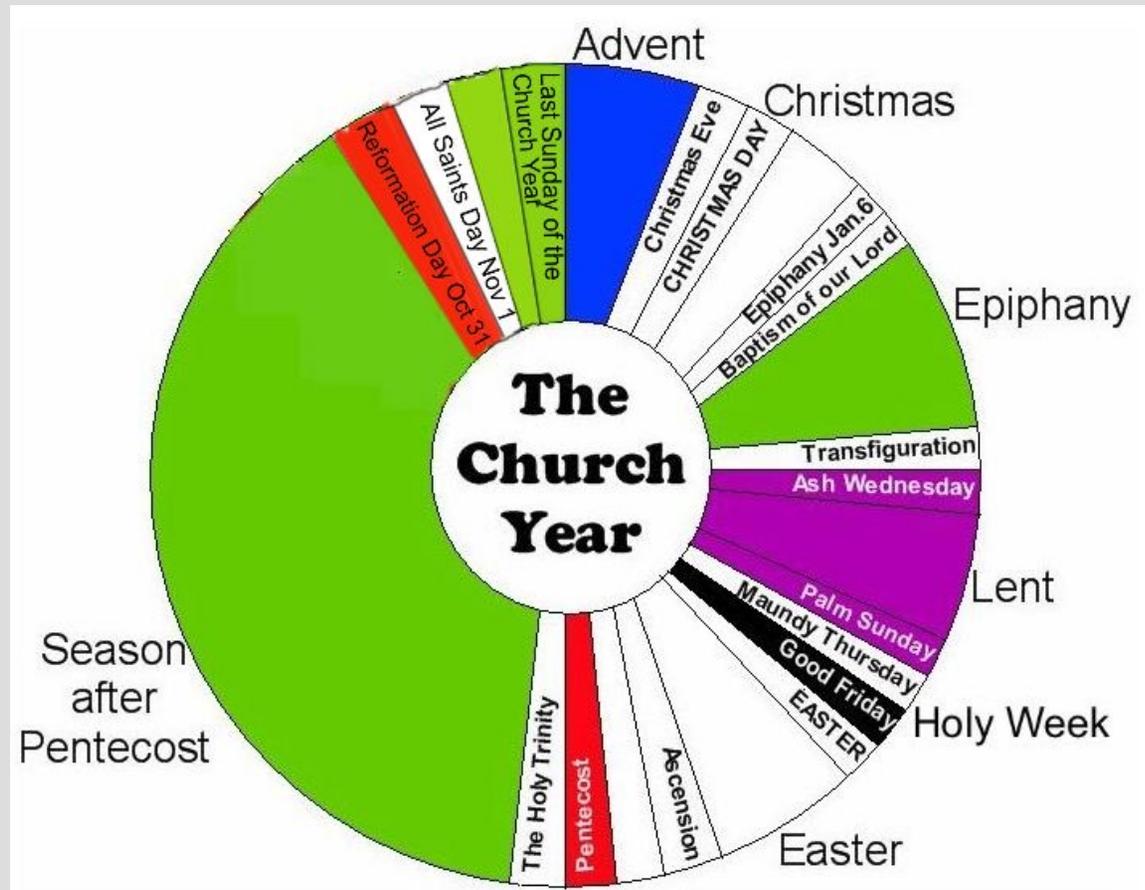


The Liturgical Year

The liturgical year consists of the cycle of liturgical days and seasons that determines when feast days are to be observed, and which portions of scripture are to be read.

Distinct colors may be used in connection with different seasons of the liturgical year. The dates of the festivals vary somewhat among the different churches, although the sequence and logic is largely the same.



The year revolves around 2 events

Christmas

- Advent
- Christmas
- Epiphany
- Baptism of our Lord

Easter

- Lent
- Holy Week/Triduum
- Easter season
- Pentecost



THE ADVENT OF
HOPE PEACE LOVE JOY LIGHT

The Christian year begins with Advent

- Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas.
- The word "Advent" comes from the Latin word "adventus," which means "coming". Advent is a time to prepare for the birth of Jesus at Christmas and his Second Coming.
- Special practices include Advent calendars and wreaths and "hanging of the greens"
- The traditional color was purple, and still is in many churches, including the Roman Catholic Church. The use of blue is relatively new but can be traced to the Church of Sweden.



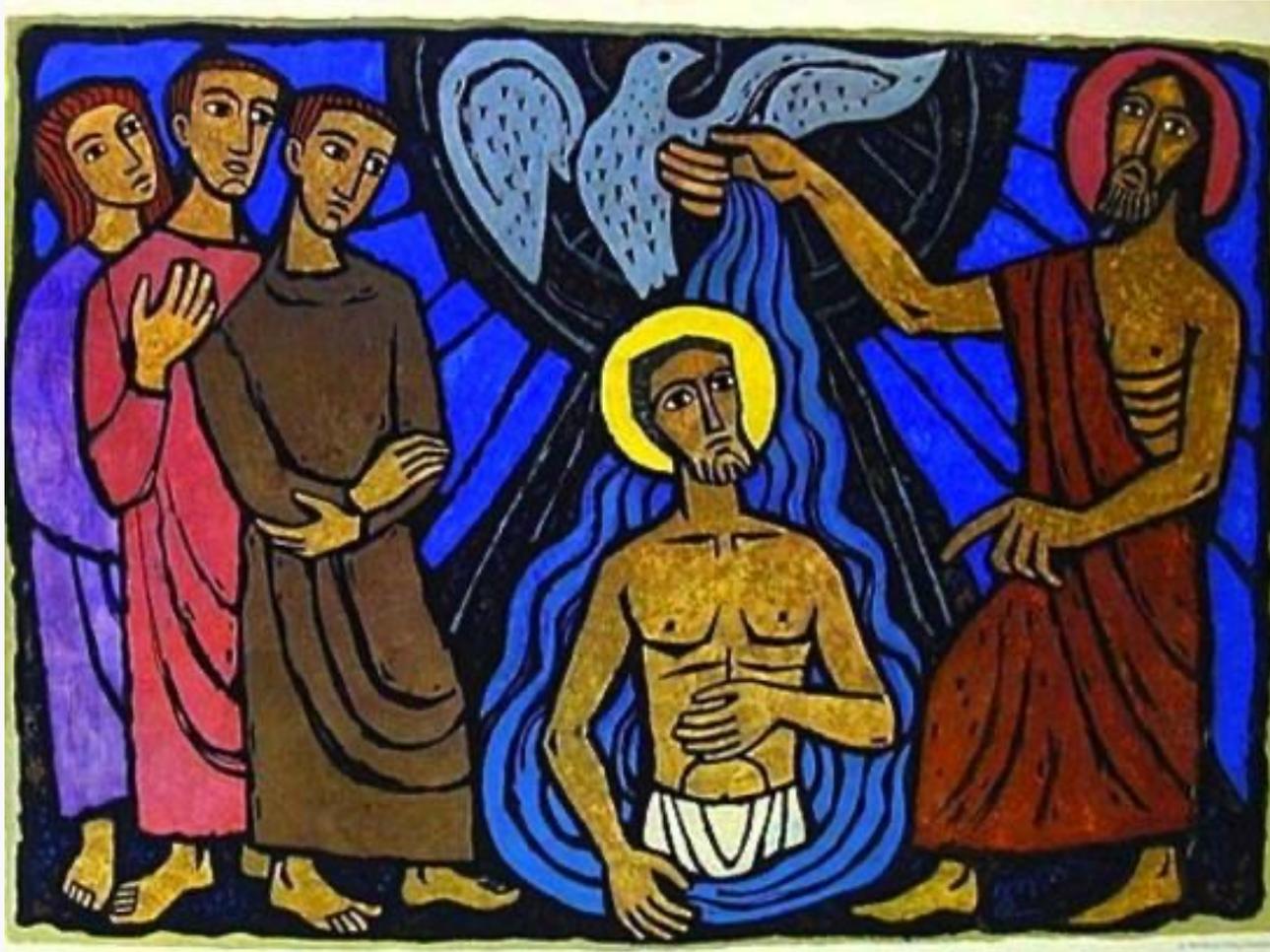


The Christmas Season

- Christmas is not one day. It is a church season that is twelve days long.
- The “Twelve Days of Christmas” may or may not have hidden Christian meaning.
- The Christmas season includes the Nativity of our Lord, The Feast of the Epiphany and the Baptism of Our Lord.



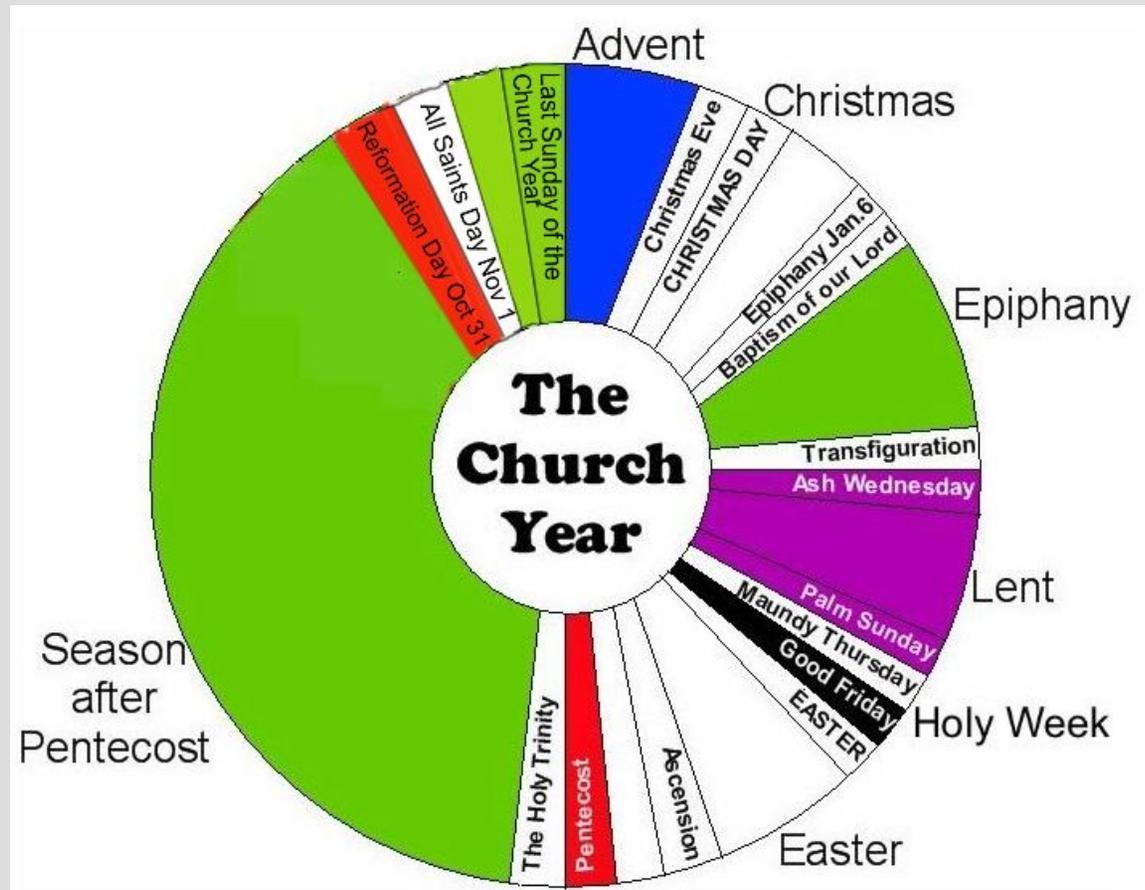




The Time After the Epiphany

- In Roman Catholicism this time is the beginning of “Ordinary Time” while in Lutheran circles the time is commonly referred to as the “Sundays after the Epiphany” or even the “Season of Epiphany.”
- The word “epiphany” means “manifestation” in Greek. Scripture readings during this time of the year deal with Jesus’ identity.
- The number of Sundays after the Epiphany can be from 4 to 9 depending on the date of Easter.
- On the last Sunday before Ash Wednesday we celebrate the Transfiguration of our Lord. (Other denominations, such as Roman Catholics, celebrate the Transfiguration in August.)





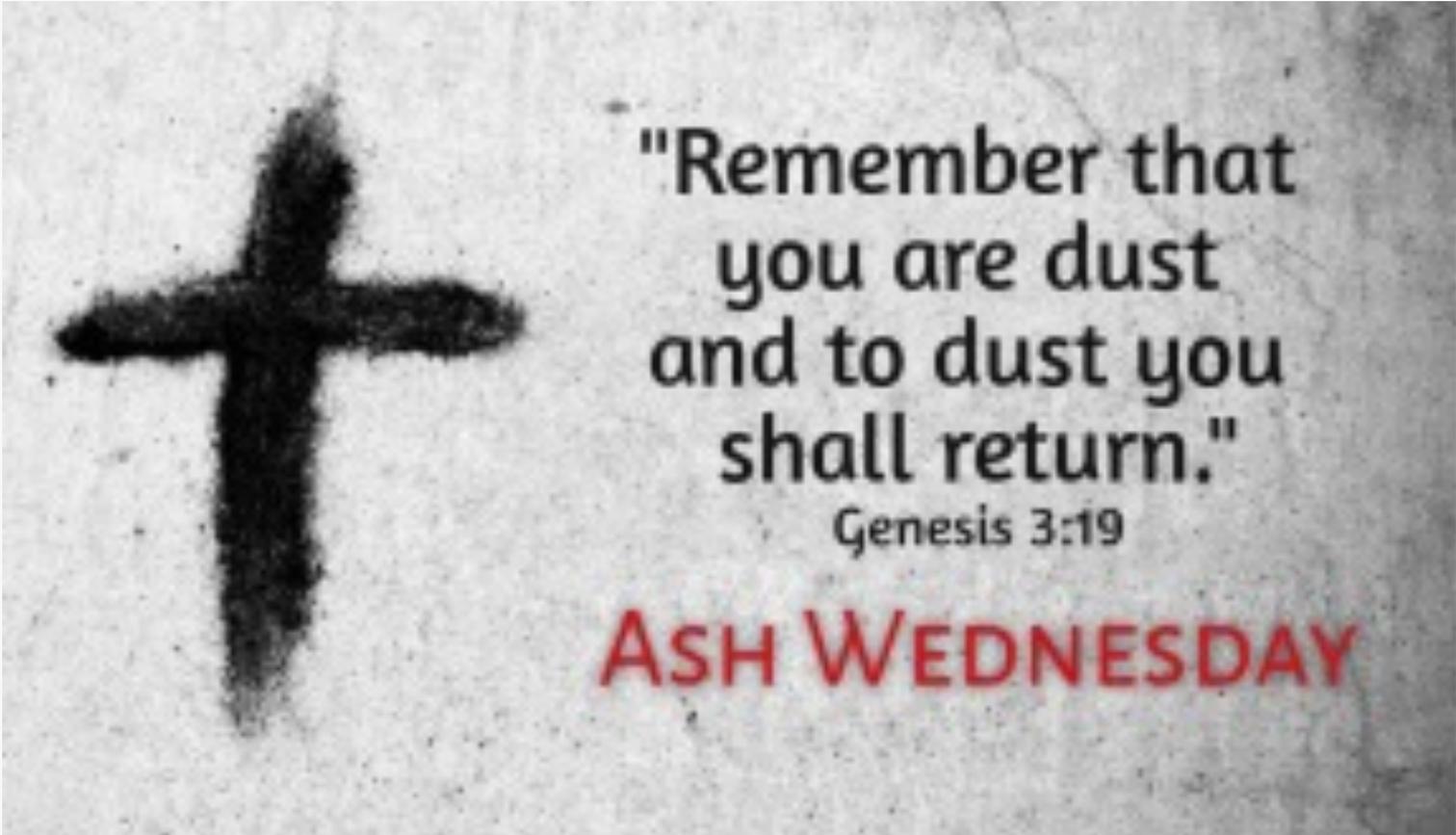
THE
FORTY
DAYS
of LENT



RETURN
to the
LORD
YOUR
GOD

Why is Lent 40 days?

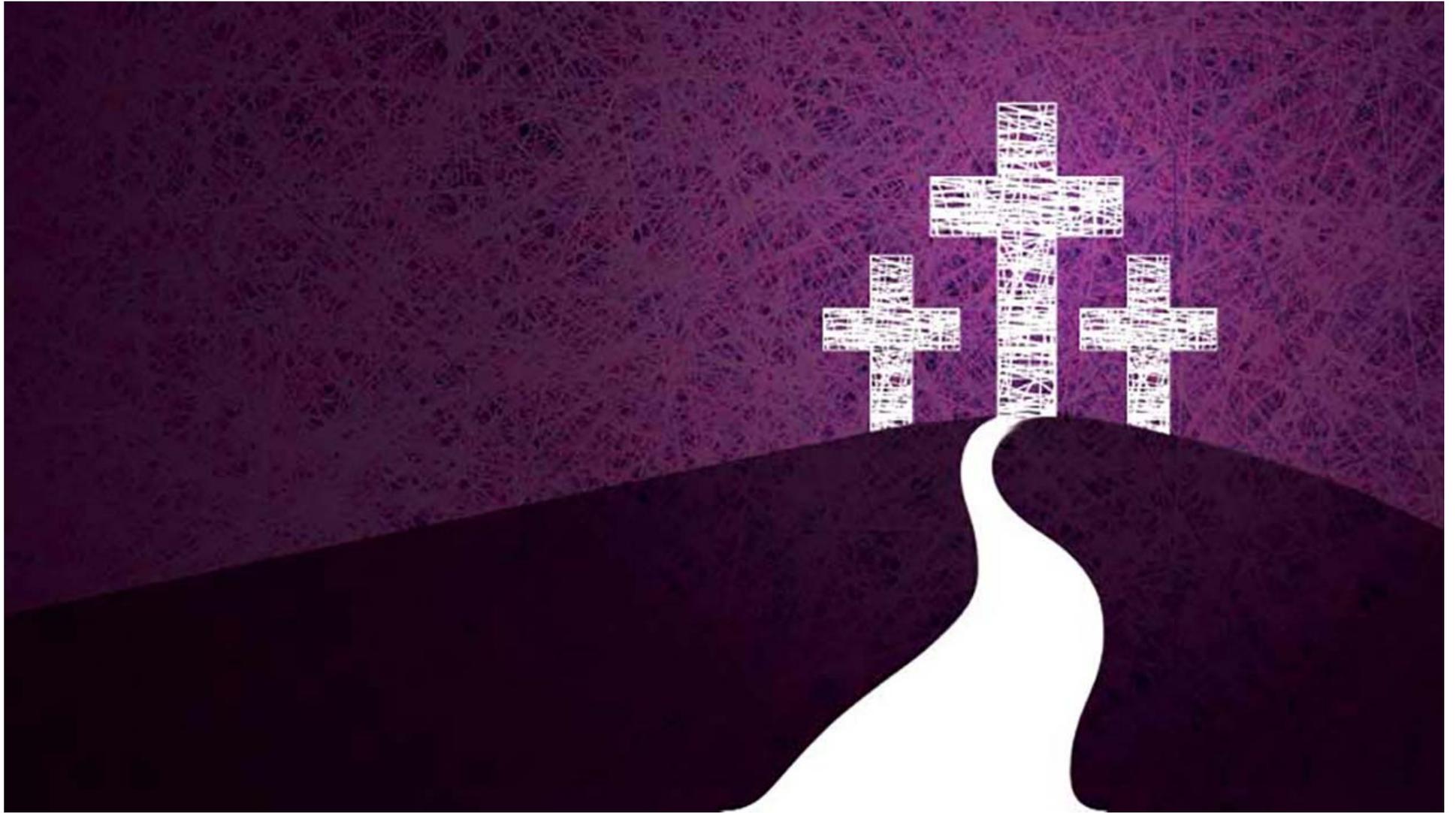
- 40 is a significant number in Scripture.
- Jesus spent 40 days fasting in the wilderness and being tempted by Satan in the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke before beginning his public ministry. **The gospel for the first Sunday in Lent is ALWAYS the temptation story.**
- The Great Flood lasted 40 days, Moses and Elijah also fasted for 40 days (Exodus 34, 1 Kings 19), Moses stayed on Mt. Sinai for 40 days receiving when receiving the Law, the Israelites wandered in the desert for 40 years, Jesus appeared to the disciples for 40 days after Easter.
- Sundays are considered excluded, being considered “little Easters” so Lent is really 46 days long. This is why we have “Sundays IN Lent” not “Sundays OF Lent.”



"Remember that
you are dust
and to dust you
shall return."

Genesis 3:19

ASH WEDNESDAY



Why is Lent purple?

- Purple is rich in symbolism, originally associated with royalty, because it was a more expensive color to dye.
- It was used as an act of derision toward Our Lord when Pilate placed a purple robe on Jesus, whom he called “King of the Jews”. Purple thus symbolizes pain, suffering, mourning and penitence.

“The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and called together the whole company of soldiers. They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. And they began to call out to him, “Hail, king of the Jews!” Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.”—Mark 15:16-20

Themes of Lent

- Worship changes during Lent to highlight its somber nature.
- The most significant change is to refrain from singing or speaking the word “Alleluia” since that is an expression of joy.
- Some congregations will “veil” all crosses
- Some congregations will not have altar flowers
- The traditional discipline of Lent is threefold – prayer (reflective, confessional), fasting (giving up something, or adding something extra) and almsgiving (giving to the poor, sacrificial giving)
- Scripture readings take us to the crucifixion

HOLY WEEK



Palm Sunday

- Palm Sunday is the day Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem in triumph, with crowds shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David!”
- Palms branches are distributed to congregants, which can be brought home.
- Some congregations process into worship with their palms singing a traditional hymn, “All Glory, Laud and Honor.”
- Fun fact – the ashes for Ash Wednesday are made from the burning of dried palm leaves.
- Some congregations have adopted the reading of the Passion (according to the gospel year) into their Palm Sunday worship.





Maundy Thursday

- Maundy Thursday gets its name from the Latin word “mandatum” meaning command, reflecting the “new” commandment Jesus gives us in the gospel for the day – to love one another
- The gospel is Jesus washing the disciples’ feet. Some congregations may do a foot washing ritual.
- It is also the day we remember Jesus giving us the sacrament of Holy Communion. Interestingly, there is no last supper in the gospel for the day, since John does not include a last supper.
- On Maundy Thursday, we hear the “first communion” account from the second reading in 1 Corinthians.





Good Friday

- Observance of Good Friday varies widely from congregation to congregation
- Some practices may be: noon services, stations of the cross, evening services, the “Seven Last Words,” Tenebrae (darkness) services culminating in the slamming of the book – or in some cases playing discordant chords on the organ. Some congregations encourage fasting.
- Generally, Holy Communion is NOT celebrated on Good Friday.



Holy Saturday

- Some congregations may offer an “Easter Vigil,” also referred to as the “Great Vigil of Easter.”
- An Easter vigil begins in candlelight. There are traditionally 12 readings and during the service the Easter proclamation is given, welcoming back the “Alleluia.” Lights are turned on and the service resumes joyfully with Easter hymns.



Why is the date of Easter different every year?? Who decided this???

- Easter falls on the Sunday following the first full moon after the northern spring equinox (March 21).
- The Council of Nicea (325 C.E./A.D.)



**HE IS NOT HERE,
FOR HE HAS RISEN!**

Matthew 28:6



CHRIST
is
RISEN

Alleluia

Easter Season

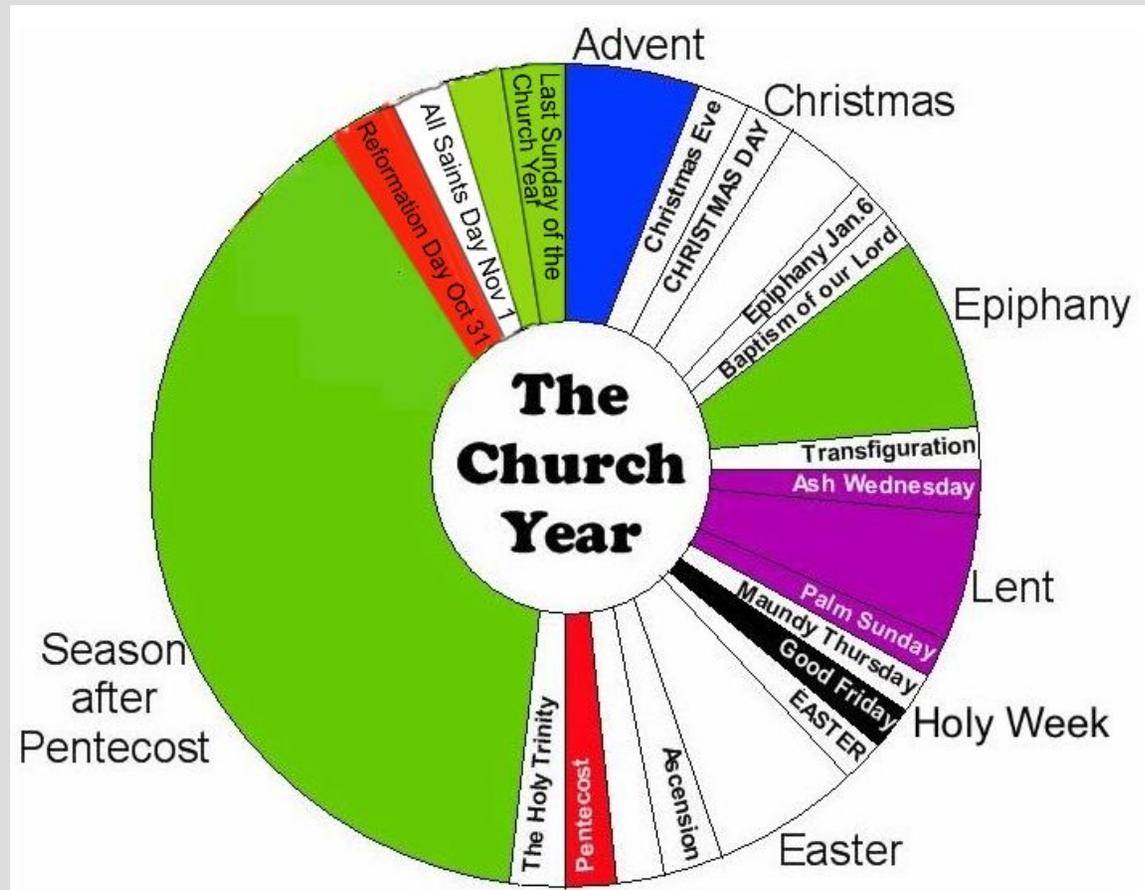
- Easter is not just a day, just as Christmas is not just a day. It is a SEASON.
- There are 7 weeks of Easter, or 50 days (Easter Sunday is day 1)
- Gospel readings in the Easter season highlight Jesus' post resurrection appearances
- A head's up that the 2nd Sunday of Easter is ALWAYS the "Doubting Thomas" story
- The Ascension of our Lord is the 40th day after Easter Sunday and always properly falls on a Thursday. Some congregations will celebrate it on the 6th Sunday of Easter.
- Pentecost is the 50th day after Easter Sunday, and the last day of the Easter Season.





Sundays after Pentecost

- Once the Easter Season is over, we enter a time we call “Sundays after Pentecost” or sometimes “Ordinary Time.”
- Sundays after Pentecost lasts from Pentecost right up until the end of the Church year at the end of November or beginning of December.
- In general, there are only a few special Sundays during this time.



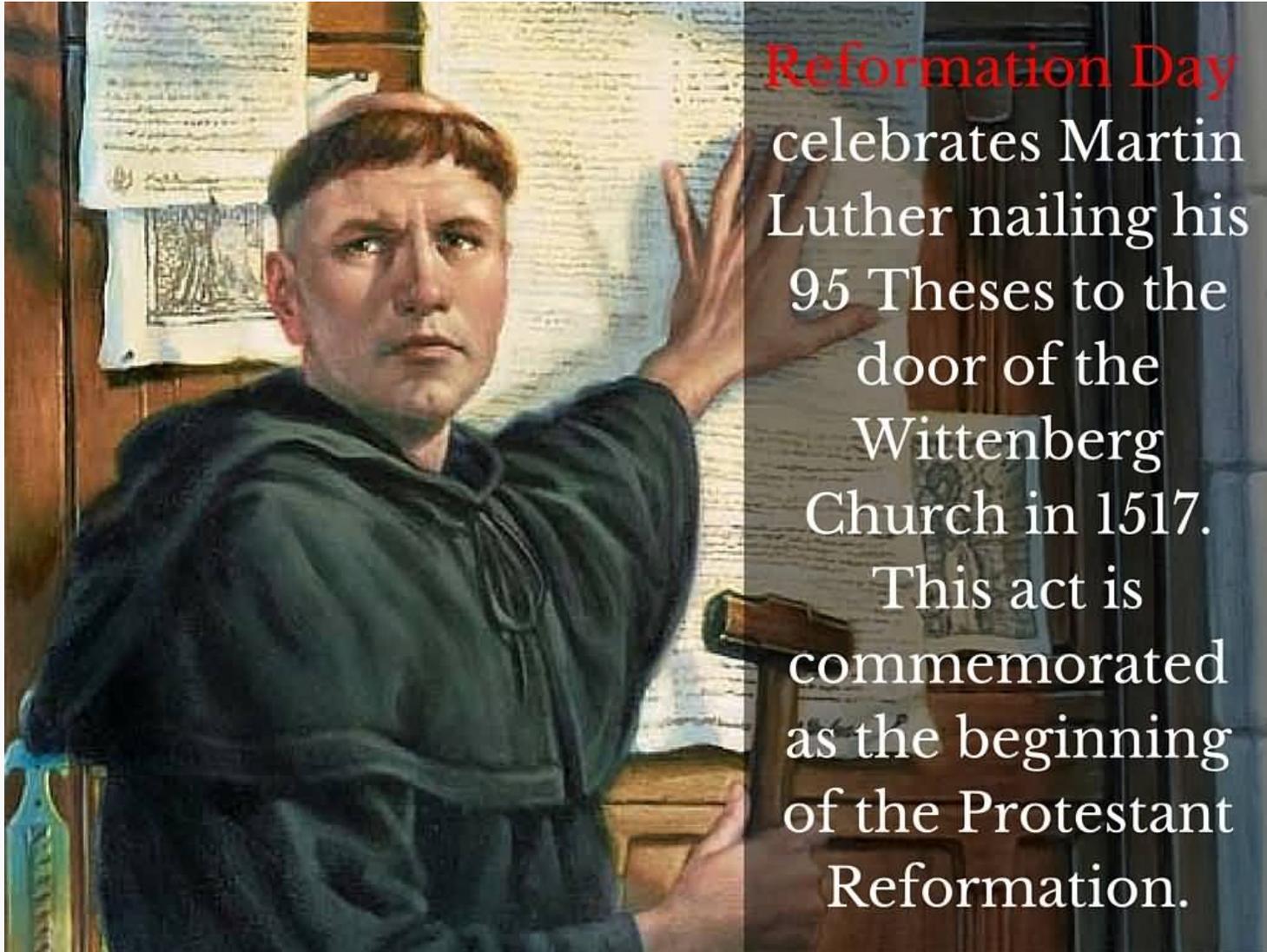
God eternal.
Three
in one



Holy Trinity Sunday

- Holy Trinity Sunday is celebrated on the first Sunday after Pentecost in most of the liturgical churches in Western Christianity. It is a celebration of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, the three Persons of God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- It is the only feast in the Lutheran Church that celebrates a “doctrine,” not an event. It is not explicitly in Scripture, only alluded to.
- Preaching on the Holy Trinity is complicated since it is considered a holy mystery and in trying to explain it we can easily run into theological problems.





Reformation Day

celebrates Martin Luther nailing his 95 Theses to the door of the Wittenberg Church in 1517.

This act is commemorated as the beginning of the Protestant Reformation.

Reformation Day/Sunday

- Reformation Sunday is a day unique to Lutheranism, although “some” other protestant denominations may remember it
- Martin Luther posted his disagreements (95 Theses) with the Church regarding the sale of indulgences (crudely speaking, the sale of forgiveness) on Oct. 31, 1517, sparking what would become the Protestant Reformation. We celebrate it on the last Sunday of October.
- It's no accident that Luther posted disagreements regarding indulgences on All Saints' Eve and the day before All Souls' Day – both days having to do with issues of heaven and purgatory

All Saints Day



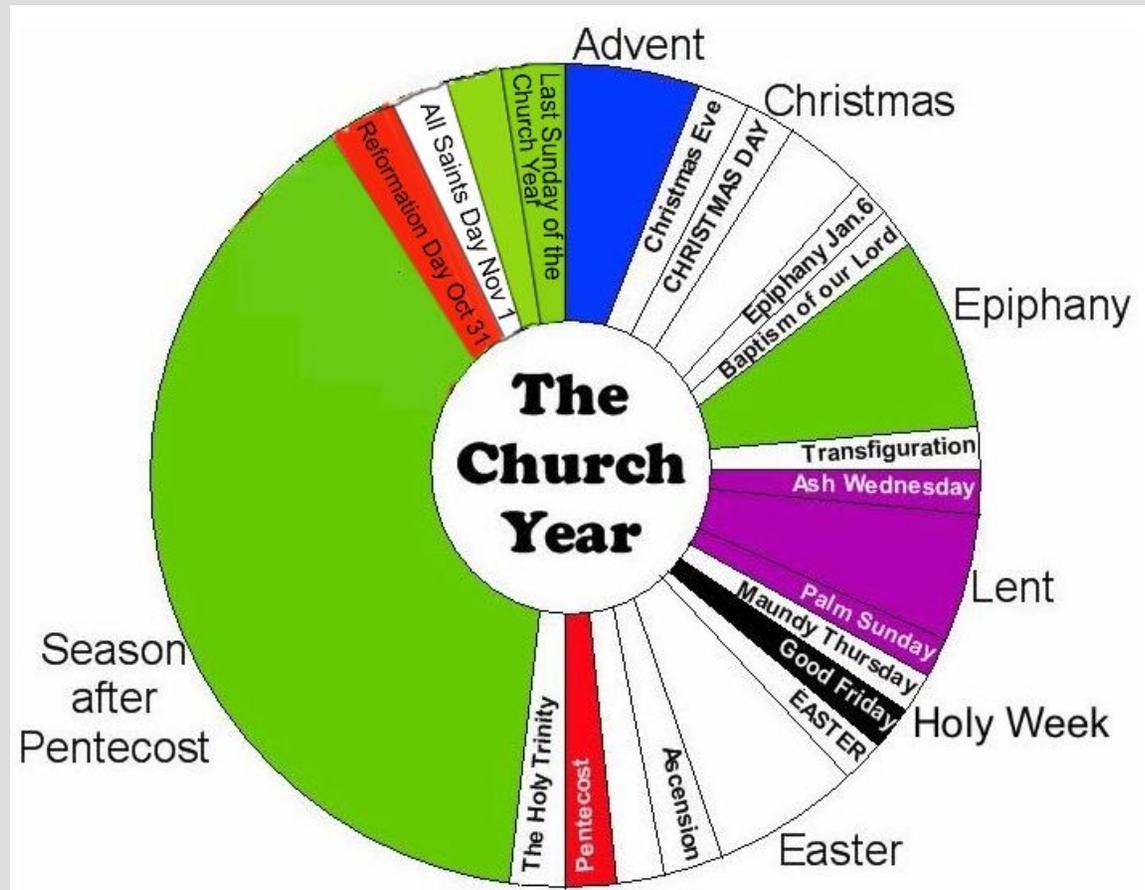
All Saints' Day/Sunday

- All Saints' DAY is November 1st. We celebrate it on the first Sunday of November.
- The purpose of this major feast is to honor saints of the Church who are unknown, who have no specific feast day. In the Roman Catholic Church this is still the case. As Lutherans, we use this day to honor all those who have died in the faith as well as our connection to them as "living saints," being part of the Communion of Saints.
- All Saints' is not to be confused with "All Souls' Day" which is a day to remember and pray for the souls in purgatory. Lutherans do not believe in purgatory.



Christ the King/Reign of Christ

- This is the last Sunday of the liturgical year, celebrated on the Sunday before the beginning of Advent. In some churches this is also called Judgment Sunday.
- Along with Holy Trinity Sunday it is a major feast of the Church that is not a specific event, but unlike Holy Trinity Sunday we have many scriptures which point to Christ as our King/ruler/head of the Church.
- The soldiers who mocked Jesus at his crucifixion crowned him with a crown of thorns.
- Readings up to and including this Sunday are apocalyptic in nature – reflecting the end of times/days.



Questions for reflection

- What is your favorite time of the church year (day or season), and why?
- What is your least favorite day or season of the church year, and why?