

The 2023 Church Year (starts 27 November, 2022)

Some days of the Church Calendar, such as Christmas Day and Epiphany, are the same every year. Many of the others change from year to year (see [This Table](#)) because they are linked to Easter, which is on the Sunday following the first full moon of spring (i.e. first after the March equinox).

Sunday, 27 November 2022 - First Sunday in Advent

The first in the four-Sunday countdown to Christmas. This is the beginning of the 2023 Church Year. We start lighting the advent candles of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love, one per Sunday. This year the first Sunday of Advent is as early as it can be, because Christmas falls on a Sunday. It can be as late as December 3 if Christmas falls on a Monday - for example Dec 2023.

Saturday, 24 December 2022 - Christmas Eve

We hold a Christmas Eve carol service. A final candle, the Christ Candle, is lit.

Sunday, 25 December 2022 - Christmas Day

We celebrate Christ's birth. This is a very symbolic time in many religions. The winter solstice has just passed on December 21, and the days are lengthening, signifying the triumph of light over darkness. We light Christmas lights and spend time with our families. Christmas day is Day 1 of the traditional "12 days of Christmas". Day 12 is the day before Epiphany. "12th Night" refers to the last night before Epiphany.

Friday, 6 January 2023 - Epiphany. A revelation or manifestation. Christ is revealed to the world. In some countries it is the feast of the Magi ("Three Kings day"). Epiphany is the first day *after* the 12 days of Christmas.

Sunday, 8 January 2023 - Baptism of Jesus Sunday. This is always the first Sunday after Epiphany.

Tuesday, 21 Feb 2023 - Shrove Tuesday

The day before the first day of Lent, Ash Wednesday. Some people traditionally eat pancakes on Shrove Tuesday (Pancake Day). This is also the day for final parties and carnivals like Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday) and Fastnacht (Fasting Night) before the fasting of Lent.

Wednesday, 22 Feb 2023 - Ash Wednesday

The first day of Lent, a 40 day (not counting Sundays, which are not considered part of Lent) countdown to Easter. Lent is traditionally a time of self-denial. The name Ash Wednesday dates back to a time when people put ashes on their foreheads to remind them of the sackcloth and ashes of penitent sinners. On the first Sunday of Lent we light six candles representing the six weeks of Lent and put out one a week until the final one is extinguished on Good Friday.

Tuesday, 21 March 2023 - "Official" March Equinox

The true equinox is the instant that the sun is right over the equator, which can be March 19, 20 or 21 depending on the year, and what time zone you are in. For example, this year (2023) in Steveston the real equinox is March 20, at 2:24 pm PDT. In some parts of the world this will

already be March 21.

Sunday, 2 April 2023 - Palm Sunday.

The Sunday prior to Easter Sunday. Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey and people scattered palm branches on the ground. Sometimes we hand out palm branches at the service.

Wednesday, 5 April 2023 - "Paschal" Full Moon

First "official" full moon on or after the "official" March equinox. Easter is the first Sunday after this. If the Paschal full moon falls on a Sunday, Easter is the next Sunday, so the earliest that Easter can be is when the Paschal full moon falls on a Saturday. The date of the Paschal full moon is taken from tables based on a 19 year cycle. For the years 1900 to 2199, you can use [This simple Table](#). For other years, use [This Table](#) from the Astronomical Society of South Australia. Note that the Paschal full moon does not always correspond to the astronomical full moon.

Thursday, 6 April 2023 - Maundy Thursday

The day before Good Friday. Services are held at selected churches. "Maundy" comes from the Latin word *mandatum*, or commandment (the same root as mandatory). This refers to the command to love others, which Jesus gave to his disciples at the Last Supper.

Friday, 7 April 2023 - Good Friday

The Crucifixion. We have a church service on Good Friday. The service rotates among Richmond churches.

Sunday, 9 April 2023 - Easter Sunday

The Resurrection. Traditionally, this was considered the holiest day of the year. Often people who came to church only once a year came on Easter Sunday. This role now seems to be taken by Christmas Eve.

Thursday, 18 May 2023 - Ascension

Jesus ascends into heaven on the 40th day after resurrection. In some countries this is a holiday. Not here. We observe it on the nearest Sunday.

Sunday, 28 May 2023 - Pentecost

From the Greek "50th day". If you count Easter as day 1, Pentecost is day 50. Jesus' disciples receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Some traditions hold that they could "speak in tongues" and understand foreign languages, symbolic of being able to spread the Gospel to all peoples. Pentecost is considered the birthday of the Christian Church.

Sunday, 4 June 2023 - Trinity Sunday

Celebrated on the Sunday after Pentecost. Celebrates the Creator, Word and Spirit in one God. (In older tradition "Father, Son and Holy Ghost")

3 Dec 2023 - First Sunday of Advent

Official start of the 2024 Church Year. This is the latest date, because Christmas 2023 is on a Monday.