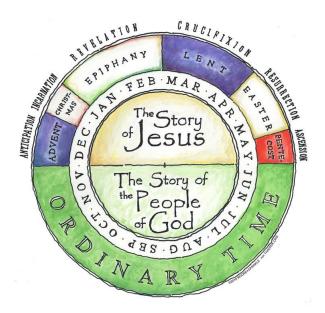
Greetings Church Family,

What time is it? The simplicity and frequency of this question distracts us from the fact that it is one of the most important questions a human being can ask. Our lives are oriented around how we answer it. 'What time is it' determines whether we get up or go to bed. It determines whether we go to work, go to school, pick up the kids, go to an event, go home, or go to dinner. In many ways, we are bound to this question. 'What time is it' determines nearly everything about our lives.

And while many religions seek some sort of an escape from time, Christianity proclaims salvation as a redemption of time. Specifically, it is redeemed by the *Incarnation* and the *Resurrection* of Jesus. This is why the Church Calendar revolves around these two divine movements.



As you can see in the graphic above, the first half of the Church Calendar revolves around the story of Jesus. Beginning with Advent, we anticipate God becoming flesh at Christmas. Then, following Christmas, the Magi remind us through Epiphany, that Jesus didn't come only for the Jews, but for the entire Gentile world as well. The way Jesus would save the world was not by military might, as many Jews had hoped, but through his crucifixion on the cross, his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension into heaven. These three events in Jesus' life are commemorated in the church calendar through Lent, Easter, and Pentecost.

Once the early church had been filled with the Holy Spirit, the second half of the church calendar, called 'Ordinary Time' focuses on the story of the people of God. What would this Spirit-filled community do as they continued to carry out the mission of Jesus? How might they establish God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven? It was an important question 2000 years ago, and it is a question we as modern day followers of Christ must ask of ourselves as well.

So... what time is it? What if we answered that question in the truest way it could be answered? What if we answered 'It's God's time.' How would our lives be shaped if our calendars were oriented around

God's story rather than our own? That's the question we are going to explore in the coming year. You are invited to join us. I believe it will be worth your time.

Blessings, Ken Van Vliet