

Eastertide





Eastertide

The Purposes of Lent and Eastertide

Historically, Lent and Eastertide have been all about discipling people in the way of Jesus and sending them into ministry in his name.



Eastertide is the time of new life. Our Savior living forever a life which belongs no more to the earth and which one day we shall share with Him in heaven. Then our own lives — from Christ to us — for we have more than the assurance of rejoining Him; snatched by Him from the power of the devil we belong to Him as His by right of conquest and we share His life.



Easter week is the week of the baptized. They have passed from death to life, from the darkness of sin to the life of grace in the light of Christ. Wherever there are neophytes, the Easter season, and particularly the first week, is the period of post baptismal catechesis or mystagogogy. The community shares with them a deepening understanding of the paschal mystery and an ever greater assimilation of it in daily life through meditation, participation in the Eucharist, and the practice of charity.



The moral requirements of the new life are recalled throughout Eastertide. They are governed by the principle enunciated by St. Paul that, risen with Christ, the Christian must raise his desires to heaven, detach himself from earthly pleasures in order to love those of heaven. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to complete the formation in the baptized of the "new man" who, by the holiness of his life, bears witness to Christ crucified.



The Fifty days from Easter Sunday to Pentecost are celebrated in joyful exultation as one feast day, or better as one "great Sunday."

These above all others are the days for the singing of the Alleluia.



The Sundays of this season rank as the paschal Sundays and, after Easter Sunday itself, are called the Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Sundays of Easter. The period of fifty sacred days ends on Pentecost Sunday. The first eight days of the Easter Season make up the octave of Easter and are celebrated as solemnities of the Lord.



On the fortieth day after Easter the Ascension is celebrated, except in places where, not being a holy day of obligation, it has been transferred to the Seventh Sunday of Easter. This solemnity directs our attention to Christ, who ascended into heaven before the eyes of his disciples, who is now seated at the right hand of the Father, invested with royal power, who is there to prepare a place for us in the kingdom of heaven; and who is destined to come again at the end of time.



The weekdays after the *Ascension* until the Saturday before Pentecost inclusive are a preparation for the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.

This sacred season of fifty days comes to an end on Pentecost Sunday, which commemorates the giving of the Holy Spirit to the apostles, the beginnings of the Church and its mission to every tongue and people and nation.

Pentecost

THE **SPIRIT** OF
PENTECOST





The Christian holiday of **Pentecost**, which is celebrated the 50th day (the seventh Sunday) after Easter Sunday, commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and other followers of Jesus Christ while they were in Jerusalem celebrating the Feast of Weeks, as described in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2:1–31).



The holiday is also called "White Sunday" or "[Whitsunday](#)" or "Whitsun", especially in the [United Kingdom](#), where traditionally the next day, [Whit Monday](#), was also a public holiday (since 1971 fixed by statute on the last Monday in May). The Monday after Pentecost is a legal holiday in many European countries.



In Eastern Christianity, Pentecost can also refer to the entire fifty days of Easter through Pentecost inclusive; hence the book containing the liturgical texts is called the "*Pentecostarion*". Since its date depends on the date of Easter, Pentecost is a "moveable feast".



Pentecost is one of the Great Feasts of the Eastern Orthodox Church, a Solemnity in the Roman Rite of the Catholic Church, a Festival in the Lutheran Churches, and a Principal Feast in the Anglican Communion. Many Christian denominations provide a special liturgy for this holy celebration.



What does the Bible say about the day of Pentecost?

The day of Pentecost was the fulfillment of the words Jesus spoke to His disciples regarding the Holy Spirit of God, which is represented by wind and fire throughout the Bible. Life was brought to Adam's physical body when God breathed into his nostrils (**Genesis 2:7**).



Pentecost! Another day for stretching yourself. Another day for bringing some life into the sanctuary for worship. Of course, every time we gather as the people of God, there is life. But celebrations like Pentecost are opportunities for stepping out and going even further, trying to recapture the experience of being empowered by the Spirit for the task of building the church, making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.



Pentecost is one day when such a thing doesn't feel quite so outlandish, but it might just be within the realm of possibility—at least in the Spirit-breathed possibility.

The day of Pentecost – What is it?



Pentecost is often thought to have begun in the New Testament, but in actuality, the word Pentecost is a Greek word referring to the Festival of Weeks, which was one of the main holy festivals of the Jewish people ([Leviticus 23:15](#); [Deuteronomy 16:9](#)). The Festival of Weeks (or Feast of Weeks) was celebrated at the end of the grain harvest ([Exodus 34:22](#)), which occurred fifty days after the wave offering of Passover.



It was on this day—the day of Pentecost—that the Holy Spirit descended upon the believers in Jerusalem ([Acts 2](#)). Jews from every nation were all gathered together in the city, and witnessed tongues of fire falling on all the believers in Jesus, and they (the believers) were given the ability to speak in all the languages of the Jews gathered there, and they were amazed, saying "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?" ([Acts 2:7-8](#)).



The day of Pentecost was the fulfillment of the words Jesus spoke to His disciples regarding the Holy Spirit of God, which is represented by wind and fire throughout the Bible. Life was brought to Adam's physical body when God breathed into his nostrils ([Genesis 2:7](#)). God's Spirit is compared to the wind, when Jesus said, "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit" ([John 3:8](#)).



God led the Israelites as a pillar of fire ([Exodus 13:21](#)), and He is described as a "consuming fire" ([Deuteronomy 4:24](#); [Deuteronomy 9:3](#); [Isaiah 33:14](#); [Hebrews 12:29](#)). The glorified Christ is also identified by eyes that flame like fire ([Revelation 1:14](#); [19:12](#)).



But the tongues of fire and the mighty, rushing wind were not the only indications of the Spirit's presence that day. The Spirit spoke through Peter to the hearts of the people. Every person understood the sermon in their own language as a result of God's intervention, for God is merciful and "desires all people to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth" ([1 Timothy 2:4](#)).



As the crowds listened, they were "cut to the heart" ([Acts 2:37](#)) and instantly understood the message, as a result of the Spirit's illumination. God is a Creator, and just as He created physical light to illuminate the world, He creates light in a mind darkened by sin and the fall, so that the person can see Christ clearly and come to Him ([2 Corinthians 4:4-6](#)).



The day of Pentecost was a day of great mercy, when both Jew and Gentile were given that light, and God's invisible church, His bride, was born.

Pentecost was originally an agricultural festival celebrating the first harvest of the growing season. Later, it became a commemoration of the giving of the land of Canaan to the people of Israel; and even later, it morphed into an observance of the giving of the law to Moses on Mount Sinai.



All these are important times of celebration, but nothing in those celebrations indicates the power that was unleashed on this day. It certainly caught the disciples by surprise. They were used to a low-key holiday (not like Yom Kippur or even Rosh Hashana), but instead found themselves in an encounter with God that literally blew them away.

This is a day for playing with fire, for opening the windows and letting the wind blow through.



How can we capture an experience of power? How can the worship experience “enliven” the congregation? Because that is what happened; there was life given, life poured out, life shared in that Pentecost moment that caught everyone by surprise. This is a great day for something new, a song to learn as a congregation, a movement to do as we sing together. Bring a teacher to share this something new, encourage the congregation to step out of their comfort zones for just a little bit on this Pentecost celebration day.



You can be assured that the disciples who were spouting forth in languages they never knew before were outside their comfort zones! Sing in a different language or using a spiritual language.



Prayer, in another language. We can hear the rhythms of the prayer, even if the words are unintelligible. We might be surprised at how understanding comes. And even if understanding doesn't come, entering into that space where we aren't always in control of what is happening or our understanding of it, makes us readier to receive the Spirit when it comes.



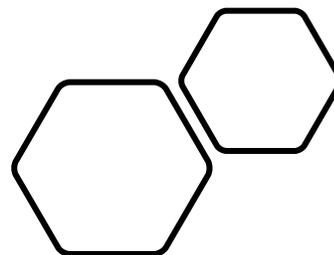
Let there be red! Red is the color of Spirit and the color of flame. It is a reminder of that first startling presence that came and rested on them. Did you catch that, the resting? What does that mean? This amazing moment, this throbbing with power moment, is ... comfortable? It fits, somehow; it fits, and we are in the right place at the right time.

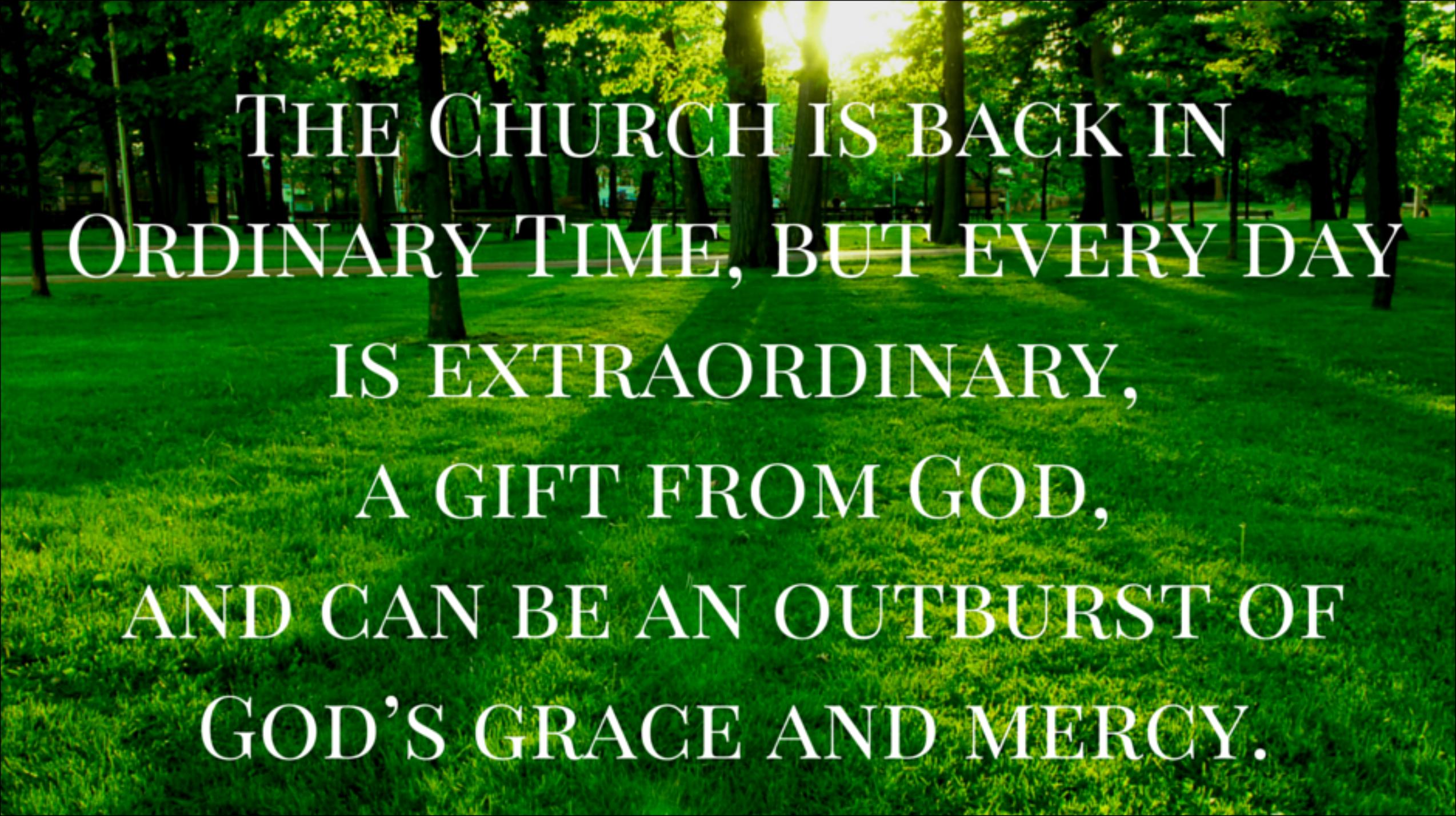


Do something dramatic, something memorable, something that might—let’s be honest—upset some of those who gather as not being “proper” for church. We have tamed worship, tamed Pentecost, trying to be proper and reserved. There is a time and place for proper, and for calm and reserved. But Pentecost is not that time or place.

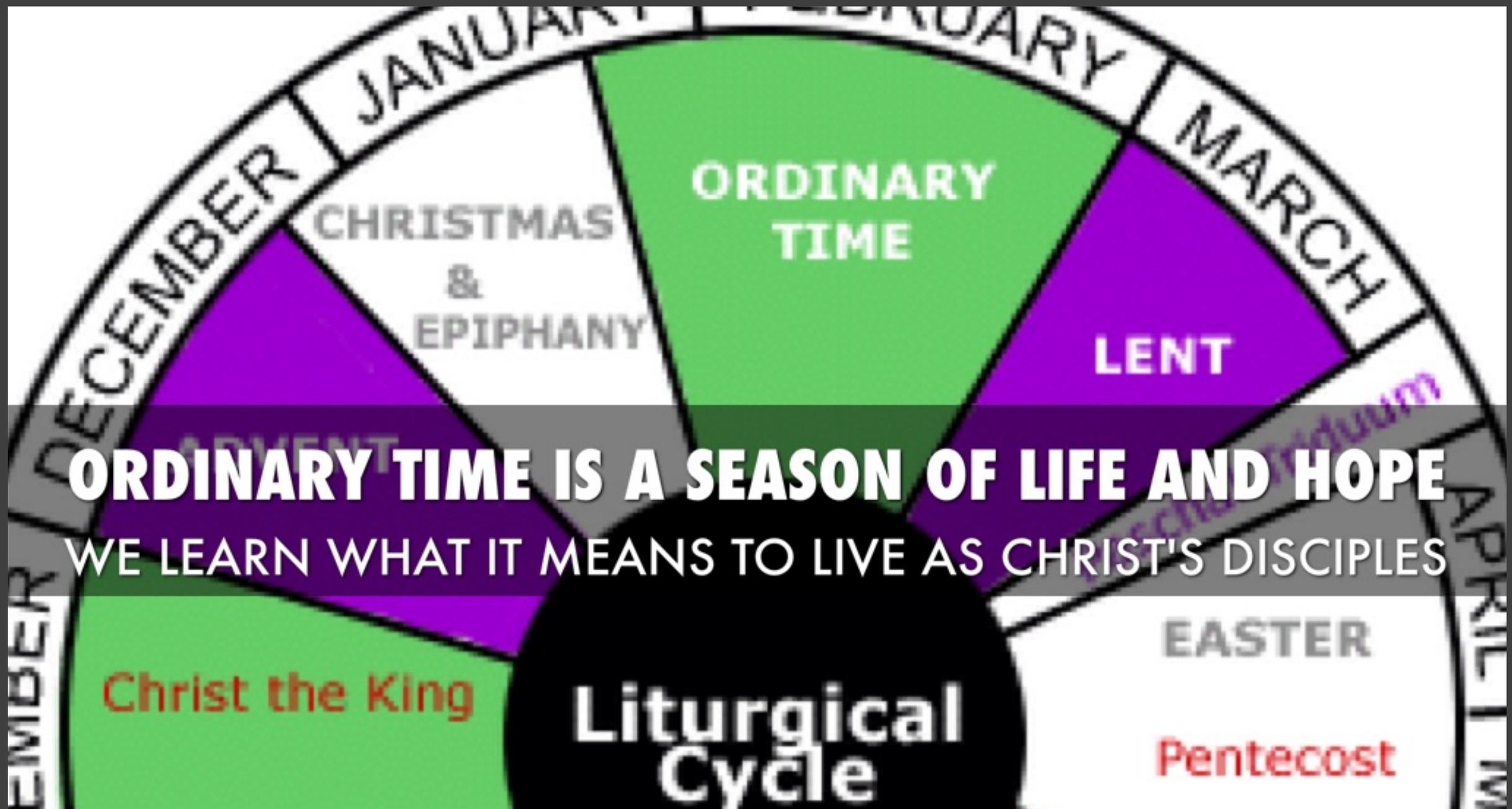


*Ordinary
Time*



A sunlit path in a lush green park with tall trees and a bright sun in the background.

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ORDINARY TIME, BUT EVERY DAY
IS EXTRAORDINARY,
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ORDINARY TIME IS A SEASON OF LIFE AND HOPE
WE LEARN WHAT IT MEANS TO LIVE AS CHRIST'S DISCIPLES

Christ the King

Liturgical
Cycle

EASTER

Pentecost