



CHURCH  
CHANGER

## LEADER GUIDE: EPISODE #3 PREACHING CALENDARS DESIGNED TO GROW YOUR CHURCH

### AN INTRODUCTION TO CHURCH CHANGER:

It's time to rip the lid off your leadership and push past organizational pain points holding you and your church back. **Church Changer** is designed to equip church leaders with practical tools, proven strategies, and best practices to help you reach more people for Christ and shatter growth barriers in your ministry. Listen today, and put key takeaways into practice tomorrow! We're here to collaborate with you and cheerlead for you. Join Co-hosts Pastor Tim Lucas and Lauren Bercarich, along with special guests, as they outline a clear path forward so you can increase your impact, and let's have some fun in the process! New episodes drop the first Tuesday of each month.

### EPISODE NOTES:

#### Overview

In this episode of Church Changer, the focus is on making your sermons more appealing and growing your church with a strategic preaching calendar. Let's learn how to address people's needs while capitalizing on seasonal trends and rhythms in American culture.

We will walk through planning a preaching calendar for an entire year - going month-by-month. But another way to look at your calendar is in trimesters. The first trimester is your "Easter Run" (January - Easter), the second trimester is your "Summer Run" (May-August), and the third trimester is your "Fall Recall Season" (September - December).

Our hope is that this episode will equip you to map out your next trimester or more!

**"Ultimately you want to COOPERATE and not COMPETE with the calendar. That means you need to understand seasonal trends and rhythms already built into the calendar"**

- *Tim Lucas*



So, as we think about our preaching calendar - we want to be strategic. We want to follow a rhythm that cooperates with trends in American culture. What does that actually look like? Cooperating with the calendar means taking into consideration holidays, vacation patterns, the start of the school year, and much more. At the same time, you also need to understand people's needs, habits, and behaviors, which are also seasonal. This is crucial for meeting people where they're at.

## January

The New Year is a season for new rhythms. The "felt need" in this season is a fresh start. Series on simplicity, spiritual disciplines, budgeting, and time management are what people are hungry to hear. Your series in January should be attractional... this is a great recall season for your church and you may see a lot of new people walk through the doors. Make sure you're ready to welcome them with an engaging series.

**Examples:** [Dream Again](#), [Breathing Room](#), [First Things First](#), [Divine Direction](#), [Simplify](#).

## February

Two things are true about February each year - Valentine's Day is 2/14 and it's the month with the highest suicide rate - people feel lonely and isolated. Series on singleness, sex, dating, relationships, and God's plan for your life, are highly attractional and inviteable. The key to a good relationship series is that you can't speak to just one audience - married couples. Consider that your congregation has people who are single, divorced, widowed, etc. The other key is that not all relationship sermons need to focus on romance. You can spotlight the complexity of ALL types of relationships: those you have with your parents, kids, coworkers, and friends.

**Examples:** [Relationship Rehab](#), [Relationship Goals](#), [First Comes Love](#), [Love, Sex & Dating](#).

## March

March falls within the season of Lent, the perfect time to do a 40-day discipleship series. After drawing people to church in January and February, it's time to go deeper with them. This is a season you can dedicate to small group studies that help people engage systematically with the Bible, cultivate spiritual disciplines, and grow deeper in their faith. Afterward, there is spiritual fruit to be harvested and that's why we recommend hosting Baptism Sunday as a conclusion.

**Examples:** [Wind & Fire](#), [The Daniel Dilemma](#), [God of Miracles](#), [FAST](#), [Seven](#).

## April

Lent concludes with the celebration of Easter - the biggest day of the year on the Christian calendar and the superbowl as a church. Follow Easter with an attractional series to capitalize on all the new guests who came to church on Easter Sunday.

**Examples:** [Crazy Happy](#), [Homeless Church](#), [The Eleventh Hour](#), [Label Maker](#).



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## May

With May comes Mother's Day - the third highest attended holiday of the church calendar. That's why you should strategically craft a special series or service that recognizes all women. You can also consider pairing Mother's Day with Baby Dedications.

**Examples:** [Queen](#), [Girl, Get Up!](#), [Girl Boss](#), [Mother's Day At Liquid Church](#).

## June

We suggest leveraging either Memorial Day Weekend or the start of June as the unofficial start of Summer. The time is ripe for a special event that gets people outdoors. A celebratory service or an Outreach Series work well here. Another route to consider is honoring Dads for Father's Day with a masculine skinned series. Historically, Father's Day is not nearly as well attended as Mother's Day, but if you give them a reason to attend... they just might!

**Examples:** [Renovate](#), [LATS](#), [Spartan Faith](#).

## July

In the midst of Summer, we recognize that attendance will drop and most people won't attend church every week. So, we suggest creating non-contiguous, topical series so that guests can come any week and pick-up the content with ease.

**Examples:** [Dangerous Prayers](#), [Speak Life](#), [#SquadGoals](#), [Comparison Trap](#).

## August

The Fall ramp-up must begin in August. Consider a much-anticipated franchise series, such as *At The Movies*. Why movies? Because it's the season of Summer blockbusters and this series is non-contiguous, as we recognize we're still in the midst of vacation season. Adding special elements like movie popcorn and candy, lobby fun, and/or a special outdoor movie night, amp up the fun and make the series ultra-attractual and easy for people to invite their friends.

**Examples:** [ATM 2021](#), [ATM 2020](#), [ATM 2019](#), [ATM 2018](#), [ATM 2017](#).



**“With a franchise series, because people know what to expect, they are much more inclined to invite somebody to church. They know it’s a fantastic experience, they make time for it every year, and so they can invite someone to church with confidence.”**

**- Lauren Bercarich**

## **September**

Consider Labor Day weekend as part of the Summer. You could continue your movie series into September. Or do a special Sunday message, such as a “Student Takeover,” elevating High Schoolers and platforming content that has the entire congregation focused on the next generation. As for your official Fall kick-off, that should happen in the second half of September. Plan for a short recall series or special message with attractational content that sets you up well for a season of deeper discipleship to follow in October.

**Student Takeover Examples:** [2021 “Brave,”](#) [2020 “World Changers”](#)

**Examples:** [Homecoming,](#) [Oil Change,](#) [Anxious For Nothing,](#) [I Am,](#)

## **October**

With families now fully entrenched in their Fall routine, the season is right for a small group campaign and a time of deeper discipleship. We recommend building another 40-day discipleship series into your calendar.

**Examples:** [Emotionally Healthy Spirituality,](#) [The Chosen,](#) [SWAT,](#) [Love Comes To Town.](#)

## **November**

Continue the discipleship series launched in October, and either conclude with Baptisms or an All-Church Outreach. Leverage Thanksgiving Weekend as the time to launch your annual Christmas Offering with Vision Sunday.

**Vision Sunday Examples:** [VS 2021,](#) [VS 2020,](#) [VS 2019,](#) [VS 2018.](#)

## **December**

The entire month should point toward Christmas. Craft a Christmas Series that effortlessly flows into Christmas Eve, the second biggest holiday on the Christian calendar. Note that you don’t have to start from scratch - leverage existing content and assets for a successful season. For instance, [“Advent Conspiracy”](#) - is an established movement that has graphics and resources that are free to churches. Turning this into a sermon series could be a huge hit with your congregation. At the end of the year, you might be running on fumes and using an established concept might be just



what you need for success! And remember to add special elements to make Christmas Eve memorable for families (e.g., photo booth, candle lighting, etc.).

**Examples:** [The Gift](#), [A Christmas Carol](#), [Advent Conspiracy](#), [Share Christmas](#), [Lit](#).

### Planning Timeline & Strategy

In terms of planning... you want to meet with your team now to map out your Fall trimester. Decide what you'll be preaching September through December. Then, in October, get together again and decide what the "Easter Run" for 2023 looks like. Begin your work months in advance to get the full benefit of your preaching calendar.

And one final piece of advice - Lead Pastors - don't do this planning ALONE! To craft the best preaching calendar, you need a multitude of distinctive voices and viewpoints around the table. You will be grateful for the creative ideas your colleagues bring to the conversation. This will make your life easier and your sermons better!

### Churches Making Waves: Eagle Brook

As part of the Church Changer podcast, each month we want to spotlight churches "making waves" and doing great work. It's not just about giving them a shout-out, but about pointing you in the right direction. For anyone working in ministry, it's a great idea to see how others are excelling to discover some key takeaways that would work for you and your church.

This episode, we're spotlighting [Eagle Brook Church](#) out of Minnesota. If you want to see a church that structures their series with intentionality, weighing both the rhythms of the calendar and the felt needs of the congregation, you need to check them out! By the way... they make it really easy. All of Eagle Brook's messages and complementary assets like conversation guides and podcasts are [on their website](#), which makes it really easy to engage with their content.

### Something Fun, Something Free

To get a copy of Tim's free ebook called "**7 Sermon Series Guaranteed To Grow Your Church**," all you have to do is go to [ChurchChanger.com](#). On the homepage, you'll see where to claim your free ebook, which provides a template to implement 7 successful sermon series at your church. There's a series focused on outreach, stewardship, evangelism, discipleship, and more. See if one of these series fits your calendar, and just plug and play!



## Follow / Contact The Church Changer Team

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- Check out our website at [ChurchChanger.com](http://ChurchChanger.com)
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Plus... if you enjoyed this episode, we'd love it if you'd leave us a review wherever you listen to podcasts.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Continue the conversation! Here are questions to ask yourself and your team to help your church thrive. We hope Church Changer will inspire you to put into practice what we discuss each month!

- 1. Does your preaching planning have you rushing from Sunday to Sunday? If so, reflect upon how last minute planning is negatively impacting your staff.**

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- 2. What roadblocks do you need to remove to start planning a preaching calendar that allows your team to work months in advance? Are YOU part of the problem?**

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- 3. How well does your preaching cooperate with seasonal trends and rhythms already built into the calendar? Identify a recent "win" and a recent "miss."**

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4. **Think about your “Fall Run.” What will you do for Labor Day Weekend? What attractional series can you create to recall people this September?**

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5. **It’s time to start thinking about Christmas! Are there existing series and assets you can leverage for a successful season that is a lower lift?**

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**We are rooting for you! We pray 2022 is the year you shatter growth barriers in your ministry!**

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