

NEW YEAR'S EVE
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“FOR EVERYTHING THERE IS A SEASON”

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As we prepare to turn the page and begin a new year, we take a moment today to review the seasons of faith that make up a YEAR IN THE CHURCH. Each season shows us how Jesus is with us every day of our lives and every season of the year. We start with the season we just finished, Advent, and then move into the coming year, as Jesus continues to come to us.

ADVENT + WAIT AND SEE

As we heard from the book of James, farmers know how to be patient. As farmers wait through each season they watch their crops grow from seeds to full-grown plants. They wait through sun. They wait through rain. They wait through drought. But in the end, the waiting is well worth it! They harvest their plants when they are ripe and ready. We are called to be like farmers during the season of Advent. We are called to wait and see what God is growing. He planted Jesus in our world. He put the seed of salvation into the world in flesh and blood. It may be hard for us to see how a little baby can do great things. But the Bible tells us again and again, “Wait and see.” Good things are on their way. God says, “In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and He shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.” And again God says, “Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not see it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” Our job in the season of Advent is to be on the lookout for Jesus and His forgiveness and salvation in even the smallest of ways. Because God is able to do from the very smallest of things, the very greatest of things. Wait and see!

CHRISTMAS + A KING IS BORN

In Ecclesiastes it says, “There is a time to be born.” The Christmas season is all about it! “The time came for her to be delivered.” The season of Christmas reminds us that the birth of Jesus was no ordinary birth. It is THE birth for ALL TIME! THE birth that has meaning in every season of our lives. Why? Because He is born to be “God with us” every day, no matter what the season. He is born to save His people from their sin. He is born to be our King. He is born to rule over heaven and earth. His birth on Christmas means that we are born anew to a new life that is blessed with the God-given Christmas gifts of peace, hope and love. And now that our King is born, we have a season of unending blessings to look forward to in the kingdom of heaven. Long live the King!

EPIPHANY + GO FORTH

Epiphany is a season of movement, for going the distance. The Wise Men were on the move to follow the star and find the Savior. First they went to the palace in Jerusalem. When they discovered He was not there, they went to the place baby Jesus was and worshiped Him there. We are always on the go! No one season seems to be less busy than any other! But what are we going forth to do? Are we going and doing just to please ourselves and others? The Wise Men had it right; they were on the go to get to Jesus. Our goal, to go and to do, is to stay in step with Jesus. Our job in God's kingdom is to worship and pray and serve and care and love one another. Our job in Epiphany is to live the Good News of Jesus' birth for those who may never see the Savior in this or any other season. Jesus says, “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every nation.” EVERY NATION begins right here in our neck of the woods. Go with God!

LENT + TO DIE FOR

It comes as no surprise that the season of Lent is a clear remind that there is A TIME TO DIE! In Lent we follow Jesus to the cross where He will suffer and die for our sins on Good Friday. Jesus knew the time to die had come. "When the days drew near for Him to be taken up, He set His face to go to Jerusalem." And Just before His death, Jesus says, "But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify Your name." Then, with His dying breath He prays, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit." But just like Jesus' birth, His death was not ordinary. By His death, He paid the price of death that we deserve for our sins. He gave His life as a ransom for us. By His wounds we are healed. He died for us so that we might live. The season of sin is over, and the cross is the key.

EASTER + LIVE IT UP

"There is a time to cast away stones." And Easter is the proof of that. In Matthew chapter 28 we read, "An angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it." With that stone CAST AWAY Jesus makes a grand entrance on Easter morning. But more than stones were cast away that first Easter Day. The power of death was cast away! The chains of sin and guilt and shame were cast away! The way to life and freedom and forgiveness are wide open!

With the stone rolled away, we have the chance to "live it up," as it were, in the sense that we can live our lives in a way that points up to heaven and to the place where our risen Lord is seated at the right hand of God, waiting for us to join Him in heaven. When we "live it up" as Easter people, we raise our voices high in songs of praise. We lift up our prayers to Him! We lift up those around us with care and compassion. When we live it up, we live for Jesus!

PENTECOST + BE FRUITFUL

"There is a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted." One of the most wonderful verses in Scripture is from Acts chapter 2: "And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved." Pentecost is the season when each of us has the opportunity to grow spiritually. To be fruitful in our work. To encourage the spread of the kingdom of God!

But how can we be fruitful in our spiritual lives?

HERE IS THE LIST:

We are fruitful when we love our family, friends and even those who are hard to love.

We are fruitful when we have the joy of life, and are excited about the gift of each day, the blessings of creation and the people God has placed in our lives.

We are fruitful when we have a sense of peace and calm in the face of troubles and trials.

We are fruitful when we are patient with people and situations.

We are fruitful when we show kindness to others, being gentle with others, looking for the good in every situation, being faithful in worship and prayer.

To everything there is a season, and in every season Jesus is the reason!

Now, let us go and make that our mission as this New Year begins.

Let Jesus be the reason for every season. And all God's children say,

Amen.

Sola Deo Gloria!