



May 2017



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 WBA/WMU Annual Meeting 5:45-8:15 p.m. First Baptist Activity Center	2 8:00 Brotherhood Breakfast 10:15 Faithfully Fit (CAC)	3 5:30 Church Supper 6:15 Prayer Service 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	4 10:15 Faithfully Fit (CAC)	5	6
7 9:45 Sunday School 11:00 Morning Worship	8	9 8:00 Brotherhood Breakfast 10:15 Faithfully Fit (CAC)	10 5:30 Church Supper 6:15 Prayer Service 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	11 10:15 Faithfully Fit (CAC)	12	
14  9:45 Sunday School 11:00 Morning Worship	15 10:30 <i>Baptist Women on Mission</i> 5:00 Historical Society Meeting 6:00 Finance Committee Meeting	16 8:00 Brotherhood Breakfast 10:15 Faithfully Fit (CAC)	17 5:30 Last Church supper until Fall 6:15 Prayer Service 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	18 10:15 Faithfully Fit (CAC)	19	
21 9:45 Sunday School 11:00 Morning Worship  6:30 Deacon's Meeting	22	23 8:00 Brotherhood Breakfast 10:15 Faithfully Fit (CAC)	24 6:15 Church Conference 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	25 10:15 Faithfully Fit (CAC)		
28 9:45 Sunday School 11:00 Morning Worship	 MEMORIAL DAY Church office closed	30 8:00 Brotherhood Breakfast 10:15 Faithfully Fit (CAC)	31 6:15 Prayer Service 7:00 Choir Rehearsal			

From the Pastor's Perspective . . .

For much of our history, Baptists have given little attention to the Christian Year. In fact, some Baptists did not even recognize or celebrate Christmas or Easter. Coming out of the Reformation tradition, they completely rejected the Christian Year.

Over time, Baptists in general began to recognize and celebrate Christmas and Easter. But they still largely ignored the rest of the historic Christian calendar.

In the 20th century, many Protestant churches began to see the value of the Christian Year and began to observe it once again. Until about the 1970s, almost all Baptist churches in the Southern Baptist tradition that observed any kind of calendar followed the denominational calendar with its special emphasis Sundays, supplemented by the secular calendar (civic holidays) and what someone has called the “Hallmark calendar” (Valentine’s, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, etc.), along with Christmas and Easter. And when Christmas Day and Easter Sunday were past, Christmas and Easter were over.

But in the 1960s and 70s, a small number of Baptist ministers and churches began to see the value of the Christian Year, of marking time with the remembrance of the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and God’s continued work in and through the church. The number of Baptist and other evangelical churches that follow the Christian Year in some way and to some degree continues to grow.

Here in our worship at Temple, we are focusing on the major days and seasons of the Christian Year. So far since the last Sunday of this past November (my first Sunday with you as your pastor), we have observed Advent and Christmas, Ash Wednesday and Lent, Holy Week and Easter. Right now we’re in the midst of the seven-week season of Eastertide, reflecting on the significance of Jesus’ Passion, death, and resurrection. In a few weeks we’ll reflect on His ascension into heaven, then the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the church at Pentecost, and the significance of the Trinity—the one true God’s existence and revelation of Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In the season of “ordinary time” following Pentecost, we’ll reflect on God’s work among His people as revealed in both the Old and New Testaments. Then in October, we’ll mark the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation. And on the first Sunday of November, we’ll remember those saints from Temple who have gone to be with the Lord over the previous twelve months.

But just what is the origin and the significance of the Christian Year?

The biblical foundation for the idea of a Christian Year includes the Jewish festivals and fasts that we find in the Old Testament (Passover and Unleavened Bread, Pentecost or Weeks, Trumpets or *Rosh Hashanah*, Day of Atonement or *Yom Kippur*, Tabernacles or Booths, Dedication or Lights or *Hanukkah*, and Lots or *Purim*), along with the weekly Sabbath day. In the New Testament we find references to Easter (as in 1 Corinthians 5:7-8; Greek *pascha*, the word for the Jewish Passover) and to the Lord’s Day or first day (1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Revelation 1:10).

The Christian Year developed over several centuries. In the 1st century, churches were observing the Lord’s Day and Easter. Every Lord’s Day was a little Easter—Christians met on the first day of the week rather than the Sabbath because Jesus rose on the first day. But they also celebrated the anniversary of Jesus’ death and resurrection at the Passover season. Jewish Christians in the 1st century continued to observe the Jewish festivals as well, and associated Jesus’ death and resurrection with Passover (the Eastern Orthodox churches still call Easter *Pascha*). By the 2nd century, *Easter* was celebrated for seven weeks. At least by the 4th century Christians celebrated Pentecost as a remembrance of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. *Lent* began to be observed as a time of preparation, first for those who would be baptized at Easter, then for all Christians to celebrate Easter. *Epiphany* originally celebrated both the birth of Jesus and His manifestation to the magi (and thus to the Gentiles); later the manifestation to the magi became the focus. *Christmas* marked the birth of Jesus from the 4th century; both Christmas and Epiphany were deliberately placed on the same dates as pagan festivals as appropriate alternative Christian celebrations for disciples who had come out of pagan backgrounds. *Advent* later developed as a time of anticipation both of the celebration of Jesus’ birth and of His return in glory. Thus all the major days and seasons were developed and observed by the 4th or 5th century. Other observances such as saints’ days (a custom that began with remembering martyrs on the anniversaries of their deaths) continued to be added to the calendar in subsequent years.

The Christian Year helps us enter into the story of the Bible and the history of the people of God. The regular repetition of this narrative year after year helps us to learn our faith more deeply and enriches our worship significantly. It helps us to hear the story as a whole, not just bits and pieces of it. And it helps us to order our lives by a *Christian* sense of time, rather than being controlled by the *secular* calendar. It is, in a very real sense, a powerful discipleship tool.

I pray you will find our following the Christian Year helpful in your walk with Christ and in our life together as a church!