

Remnant Life Church
March 6, 2022
The Calendar of the Church
Acts 2:42-47

READ – Acts 2:42-47

- What we just read is the meeting of what would become the first “New-Testament” church led by the Disciples of Jesus who had just received the power of the Holy Spirit
- It is the blueprint from which the church we know today operates

This past Wednesday was Ash Wednesday

- It is a designated event of church life that signifies we are entering into the Resurrection Sunday portion of the year
- But I wonder how many of you know what these events are, what they mean, and why are they significant?

The reason I want to teach on this is so that the things we do in church, many of them very familiar for many of you, do not become mere rituals with no meaning.

The Christian church follows what it known as the Liturgical Calendar.

- The word liturgy means: *A religious rite or activity or a body of rites observed and prescribed for public worship*
- So, the Liturgical Calendar would recognize the specific times of worship within the Christian church that are done as a collective body on a repetitive yearly basis
 - IOW – these are the times when we worship with common focus throughout the entire global church for those who love God and follow Jesus Christ
 - These events all revolve around the person, ministry, and life of Jesus
- These events are not totally unique to the Christian church but I specify our church group since the Jewish church, for instance, recognize different days in conjunction with the story of the Hebrew people in the OT
 - Their times of recognition include Hanukkah, Purim, Rosh Hashanah, and Yom Kipper among many others

What are the events of the Liturgical church calendar?

Epiphany

- First Sunday of the new calendar year
- Celebrates the revelation of the Son of God who came as a human being in the person of Jesus Christ
- The western Christian church usually recognizes the visit of the Magi as the point of that revelation

The Baptism of the Lord

- The first Sunday after Epiphany (January 9, 2022)
- The celebration of the baptism of Jesus by His cousin John the Baptist in the Jordan River

- This was the first recorded action of Jesus that demonstrated His life would be the same as the people as a living witness and example to be followed

Lent

- The time between Ash Wednesday and the start of Holy Week or Passion Week
- It is the time of self-preparation for the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ
- Many churches promote the discipline of self-denial as a way to focus and enter in
 - This should be a time when a person elects to give up something that they enjoy
 - The Catholic church places a great deal of emphasis on this time

Ash Wednesday

- 40 days (excluding Sundays) prior to Resurrection Sunday
- The day that marks the beginning of the Lent season
- Many church hold an early morning solemn service and will place a cross using ash on their foreheads to be worn for the day
- This signifies the beginning of the Lent season for the participant
- Another day, not of the church but still prominent, Fat Tuesday is the day before Ash Wednesday
 - The most famous event associated with this time is Mardi Gras
 - Mardi Gras is French for Fat Tuesday
 - It was the day traditionally before the start of Lent when all the sweets, fats, eggs, and milk – items forbidden during the 40 days of fasting – were either used or disposed of so that that house would be clean of those things and without temptation
 - The first occurrence of Mardi Gras, in France, was on March 3, 1699
 - And the first time in this country was in 1703 in Mobile, Alabama
 - It quickly moved from just the one day to a festival lasting 12 days begins 11 days before Fat Tuesday and finishing on the last night before Ash Wednesday
 - Today, the most famous of the festival celebrations are held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Venice, Italy, and New Orleans, LA.
 - These events are not things to be joined
 - The level of debauchery associated with these events has greatly escalated as sin has taken hold of it
 - Sin always drags events and even people down with it

Palm Sunday

- The Sunday before Resurrection Sunday
- It commemorates the beginning of last week of Jesus' earthly life
- Also, His triumphal entry into Jerusalem
- It is also signifies the end of the Lent season

Holy Week

- The final days of Jesus' earthly ministry
- Each day had a significance even if nothing was recorded in the Gospels

Maundy Thursday

- Three significant events as recorded in the Gospels
- The Last Supper
- The Washing of the Disciple's Feet
- Jesus' Prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane

Good Friday

- The commencement of the arrest, trials, and beginning of the endurance of the cross
- Jesus dies on this day

Resurrection Sunday

- The day that Jesus rose from the grave
- He begins His appearances beginning with Mary Magdalene at the Garden Tomb
- Jesus appeared to well over 500 people following His resurrection

Ascension Day

- 40 days after the resurrection
- Jesus ascended back to heaven in the presence and full view of the 11 disciples

Pentecost

- Seven weeks after the Resurrection or on the 50th day following Resurrection Sunday
 - This took place while the people were in Jerusalem for the Festival of Weeks
 - This was a yearly festival as given by Moses to celebrate the wheat harvest and to give God thanks for His provision
- It was here that the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples and was then available for all believers

Trinity Sunday

- The first Sunday after Pentecost that churches sometime recognize
- Celebrates the Holy Trinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

Christ the King Sunday

- The Sunday before the start of Advent
- Celebrating the complete authority of Jesus Christ as King and Lord of all creation

Advent

- The four Sundays before Christmas
- A time of preparation in anticipation of the birth of Christ

Christmas

- December 25
- Celebrating the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Holy Scriptures with the birth of Jesus, God incarnate in the flesh of man

But many of those dates, at least for me especially during Holy Week and the time of Advent, are some of the most moving and meaningful in the life of the church and, what should also be, in the life of the Christian.

This year as we enter into the season of the resurrection, I encourage you to examine these familiar elements of church life anew.

Remember why we make special note of these times and never forget the reason we come together.

- To worship our awesome and loving God
- And to give thanks for what Jesus Christ did for us on the cross of calvary
- He provided a way for us to come back into fellowship with our Creator and set a place for us in His presence for all eternity
- What other reason would we need to appreciate and participate in these wonderful days of special meaning in the life of the church?