

THE SEASON OF EASTER

The season of Easter is a fifty-day festival lasting from Easter Sunday to Pentecost Sunday inclusive. For seven weeks the Church revels in the Spirit of the Risen One.

On the first three Sundays we hear of the appearances of the risen Lord to his disciples. On the first two of these Sundays throughout the three-year cycle we read the same stories from the gospel of John. The fourth Sunday of Easter is called "Good Shepherd" Sunday because we hear various parts of Jesus' teaching on this theme as recorded in John 10. For the next three Sundays the gospel text is taken from Jesus' "farewell discourse" (John 14 – 17). The gospels for Ascension and Pentecost Sundays relate to the event being celebrated on each of these days.

Throughout Easter the first reading from the Acts of the Apostles recounts the growth of the early Church. In Year B the second reading up to the Ascension is from the first letter of John with its strong emphasis on love of God and neighbour. The readings are arranged as follows:

SUNDAY	YEAR	FIRST READING	SECOND READING	GOSPEL
Easter Day <i>Christ is risen</i>	A B C	Acts 10:34, 37–43 <i>We ate and drank with him</i>	Colossians 3:1–4 <i>Look for the things that are above</i>	John 20:1–9 <i>Jesus risen from the dead</i>
Second <i>Community of believers grows</i>	A	Acts 2:42–47 <i>The community of believers</i>	1 Peter 1:3–9 <i>Rebirth through the risen Jesus</i>	John 20:19–31 <i>Jesus appears; Thomas</i>
	B	Acts 4:32–35 <i>One heart and one mind</i>	1 John 5:1–6 <i>Jesus overcomes the world</i>	
	C	Acts 5:12–16 <i>Growth of the community</i>	Revelation 1:9–11, 12–13, 17–19 <i>Christ who lives forever</i>	
Third <i>The risen Christ appears</i>	A	Acts 2:14, 22–33 <i>Sermon of Peter</i>	1 Peter 1:17–21 <i>Redeemed by the Lamb</i>	Luke 24:13–35 <i>Christ appears</i>
	B	Acts 3:13–15, 17–19 <i>Sermon of Peter</i>	1 John 2:1–5 <i>Christ the victim</i>	Luke 24:35–48 <i>Christ appears</i>
	C	Acts 5:27–32, 40–41 <i>Sermon of Peter</i>	Revelation 5:11–14 <i>The Lamb receives power</i>	John 21:1–19 <i>Christ appears by the sea</i>
Fourth <i>The Good Shepherd</i>	A	Acts 2:14, 36–41 <i>Sermon of Peter</i>	1 Peter 2:20–25 <i>Returned to our Shepherd</i>	John 10:1–10 <i>Christ the Sheep-gate</i>
	B	Acts 4:8–12 <i>Sermon of Peter</i>	1 John 3:1–2 <i>Children of God</i>	John 10:11–18 <i>The true shepherd</i>
	C	Acts 13:14, 43–52 <i>Sermon of Paul, Barnabas</i>	Revelation 7:9, 14–17 <i>The Lamb leads to living waters</i>	John 10:27–30 <i>Christ gives life</i>
Fifth <i>Ministries</i>	A	Acts 6:1–7 <i>Seven men chosen</i>	1 Peter 2:4–9 <i>The royal priesthood</i>	John 14:1–12 <i>Christ; way, truth, life</i>
	B	Acts 9:26–31 <i>Paul presented by Barnabas</i>	1 John 3:18–24 <i>Believe and love one another</i>	John 15:1–8 <i>Dwell in Christ</i>
	C	Acts 14:21–27 <i>Preaching of Paul, Barnabas</i>	Revelation 21:1–5 <i>The New Jerusalem</i>	John 13:31–35 <i>The command of love</i>
Sixth <i>Expansion of the community</i>	A	Acts 8:5–8, 14–17 <i>Gift of the Spirit</i>	1 Peter 3:15–18 <i>Christ dead and risen is our hope</i>	John 14:15–21 <i>Promise of the Spirit</i>
	B	Acts 10:25–26, 34–35, 44–48 <i>The Spirit given to pagans</i>	1 John 4:7–10 <i>God loved us and sent his son</i>	John 15:9–17 <i>The proof of love</i>
	C	Acts 15:1–2, 22–29 <i>Leaders chosen</i>	Revelation 21:10–14, 22–23 <i>The holy city from heaven</i>	John 14:23–29 <i>The Spirit will teach us</i>
Ascension <i>Jesus is with us always</i>	A	Acts 1:1–11 <i>Jesus is taken into heaven</i>	Ephesians 1:17–23 <i>Jesus at God's right hand</i>	Matthew 28:16–20 <i>Jesus commissions the eleven</i>
	B		Ephesians 4:1–13 <i>Live according to your vocation</i>	Mark 16:15–20 <i>Jesus commissions the eleven</i>
	C		Hebrews 9:24–28; 10:19–23 <i>Jesus has entered heaven</i>	Luke 24:46–53 <i>Jesus commissions the eleven</i>
Pentecost <i>Jesus sends the Spirit</i>	A	Acts 2:1–11 <i>The Spirit as tongues of fire</i>	1 Corinthians 12:3–7, 12–13 <i>We are all one body in Christ</i>	John 20:19–23 <i>Receive the Holy Spirit</i>
	B		Galatians 5:16–25 <i>The fruits of the Spirit</i>	John 15:26–27; 16:12–15 <i>The Spirit of truth guides you</i>
	C		Romans 8:8–17 <i>All led by the Spirit are of God</i>	John 14:15–16, 23–26 <i>The Spirit will teach you</i>