



**GCI** *Buzz*

What is  
the: **GCI**  
**Worship**  
**Calendar**

[More on gci.org/the-churchs-worship-calendar/](https://gci.org/the-churchs-worship-calendar/)



# wor·ship cal·en·dar

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*Noun*

1. an invitation to exalt Jesus more intentionally as the central focus of our worship. Embracing a well-defined calendar brings clarity to how we worship in GCI and keeps us Christ-centered. It is a season-to-season reminder of who we are and whose we are.

*Examples:*

- In **Advent**, we remember and celebrate Christ's coming. It is a season of anticipation, with a posture of waiting with expectation.
- In **Christmas**, we remember and celebrate Christ's birth. It is a season of joy and wonder – God is with us! The posture of the services during this season is one of contemplation and celebration.

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## ...Examples continued

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- In **Epiphany**, we remember and celebrate Christ's ministry. It is a season of discipleship with a posture of sitting at the feet of Jesus and learning who he is.
- In **Easter Prep** (also known as Lent), we remember and celebrate Christ's salvation. It is a season to open ourselves wider to more fully appreciate our deep need for Jesus. The posture of the services during this season is one of preparation to receive the overflowing graces of Good Friday and Easter.
- In **Easter**, we remember and celebrate Christ's resurrection. It is a season of transformation – the inauguration of new creation, with a posture of contemplation and celebration.
- In **Ordinary Time**, we remember and celebrate Christ's church. It is a season of participation with Jesus in the building of his church. The posture of the services during this season is one of being sent and joining Jesus in disciple-making.

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# Worship Calendar

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## *Background:*

The GCI Worship Calendar is based on the Revised Common Lectionary or RCL. The RCL has been around for centuries and is used by many different Christian churches around the world. We use the RCL as our framework as it is the most widely accepted basis for the Christian calendar, including seasons and holy days that have been traditionally observed in Christian churches.

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# Worship Calendar

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## *Purpose:*

Each week, as we gather in our GCI congregations around the world, most of our pastors are preaching from the Revised Common Lectionary. Using these same passages, and often the same sermon outlines published in *Equipper* is incredibly unifying. Reading and responding to the same truth about our triune God is a wonderful way to create connection within our global fellowship.

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# Worship Calendar

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## *Outline:*

The annual worship calendar begins in late November (or early December) with Advent Season. *The first half of the worship year focuses on key events in the life and ministry of Jesus and the second half, called Ordinary Time (or the Time after Pentecost), focuses on living out what was learned during the first half.*

Throughout the year, the church's worship is expressed in words and actions themed to the particular season: songs and hymns, spoken prayers, proclamation of the Word of God in scripture reading and preaching, and partaking of the Lord's Supper (also called Communion and the Eucharist). To assist its congregations in following the Christian worship calendar, GCI provides sermons for each Sunday and some of the additional special worship days. These sermons are synced with the scripture readings set out in the **Revised Common Lectionary**. To view the sermons published to date in GCI Equipper, [click here](#).

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# Worship Calendar

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## *Primary worship days and seasons:*

Here is a list of the primary worship days and seasons in the Western Christian worship calendar. Some churches celebrate all of these, others only some. GCI asks its congregations to celebrate (as a minimum) the days/seasons of Advent, Christmas, Holy Week, and Easter. For additional information and resources related to this worship cycle, [click here](#).

- **Advent Season**—spanning the four Sundays prior to Christmas
- **Christmas Season**—beginning with Christmas Day on December 25 and continuing through January 5
- **Epiphany Season**—beginning with the day of Epiphany on January 6 and continuing to the day before Ash Wednesday—the season includes the Baptism of our Lord (the Sunday after the Epiphany) and Transfiguration Sunday (the Sunday before Ash Wednesday)

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# ...Days & Seasons continued

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- **Preparation for Easter**—beginning with Ash Wednesday and continuing through Holy Saturday (thus overlapping Holy Week)
- **Holy Week**
  - » **Passion (Palm) Sunday**
  - » **Maundy Thursday**
  - » **Good Friday**
  - » **Holy Saturday**
- **Easter Season**—beginning with Easter Sunday and continuing to Pentecost, including two special celebrations:
  - » **Easter Sunday**—celebrating Jesus' resurrection
  - » **The Ascension of our Lord**—40 days after Easter Sunday
- **Day of Pentecost**
- **Ordinary Time**—the period following Pentecost until Advent Season, including three special celebrations:
  - » **Holy Trinity Sunday**—the Sunday following Pentecost
  - » **All Saints Day**— occurs on November 1, acknowledged on the following Sunday.
  - » **Christ the King Sunday**—the Sunday before Advent Season begins

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# Worship Calendar

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## *Final Thoughts:*

The GCI Worship Calendar is a tool that keeps worship alive. It provides an inspirational and intentional backbone for planning your congregation's activities and events in each Avenue. It keeps hope alive – and is the framework for intentionality in our worship and Hope Avenue. It informs the Faith Avenue by revealing all aspects of the ministry of Christ, and it defines the Love Avenue by revealing God's love for the whole world and emphasizing his presence and mission in each season.

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# Worship Calendar

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*More On:*

- [Spiritual Practices for Easter Preparation – GCI Equipper](#)
- [Spiritual Practices for Easter Season – GCI Equipper](#)
- [Place-sharing in Ordinary Time – GCI Equipper](#)

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