Holidays and Holy Days – Fall 2019
Week 6: Church Practices

- Holidays and Holy Days
  - Part 1: OT Feasts and Holy Days (weeks 1-4 ... handouts for 1-3)
  - Part 2: NT Fulfillment (week 5)
  - Part 3: Church Practice (Week 6 – TODAY)
  - Part 4: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany (week 7-9 – Dec. 1,15,22)

- Spiritual Life Cycles
  - Daily ~ Morning and Evening
  - Weekly ~ Work and Rest
  - Yearly ~ Feasts
  - 7 / 50 years ~ Sabbatical / Jubilee

In General, How does Christ Fulfill the OT Feasts and Holy Days?
  - Feasts and Holy Days are a Shadow of Reality, of Christ (Heb. 10:1-4)
  - Specific Fulfillment of Details
  - Fulfillment of Signs, Types and Patterns
• Early Church – Weekly Cycle
  o Moving from Sabbath to Lord’s Day
  o Celebrating the Eucharist (Lord’s Supper)

• Reformation / Puritan – Weekly Cycle
  o Sabbatarian Practice of the Lord’s Day
  o Changes to the Eucharist (Lord’s Supper)
    - Transubstantiation vs. Remembrance
    - Question of Participants, Frequency and “Fencing the Table”

• Liturgical Year – Cycle of Yearly Christian Holidays
  o Key Events in Life of Christ – (OT Preparation / Anticipation of Coming), Birth, Baptism, Transfiguration, Holy Week, Death, Resurrection, Ascension, Sending Holy Spirit, (Church era), Second Coming
  o Seasons of Fasting and Feasting, Repentance and Faith - Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, Ordinary Time
  o Note on other “Feast Days” – All Hallows Eve / All Saints Day, Day of the Dead / All Souls Days (Treasury of Merit), Feasts for martyrs and saints ... Reformation Day ...
- **Modern Day Christian Understanding and Practice of Church Seasons**
  
  o **Advent ~ Preparation for Coming of Christ**
    
    - Ancient Practice – time for converts to Christianity to prepare for baptism
    
    - Middle Ages – started Nov. 11, pre-Christmas lent time for prayer and fasting, preparation for the second coming
    
    - Modern – First Sunday after Nov. 30 including 4 Sundays, ending on Christmas Eve, celebration of nativity as well as looking forward to second coming
    
    - Advent wreath (evergreens, 3 purple candles of royalty – Prophet/hope, Bethlehem/faith, Angels/peace, 1 pink candle – Shepherds/joy, 1 white in center as Christ candle … or 4 blue for night sky before daylight returns … growing light as get closer to Christmas)
    
    - Advent Calendar / Joshua Tree
  
  o **Christmas ~ Celebration of Christ’s Birth**
    
    - Celebration of nativity – Dec. 25 (date fixed in 4th century … Winter Solstice)
    
    - Christmastide – 12-day feast – ends on 12th night
    
    - Reformation / Puritans – Christmas Catholic / Secular and not celebrated
    
    - Local History – Moravians in Bethlehem first US Christmas tree/ Nativity
Epiphany ~ Coming of Magi / Revelation to the Gentiles

- January 6 (or in some churches 1st Sunday after Jan. 1)
- Early Church - Day of Jesus’s Baptism
- Middle Ages / Today – Day the Magi Visit Jesus / Revelation to the Gentiles
- Beginning of Epiphanytide – from Epiphany until Feast of Presentations / Candlemas on Feb 2 (thus making Christmas + Epiphany 40 days) – alternately until day before Ash Wednesday (celebration of the Transfiguration)

Lent ~ Fast of Preparation for Easter

- From Ash Wednesday to Holy Saturday (Easter Eve) … Note: day before has become celebration – Mardi Gras, Carnival, Fat Tuesday, Fasnacht Day …
- 40-days, representing the 40-days of Christ’s temptation in the wilderness (note: 40 days does not include the Sundays, there is still sabbath in lent!)
- Traditionally time for prayer, fasting, penance, mortifying the flesh, repentance of sins, almsgiving, and denial of ego
- Three traditional practices to be taken up with renewed vigor during Lent are prayer (justice towards God), fasting (justice towards self), and almsgiving (justice towards neighbors).
- Solemn, Holy time of grief and mourning … some traditions omit “Gloria Deo” and “Alleluia” from services during lent, veil sacred objects

Holy Week ~ Crucifixion, Suffering of Christ

- Last week before Christ’s death - Palm Sunday to Easter Eve …
- Triduum – Maundy Thursday … Good Friday … Holy Saturday … Easter
  - Maundy Thursday – Last Supper, Washing of Feet (link to Passover)
  - Good Friday – Passion and Crucifixion of Jesus (traditionally no Eucharist in mass, cross and images veiled) – extinguish lights
  - Holy Saturday – Jesus in the Tomb / descent to hell – traditional service after nightfall and before sunrise, lights restored, bells rung in anticipation of Easter morning

Easter ~ Feast of Celebration of Christ’s Resurrection, Victory

- First Sunday after the first full moon on or after 21 March (spring solstice)
- Easter Vigil – after midnight Sat … Easter Sunrise Service – dawn Easter Sunday
- Easter Sunday also starts Season of Easter which last 7 weeks + 1 day ~50 days, until Pentecost. (alt. Easter as 40 days to ascension, Pentecost as 10)

Pentecost ~ Coming of the Holy Spirit, Church and Mission

- Whitsunday – 50 days after Easter – same date as Jewish feast of Weeks
- Often time for baptism (ancient church baptize on Easter and Pentecost)

Ordinary Time ~ Time between Easter and Lent

- Some add “Kingdomtide” 4 weeks before advent ~ Season of the End Times