

What Time is It?

Everybody knows when Christmas time is here. If you don't, you're just not paying attention. Not only is the Church proclaiming our celebration of the Savior's birth on the 25th of December, but the secular world—especially the realm of retail—is focused on that day. Be it for faith, family, party, or profit, on December 25 we all know what time it is.

Most people, at least most Christians, will also know when Easter is here. We may get a little confused as to exactly when Easter is coming (because it's always moving around thanks to the phases of the moon and their relation to the first day of Spring), but once we see it on the calendar, we know what's going on. In 2016, Easter will be on March 27th, and it will be time for our big celebration of Jesus' resurrection from the dead!

But what time is it *now*?

Maybe that's one of the reasons people "vanish" from church at this point in the year: they don't know what time it is. They don't feel there's a good reason to come to church, because they don't know what's going on, what we're celebrating, or why they should come. Granted, these days aren't as "big" as Christmas or Easter, but they're still important. For at this time of year, we remember the chapters of Jesus' life that connect the Great Story of Christmas to the Greatest Story of Easter.

The Twelve Days of Christmas announce the birth of Jesus, first to the shepherds of Bethlehem (Christmas), then to Simeon and Anna in the Temple (the first Sunday after Christmas, Luke 2:22-40), and to the teachers of the Law in the Temple when Jesus was twelve years old (Luke 2:41-52).

We change gears as we change seasons on January 6th, celebrating the arrival of the Magi on Epiphany (Matthew 2:1-12). On the first Sunday after Epiphany, we recall the Baptism of Jesus (Luke 3:15-22), the day when Jesus not only began his earthly ministry at age 30, but also tied Himself to us in our Baptism.

The Sundays after that walk us through portions of Jesus' early ministry, as he made himself known through his first miracle (John 2:1-11), his rejection at Nazareth (Luke 4:16-30), and his expulsion of an unclean spirit (Luke 4:31-44). This year, because Easter is early, the Epiphany season is short, so by the first Sunday in February, the season of Epiphany comes to its climax in the Transfiguration of our Lord (Luke 9:28-36), and we get ready to enter the season of Lent.

As you enter into this new year, you may be thinking about cleaning up and starting fresh with a clean slate for the New Year. But I hope your slate is not *too* clean. I hope you don't plan to erase *everything* we've just been through. Think about what just happened, what we've just celebrated, and what's yet to come.

What time is it? It's time to connect Christmas to Easter with the Lord's words. It's time to gather together and celebrate what Jesus has done for us. It's time to get out there and make Jesus, our Savior, known!