SOFTWARE & TECH

2015 Liturgical Color Calendar For United Methodist Church

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Understanding the 2015 Liturgical Color Calendar for United Methodist Church

For worshippers in the United Methodist tradition, the rhythm of the church year provides a meaningful structure for communal worship and personal devotion. One of the most visible expressions of this sacred rhythm is the use of liturgical colors. The 2015 Liturgical Color Calendar for United Methodist Church offers a guide for pastors, worship leaders, altar guild members, and congregants alike, helping to align the visual elements of worship with the themes of each season. Whether you are planning a year of services or simply curious about the meaning behind the paraments, banners, and vestments you see each Sunday, understanding this calendar enriches the worship experience.

The practice of assigning specific colors to seasons of the Christian year dates back centuries, though the specific traditions vary among denominations. In the United Methodist Church, colors are not mandated by doctrine but are recommended as a way to enhance worship and teach the faith. The 2015 liturgical year follows the familiar pattern of Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, and Ordinary Time, with a few distinctive emphases that reflect Methodist heritage.

Why Liturgical Colors Matter in United Methodist Worship

Liturgical colors serve as a visual language, communicating the tone and focus of each season without a single word. When you enter a sanctuary and see deep purple, you know a season of preparation and reflection has begun. When you see brilliant white or gold, you know a celebration of Christ's resurrection is at hand. The 2015 Liturgical Color Calendar for United Methodist Church helps congregations stay attuned to these seasonal shifts, fostering a sense of unity and anticipation.

In the United Methodist tradition, colors are typically displayed on altar cloths, pulpit falls, lectern hangings, stoles, and banners. Many churches also coordinate bulletins, screens, and other worship materials with the appropriate hue. This visual consistency reinforces the narrative of salvation history as it unfolds week by week. From the expectant waiting of Advent to the fiery passion of Pentecost, each color invites worshippers into a deeper engagement with scripture and tradition.

An Overview of the Colors Used in the 2015 Calendar

The 2015 Liturgical Color Calendar for United Methodist Church follows a standardized palette that most United Methodists will recognize. Here is a breakdown of the primary colors and what they represent:

- Purple or Blue – Used during Advent and Lent. Purple has long been associated with penitence, preparation, and royalty. In recent years, many United Methodist congregations have adopted blue for Advent, emphasizing hope and anticipation rather than penitence, while retaining purple for Lent.

• White or Gold – Used during Christmas, Easter, and on festive days such as All Saints' Sunday and Trinity Sunday. White symbolizes purity, joy, and the light of Christ. Gold is sometimes substituted on the most celebratory days.

• Red – Used on Pentecost, for ordinations, and on days commemorating martyrs. Red represents the fire of the Holy Spirit and the blood of the faithful.

• Green – Used during Ordinary Time (the season after Epiphany and the season after Pentecost). Green symbolizes growth, life, and the ongoing work of the church in the world.

• Black or No Color – Sometimes used on Good Friday as a sign of mourning, though many churches simply leave the altar bare.

Understanding these associations helps worshippers grasp the emotional and theological arc of the year as they move from one season to the next.

The Seasons of the 2015 Liturgical Year in Detail

Let us walk through the 2015 liturgical calendar season by season, noting the specific color assignments and the dates that defined the year. Keep in mind that the liturgical year begins with Advent, which actually starts in the late fall of the preceding calendar year. So the 2015 liturgical year begins with Advent in November 2014 and continues through the end of 2015.

Advent 2014: The Beginning of the 2015 Liturgical Year

The 2015 liturgical year begins on the First Sunday of Advent, which fell on November 30, 2014. For the 2015 Liturgical Color Calendar for United Methodist Church, the season of Advent is marked by **purple or blue**. This four-week season is a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the birth of Christ. Many United Methodist churches use blue during Advent to distinguish it from Lent and to emphasize the hopeful anticipation of Christ's coming.

The Sundays of Advent in the 2015 year are:

- First Sunday of Advent: November 30, 2014
- Second Sunday of Advent: December 7, 2014
- Third Sunday of Advent: December 14, 2014
- Fourth Sunday of Advent: December 21, 2014

Throughout Advent, the paraments and vestments remain purple or blue. Some churches also incorporate a weekly Advent wreath with candles, each lit in succession as the season progresses, adding another layer of visual and participatory worship.

Christmas Season 2014–2015

The Christmas season begins on Christmas Eve, December 24, 2014, and continues through the Day of Epiphany on January 6, 2015. During this period, the color changes to **white or gold**, reflecting the joy and triumph of the Incarnation. In the 2015 calendar, Christmas Day itself falls on Thursday, December 25, 2014, and the season includes the First Sunday after Christmas.

White paraments often feature gold trim or embroidery, and many churches display a nativity scene or creche as a focal point. The Christmas season is a time of great celebration, and the bright white vestments and hangings underscore the message of light coming into the darkness.

The Season of Epiphany 2015

Epiphany begins on January 6, 2015, and extends through the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, which in 2015 fell on February 17. The color for Epiphany is **green**, signifying growth and the revelation of Christ to the Gentiles. However, the Day of Epiphany itself (January 6) is often celebrated with white or gold to mark the visit of the Magi.

The 2015 calendar includes the following Epiphany Sundays:

- First Sunday after Epiphany: January 11, 2015 (Baptism of the Lord)
- Second Sunday after Epiphany: January 18, 2015
- Third Sunday after Epiphany: January 25, 2015
- Fourth Sunday after Epiphany: February 1, 2015
- Fifth Sunday after Epiphany: February 8, 2015
- Sixth Sunday after Epiphany: February 15, 2015

The season of Epiphany is a time of mission and outreach, as the church reflects on how Christ is revealed to the world today. Green paraments during this season remind congregations of the growth that comes from responding to God's call.

Transfiguration Sunday

The last Sunday before Ash Wednesday is Transfiguration Sunday, which in 2015 fell on February 15. This day commemorates the transfiguration of Jesus on the mountain and is observed with **white or gold**paraments, marking a brief festive interlude before the solemnity of Lent begins.

Lent 2015

Ash Wednesday in 2015 was on February 18, marking the beginning of Lent. This forty-day season (excluding Sundays) is a time of penitence, reflection, and preparation for Easter. The color for Lent is **purple**, though some churches use unbleached linen or a rough texture as a sign of humility and simplicity.

The Sundays of Lent in 2015 are:

- First Sunday in Lent: February 22, 2015
- Second Sunday in Lent: March 1, 2015
- Third Sunday in Lent: March 8, 2015
- Fourth Sunday in Lent: March 15, 2015
- Fifth Sunday in Lent: March 22, 2015
- Sixth Sunday in Lent (Palm/Passion Sunday): March 29, 2015

Throughout Lent, the purple paraments create a somber and introspective atmosphere. Many United Methodist churches also remove flowers from the sanctuary or use minimal decoration to emphasize the starkness of the season. The 2015 Liturgical Color Calendar for United Methodist Church specifically calls for purple during this season, though some congregations may choose a deeper shade to distinguish it from Advent.

Holy Week 2015

Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday on March 29, 2015. On this day, the color is **purple** or **red**, with red sometimes used to symbolize the passion of Christ. Many churches also use palm branches as part of the procession, and paraments may be changed during the service to reflect the shift from celebration to solemnity.

During Holy Week, special colors are observed:

- Maundy Thursday (April 2, 2015) – Red or white are often used, reflecting the institution of the Lord's Supper and the new commandment of love. Some churches strip the altar after the service, leaving it bare for Good Friday.
- Good Friday (April 3, 2015) – Black or no color is used. The altar is often bare, and paraments are removed entirely to signify mourning and desolation.
- Holy Saturday (April 4, 2015) – No color is used until the Easter Vigil, when white or gold returns.

The Great Fifty Days of Easter 2015

Easter Sunday in 2015 was on April 5. The Easter season extends for fifty days, through Pentecost Sunday on

white or gold, celebrating the resurrection of Christ and the victory over sin and death.

The Sundays of Easter in 2015 include:

- Easter Sunday: April 5, 2015
- Second Sunday of Easter: April 12, 2015
- Third Sunday of Easter: April 19, 2015
- Fourth Sunday of Easter: April 26, 2015
- Fifth Sunday of Easter: May 3, 2015
- Sixth Sunday of Easter: May 10, 2015
- Seventh Sunday of Easter: May 17, 2015

During the Easter season, white paraments are often adorned with gold embroidery or accents, and the sanctuary is filled with flowers and banners proclaiming the resurrection. This is the most joyful season of the church year, and the visual elements reflect that exuberance. The 2015 Liturgical Color Calendar for United Methodist Church emphasizes that white is the standard color for all Sundays of Easter, including Ascension Sunday, which in 2015 was May 17.

Ascension Sunday and Pentecost 2015

Ascension Sunday is observed on the seventh Sunday of Easter (May 17, 2015) and is celebrated with **white or gold** paraments. This day commemorates Christ's ascension into heaven.

Pentecost Sunday falls on May 24, 2015, and the color changes dramatically to **red**. Red symbolizes the fire of the Holy Spirit descending upon the apostles and the birth of the church. Many United Methodist churches display red banners, paraments, and vestments on this day, and some incorporate visual elements like flames or doves to represent the Spirit. Pentecost marks the end of the Easter season and the beginning of the long season of Ordinary Time.

The Season after Pentecost 2015

Also known as Ordinary Time, the season after Pentecost begins on May 31, 2015 (Trinity Sunday) and continues through the end of the liturgical year, which concludes on the Saturday before the First Sunday of Advent (November 28, 2015). During this extended period, the color is **green**, symbolizing growth, maturity, and the ongoing mission of the church.

Key Sundays

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