

RAQUETTE LAKE CHAPEL



Raquette Lake, New York

February 2020

FEBRUARY SCRIPTURE

[February 2 “The Presentation of Our Lord”](#): Malachi 3:1-4; Psalm 24:7-10; Hebrews 2:14-18; Luke 2:22-40

[February 9 “The 5th Sunday after Epiphany”](#): Isaiah 58:1-9a; Psalm 112:1-9; 1 Corinthians 2:1-12; Matthew 5:13-20

[February 16 “The 6th Sunday after Epiphany”](#): Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Psalm 119:1-8; 1 Corinthians 3:1-9; Matthew 5:21-37

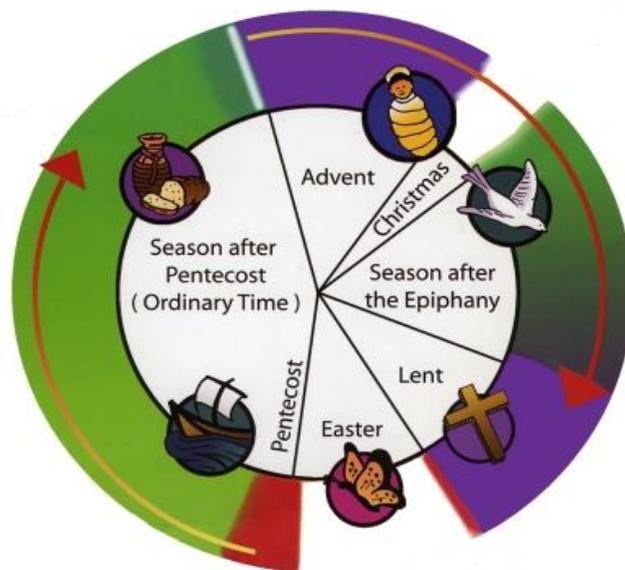
[February 23 “The Last Sunday after Epiphany”](#): Exodus 24:12-18; Psalm 2; 2 Peter 1:16-21; Matthew 17:1-9



[Lent starts with Ash Wednesday on February 26](#): Joel 2:1-2, 12-17; Psalm 103:8-14; 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10; Matthew 6:1-16, 21

THE SEASONS OF THE CHURCH AND THEIR COLORS

Last month’s newsletter identified seasons in the Church Year: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, and Ordinary Time. You can see from the diagram below that each season may be represented by a color, and the colors may be reflected in the altar cloths, ministers’ vestments, and other places during the service. While the colors below are “usually” common, there are some variations across different Christian denominations.



The colors also symbolize different things, for example: Green-hope; Red-sacrifice, charity, Holy Spirit; White-joy, innocence, purity; Gold-joy; Violet-humility, penitence, preparation; Black-mourning; Rose-subdued joy. Not all churches use all these colors regularly. Some use the colors interchangeably, for example Gold and White. White is often used only on Holy Days or it may be used instead of Gold during Christmas.

MATTHEW'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT: CHAPTERS 5-7 (NOTE THE READINGS FROM MATTHEW FOR FEBRUARY)

About eight or nine years ago before we moved to New York, I attended an interfaith service at a synagogue in West Hartford, Connecticut, with Christians, Jews, Muslims, and Hindus. The chief reading of that service was the entire Sermon on the Mount from Matthew, all three chapters! That was an eye-opener for me, hearing a Rabbi read from The New Testament, and it made me very conscious of the universality of this scripture.

Further, if someone totally unfamiliar with Christianity asked me to explain my religion, these three chapters from Matthew cover what it means to be Christian to me.

The last of the season of Epiphany is a great time to read Matthew's "Sermon on the Mount," maybe the most well-known scripture – and sermon – on earth. This week, if you can, I suggest you read the whole Sermon in one sitting, chapters 5-7. It doesn't take long, and it will probably be very familiar to you. Don't treat it as a formal Bible study: just let the message wash over you. In the following three weeks I'll send out a short reflection on each of the chapters in the Sermon.

St. Augustine (of Hippo) in the 4th century wrote these comments about the Sermon:

Jesus has made it "clear that the sermon before us is perfect in all the precepts by which the Christian life is molded..."

Chapter 5: starts with what are often called "The Beatitudes." Beatitude comes from a Latin word meaning *blessed* or *avored by God*. These nine Beatitudes are followed by the famous words about "salt and light," and then by the famous series of statements beginning "You have heard it said...., but I say unto you..." These are called the *antitheses* or seeming opposites. Jesus' intent, however, is not to overrule Mosaic Law, but to command a "profounder obedience to God's commandments...a new ethic for his followers."

Chapter 6: a summary of admonitions about prayer, almsgiving, and fasting, followed by guides for living and livelihood. This chapter also includes Matthew's version of The Lord's Prayer, which some say is "the symbolic heart of the Sermon on the Mount".

Chapter 7: admonitions about judging others and "the way of righteousness." There are many often-quoted verses here: "Ask, and it will be given you... (v. 7)" "In everything do to others as you would have them do to you... (v. 12)" and so forth. This chapter ends with the famous passage about building upon a rock. "And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. (v. 26)"

INTERESTING QUESTIONS: SEE MATTHEW 5:1

"When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and ... his disciples came to him. Then he ... taught them..." ***What does the mountain mean, and why did Jesus go up the mountain leaving the crowds to teach only his disciples?***