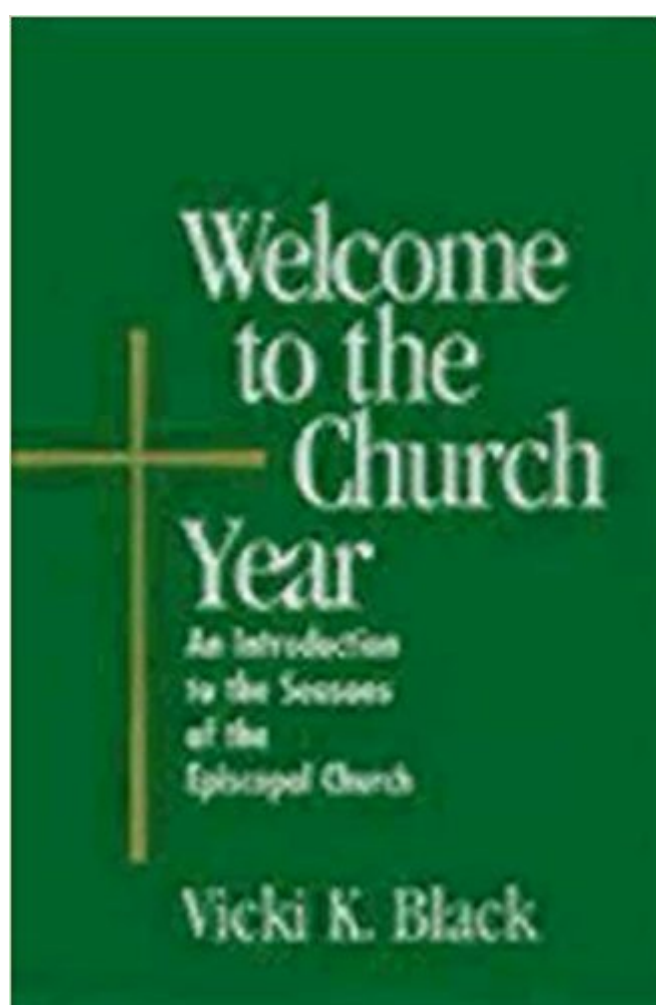


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# Welcome To The Church Year: An Introduction To The Seasons Of The Episcopal Church (Welcome To The Episcopal Church)



## Synopsis

From birthday cakes and anniversary dinners to summer vacations at the beach, each family has its own ways of marking the days and seasons of its life. For the Christian family—especially Episcopalians—it's no different. With an array of colors and an assortment of rich traditions, Episcopalians move through the Church year, marking the days and seasons that tell the story of Christ in our lives—in history and today. This book—written for newcomers to the Episcopal Church as well as lifelong members—takes readers by the hand and leads them through the Church year, from the first Sunday of Advent through the last Sunday of Pentecost, answering questions like “Why do we use purple in Lent?” and “What does Maundy Thursday mean?” In an easy-to-read conversational style, *Welcome to the Church Year* introduces readers to the traditions of the Church seasons and explains why we do what we do. But it does more than offer interesting trivia about church vestments and pageantry. Its insights can help readers participate in the liturgies of the Church year in a deeper, more meaningful way.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Vicki K. Black is an Episcopal Deacon who has served in the dioceses of Massachusetts, Wisconsin and Virginia, where she has worked in parishes and coordinated retreats.

Time is a tricky thing to deal with theologically. There are elements of repetition, and elements of

once-only. In our church experience, we look back on the once-only kinds of events (both historical and revelatory) through a cyclical pattern that has varying spans; perhaps the most significant is that of the church year, which follows the progress of the seasons, allowing for variation, but also adding stability to the way in which we as a community approach God and the narratives surrounding God's action in the world. As Vicki Black states, there are two primary cycles in the church year. The first is the Advent-Christmas-Epiphany cycle, and the second is the Lent-Easter-Pentecost cycle.

Traditionally, the church year is said to begin at the first Sunday of Advent. This day is always the fourth Sunday before Christmas; while Christmas is always December 25, the variability in the calendar means that the actual date for the beginning of Advent changes from year to year. This cycle continues through the Epiphany, after which 'ordinary' time takes place until the beginning of Lent on Ash Wednesday. ('Ordinary' time refers to the fact that these weeks are numbered with ordinal numbers - second Sunday after Epiphany, etc., and not to the fact that they are outside any of the greater seasons of the church.) Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, which falls on different dates in different years, dependent upon the date of Easter. Unlike Christmas, which is fixed on the calendar (which is the Roman solar calendar still in primary use in the world), Easter shifts from year to year, as it is pegged to the Jewish celebration of the Passover, which is governed by a lunar calendar. Lent lasts for 40 days (exclusive of Sundays) until Easter. Holy Week is technically a part of Lent, but has different colours and aspects as things go up to Easter; the Easter season continues until the feast of the Pentecost 50 days later, at which time the church goes into the second, longer period of 'ordinary' time, until the advent of the next Advent season. Black discusses each of these six elements (Advent-Christmas-Epiphany and Lent-Easter-Pentecost) in separate chapters, along with a special chapter on Holy Week, and an introductory chapter. Black's development is personal, in that she discusses how she incorporates this into her family with her husband and son; she also allows for variations of practice in different parishes and dioceses. There is a minimum of technical language here - the text is very accessible, yet doesn't 'talk down' to the reader. It is both engaging and inviting. The book can be used by a discussion group at the church - despite the division into eight chapters, it could easily be used as a Lenten discussion book or for an inquirer's class to learn aspects of the church year. There are potential discussion questions listed at the back of each chapter. The book itself is rather short and easily read in a short time, but can be useful as a reference throughout the year, too. This is part of a series by Morehouse Press, which also includes 'Welcome to the Book of Common Prayer' (also by Vicki Black), 'Welcome to Sunday' and 'Welcome to the Episcopal Church' (both by Christopher Webber). All of these books are great as introductions to the ways (sometimes mysterious) Episcopalians do things in church - useful for

newcomers as well as life-long members who might never have learned the 'why' behind what the church does.

I like all of the books in the Welcome to the Episcopal Church series. They are clear, concise books that are perfect for helping people understand the Episcopal/Anglican tradition. I use them to help people who want to go a little deeper - these books allows them to go a little deeper. I recommend them to anyone who wants to know more about the Episcopal Church.

All the Welcome to series are excellent, and I have purchased them. I have rated them 5 stars since they have "earned that designation" for me. I have, until recently, been a hit and miss Episcopalian so these books have really helped me to become comfortable and much more knowledgable. Well worth the money, for sure.

This series of books is great for a newbie. Took the mystery out of the ritual.

This is a terrific book. Includes everything you need to know about the liturgical year. I will keep this as a reference forever and will likely give a hard copy to new church members

Perfect!

I love this book! I'm a newbie to the Episcopal church, and this book helps make the church much more touchable and understandable for me! :)

I am new to the church so I needed some guidance- and this book is really helpful, now I can explain to my child.

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