

## Church Program Planning Calendar

**Episcopal Relief & Development's work is strategic, evidence-based and rooted in community. We hope this calendar helps your community achieve its goals and makes planning more manageable for you.**

This planning calendar features:

- Monthly at-a-glance calendars from September 2024 to December 2025
- "Best Practices" for making the most of your calendar across all ministries and demographics
- Helpful notes and lists to remind you of what's happening now, what's next and what's on the horizon
- Links to the lectionary, Venite Daily Office, Lesser Feasts & Fasts
- Monthly links to Children's Sermons, Lesson Plans and Current Event Responses
- Easily printable and user-friendly pages 8½" x 11" size
- Digital version online at [www.episcopalrelief.org/church-in-action/faith-formation/ministry-planning-calendar/](http://www.episcopalrelief.org/church-in-action/faith-formation/ministry-planning-calendar/)

This great resource is provided at no charge to leaders across the church. The digital version provides links to all the resources mentioned and notes about the current month, the following month and ideas for planning ahead. Across Episcopal Relief & Development's work, we learn and adapt, co-creating programs that achieve sustainable results.

The calendar is a living document that will be updated monthly. We welcome your input so we can keep this planning calendar fresh and relevant for future use. If there are events, holidays or planning ideas that you feel should be added, please let us know. Send an email to [engagement@episcopalrelief.org](mailto:engagement@episcopalrelief.org).

Happy Planning!

Episcopal Relief & Development

## Best Practices in Building Your Planning Calendar

**There is a season and a time for everything—a time for worship, study, service and silence; to work and play; to disagree and dance. God gives us these gifts and we have an opportunity to be good stewards of our time here on earth together.**

If your congregation has recently done a self-study or long-range planning, you can use that information to begin setting priorities in your calendar planning. You already have parish traditions on your calendar and don't necessarily have to add more to accommodate your goals and your people. But now is the time to scan across your calendar and ask yourself:

- Have you planned quarterly or annual opportunities for each group to come together to engage in your stated priorities? Have you considered...
  - » An outreach project for Senior Adults?
  - » A special worship service for Young Adults?
  - » A fellowship event for your Vestry?

Perhaps specific to certain events, ask yourself:

- How can you make your Parish Picnic more senior-adult friendly?
- How can you make your Christmas Market or Food Bank Drives also fellowship events for a specific group of your community?

Review the lists below for priority areas and community groups to consider in your planning.

### Possible Priorities:

- Worship
- Christian Formation
- Outreach & Service
- Fellowship
- Peace & Climate Initiatives
- Community Engagement
- The Arts

### Your Community:

- Adults/Young Adults
- Families with Children
- Teens/Children
- Your Neighbors/Community
- Staff
- Vestry & Bishop's Committees
- Ministry Team Leaders
- Teachers
- Volunteers

## Calendar Communications

**Almost as important as putting special liturgical, formational, fellowship and outreach feasts and events on the calendar, you should also schedule your invitations and information about them.**

Things to consider:

- Conduct a communications audit to determine the number of ways you notify people about what you are planning (e.g., emails, newsletters, social media posts, your website, outward facing calendars, signage, etc.) There are so many communications avenues!

As a result of the audit, ask yourself:

- Which large events merit a direct and thoughtfully-designed mailing?
- Which events or services are the subject of press releases to your local media? In addition to the general church communications, which one(s) are also pushed directly to a specific demographic in the church (perhaps middle schoolers, senior adults or families with children)?
- Make sure to include both the information (what, why, when and where) and the invitation (e.g., “This is going to be meaningful and fun...please bring a friend or neighbor!”) on the calendars of your communications and evangelism ministry teams on a timely basis.

## Monthly Observances & Ministry Opportunities

### **Black History, Women's History, Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Heritage, Pride, Creation Care, Addiction & Recovery, Native American, Hispanic Heritage...**

These observances appear across our calendars annually and can sometimes feel like distractions. But the truth is, they remind us to celebrate and expand the diversity that is within The Episcopal Church, and to find our voice of advocacy in commemorations for justice and peace.

Some considerations:

- Use these events to explore our identity as God's people and encourage our faith families to remember who we are.
  - » Be inspired by the stories of Absalom Jones, Jonathan Daniels, Verna Dozier, The Philadelphia 11 and Gene Robinson.
  - » Find creative ways to partner with local Hispanic and Asian American community events.
  - » Learn about the history of Alcoholics Anonymous, including the influence of Episcopal priest The Rev. Dr. Samuel Shoemaker, and its connection to The Episcopal Church.
- Designate a display area in your space to provide information about people and events tied to the various observances.
- Host an author or organizer to speak at a community event in your church.
- Include a special notice in your communications and during worship. You can find prayers and other ideas for observances at Episcopal Relief & Development and our national Episcopal Church websites.

Once you have decided what you wish to do with the calendar, you can start planning more intentionally across the large and small parish observances. You can also make a point to weave your goals and resources together. You are not expected to do everything on this calendar. Pray about what makes the most sense for your community, with your resources, and proceed in faith.