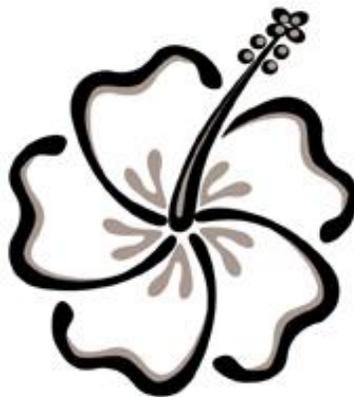


Easter

- It's not just a day, it's a 50-day season
- Ends on Pentecost Sunday
- Early Christians kept Saturday as Sabbath, and then began worshipping on Sundays as a weekly celebration of the resurrection
 - thus, every Sunday is a "little" Easter
 - (that's why Sundays are not counted in Lent)
- Easter is a season of unbridled joy
- Some churches don't have a prayer of confession in this season; others have an assurance of pardon, without confession; others believe that we really need to hear the forgiveness message and so they still have a confession
- So how does the date of Easter get chosen?
 - Easter is the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Vernal equinox.
 - Council of Nicea in 325AD decided the date, and used the science in vogue at the time
 - They thought the Vernal Equinox was always March 21, so they declared that to be the official date.
 - Thus, any time between March 22 (as it will be in 2285) and April 25 (as it will be in 2038).
 - This method was chosen so that, while using a Christian (read: non-Jewish calendar) Easter was nonetheless connected to Passover, which was important because of the symbolism of the stories.
- The word *Easter* comes from *Oestre*, the spring goddess of fertility (whose symbol is a bunny delivering eggs); in many other languages the title is related to Passover (such as *Pascha* in Russian; *Pâques* in French, and *Pakoa* or *Pakota* in Hawaiian).
- What is the story we are trying to tell to the church and to the world in this season?



Lectionary readings 2015 (year B)

Date	Scripture	Notes
April 5	Acts 10:34-43 Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 John 20:1-18 or Mark 16:1-8	Peter declares "God shows no partiality" Paul proclaims Christ arisen Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene Jesus appears to women, who are afraid; they run...
April 12	Acts 4:32-35 Psalm 133 1 John 1:1-2:2 John 20:19-31	Early church keeps all in common, shares with needy If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves Easter night – Jesus appears; week later – appears to Thomas
April 19	Acts 3:12-19 Psalm 4 1 John 3:1-7 Luke 24:36b-48	The God of the ancients is the one who raised Jesus See what love God has for us, we are called children of God! Easter day, Jesus appears and explains
April 26	Acts 4:5-12 Psalm 23 1 John 3:16-24 John 10:11-18	"Stone that the builders rejected is become the cornerstone." If we love, we know that Christ abides in us "I am the good shepherd"
May 3	Acts 8:26-40 Psalm 22:25-31 1 John 4:7-21 John 15:1-8	Philip baptizes Ethiopian outcast Perfect love casts out fear "I am the true vine and God is the vinegrower"
May 10	Acts 10:44-48 Psalm 98 1 John 5:1-6 John 15:9-17	Peter orders baptism of Gentiles we know we love God's children when we love God "As God has loved me, so I love you"
May 17	Acts 1:15-17, 21-26 Psalm 1 1 John 5:9-13 John 17:6-19	Election of Matthias as new disciple/apostle God gave us eternal life in Jesus Part of Jesus' prayer – asks God to care for disciples
May 24	Acts 2:1-21 Psalm 104:24-34, 35b Romans 8:22-27 John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15	Pentecost story All creation has been groaning labor pains until now... "When the Advocate comes...it will testify on my behalf."

Acts focus

Date	Scripture	Notes
April 5	Acts 10:34-43	Peter declares "God shows no partiality"
April 12	Acts 4:32-35	Early church keeps all in common, shares with needy
April 19	Acts 3:12-19	The God of the ancients is the one who raised Jesus
April 26	Acts 4:5-12	"Stone that the builders rejected is become the cornerstone."
May 3	Acts 8:26-40	Philip baptizes Ethiopian outcast
May 10	Acts 10:44-48	Peter orders baptism of Gentiles
May 17	Acts 1:15-17, 21-26	Election of Matthias as new disciple/apostle
May 24	Acts 2:1-21	Pentecost story

- a lot of stories of Peter
- God shows no partiality → church as new community → yet this is part of how God has done things all along → Jesus is new cornerstone → inclusion of Ethiopian outcast as demonstration of new Christian community → even Peter includes Gentiles → new way of choosing/doing things → why? should have known: Pentecost

Gospel focus

Date	Scripture	Notes
April 5	John 20:1-18 or Mark 16:1-8	Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene Jesus appears to women, who are afraid; they run...
April 12	John 20:19-31	Easter night – Jesus appears; week later – appears to Thomas
April 19	Luke 24:36b-48	Easter day, Jesus appears and explains
April 26	John 10:11-18	“I am the good shepherd”
May 3	John 15:1-8	“I am the true vine and God is the vinegrower”
May 10	John 15:9-17	“As God has loved me, so I love you”
May 17	John 17:6-19	Part of Jesus’ prayer – asks God to care for disciples
May 24	John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15	“When the Advocate comes...it will testify on my behalf.”

- interesting option to focus on words of Jesus: Don’t be afraid → Blessed are those who don’t see and still believe or As God sent me, so I send you → I am the good shepherd → I am the vine → this is my commandment: love one another → [so much here – almost any quotation showing Jesus’ compassion → [Jesus sends the Advocate]
- again, look at all these quotations in the light of Easter

1 John focus

Date	Scripture	Notes
April 5	John 20:1-18 <i>or</i> Mark 16:1-8	No 1 John reading – go with gospel anyway
April 12	1 John 1:1-2:2	If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves
April 19	1 John 3:1-7	See what love God has for us, we are called children of God!
April 26	1 John 3:16-24	If we love, we know that Christ abides in us
May 3	1 John 4:7-21	Perfect love casts out fear
May 10	1 John 5:1-6	we know we love God’s children when we love God
May 17	1 John 5:9-13	God gave us eternal life in Jesus
May 24	Acts 2:1-21	Pentecost story (no 1 John reading this week)

- interesting chance to explore a gospel
- to read these things in the light of Easter – how God’s love is manifest in us, and how we can live that love out in others
- a caution: this will take some fine crafting to avoid repetition and a general theme of just “it’s nice; love one another” – there’s much more here

Luke option

Date	Scripture	Notes
April 5	Luke 24:1-12	Early Easter morning
April 12	Luke 24:13-27	Easter Sunday afternoon, on road to Emmaus
April 19	Luke 24:28-35	Jesus “reveals” himself; disciples realize Jesus is risen
April 26	Luke 24:36-43	Jesus appears to disciples, who are terrified
May 3	Luke 24:44-49	Jesus “explains” death and resurrection
May 10	Luke 24:50-53	Ascension (which in Luke’s gospel happens Easter night)
May 17	Acts 1:12-14 (could expand in either direction)	Luke presents image of the early church – of disciples meeting to figure out what to do next
May 24	Acts 2:1-21	This is where the “rubber hits the road” for Luke – the power of God’s spirit in the risen Christ is fully present in the church

- Interesting to follow a gospel through a single story for several weeks
- Luke’s gospel is intriguing – if you read the gospel and go directly into volume 2 (Acts) there’s a natural progression – almost as if Easter doesn’t really make sense until we embody it, as the Pentecost story tells us...