

The 50 Days of Easter

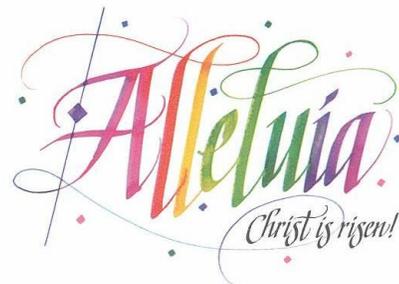
Easter for Christians is not just one day, but rather a 50-day period. The season of Easter, or Eastertide, begins at sunset on the eve of Easter and ends on Pentecost, the day we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Church (see Acts 2).

Easter is also more than just an extended celebration of the resurrection of Jesus. By the mid 4th century in the early church, Lent was a season for new converts to learn about the faith and prepare for baptism on Easter Sunday. The initial purpose of the 50-day Easter season was to continue the faith formation of new Christians.

Today, this extended season gives us time to rejoice and experience what it means when we say Christ is risen. It is the season when we remember our baptism and how through this sacrament we are, according to the liturgy, "incorporated into Christ's mighty acts of salvation." As "Easter people," we also celebrate and ponder the birth of the Church and gifts of the Spirit (Pentecost), and how we are to live as faithful disciples of Christ.

One way the church pursues this goal of seeing God present in the world is through the reading of the Acts of the Apostles. At worship services through the Easter season, our usual practice of reading from the Old Testament can be replaced with readings from the *Acts of the Apostles*. These readings tell the story of the church's earliest days, and the beginnings of our faith's spreading throughout the ancient world. These stories of heroism, controversies, persecutions and miracles all testify to the continued presence of the Risen Christ in the world, through the lives of his disciples, and the actions of the Holy Spirit.

All of this is a sign of hope for us today. In spite of imperfection and struggles, God has not abandoned us, nor left us to our own devices. The risen savior is still with us. These 50 days of Easter ask us to reflect on his presence, and—even in the face of danger or fear—to live with joy.



For more information, please see... [Page 2, Algoma Anglican, April 2017.](#)