

Ember Days “The material in the Large Catechism originated as sermons by Martin Luther on the basic texts of Christian teaching. Already in the Middle Ages, some regional synods in Germany had called for regular preaching on the “catechism” (usually defined as the Ten Commandment, Apostles’ Creed, Lord’s Prayer and, sometimes, the Ave Maria). The Ember Days, four time of fasting spread throughout the church year {*The Wednesday, Friday and Saturday after 1st Sunday in Lent, Pentecost, Holy Cross Day(Sep 14), and St. Lucia’s Day(Dec 13)*}, were often designated for this purpose. Even before the Reformation, Wittenberg’s city church, St. Mary’s also seems to have followed this practice. Luther himself preached on various portions of the catechism as early as 1518” (*The Book of Concord*, Kolb, preface to Large Catechism, p.377)

“Thus we have, in all, five parts covering the whole of Christian doctrine, which we should constantly teach and require young people to recite word for word. Do not assume that they will learn and retain this teaching from sermons alone. ²⁵When these parts have been well learned, you may assign them also some Psalms and some hymns, based on these subjects, to supplement and confirm their knowledge. Thus our youth will be led into the Scriptures so they make progress daily.

²⁶However, it is not enough for them simply to learn and repeat these parts verbatim. The young people should also attend preaching, especially at the time designated for the Catechism, ² so that they may hear it explained and may learn the meaning of every part. Then they will also be able to repeat what they have heard and give a good, correct answer when they are questioned, and thus the preaching will not be without benefit and fruit.

²⁷The reason we take such care to preach on the Catechism frequently is to impress it upon our youth, not in a lofty and learned manner but briefly and very simply, so that it may penetrate deeply into their minds and remain fixed in their memories.³

1 Luther himself wrote six hymns based on the parts of the Catechism.

2 See first Paragraph above.

Collects

Ember Wednesday.—Be pleased, O Lord, to enlighten our souls with the light of Your glory. Then we shall be able to see what we should do and shall find the strength to do it well. This we ask of You through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **AMEN.**

Ember Friday.—Be Kind to Your people, Lord. You are inspiring a sincere devotion in them; be so good as to help them in their wretchedness. This we ask of You through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **AMEN.**

Ember Saturday.—Look down benevolently on Your people, Lord; show us clemency, and withhold the scourge of Your wrath. This we ask of You through our Lord Jesus, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **AMEN.**

History

“Up to the eleventh century the Ember days of spring were kept in the first week of March; and those of summer, in the second week of June. It was St. Gregory VII. Who fixed them as we now have them; that is, the Ember days of spring in the first week of Lent, and those of Summer in Whitsunday week.” (*The Liturgical Year, Vol 5, p.156*).

Catechism Schedule

Advent: Wednesday: 1st-3rd Commandments

Friday: 4th-10th Commandments

Saturday: Conclusion

Lent: Wednesday: 1st Article of the Creed

Friday: 2nd Article of the Creed

Saturday: 3rd Article of the Creed

Pentecost: Wednesday: Lord’s Prayer (through 4th Petition)

Friday: Lord’s Prayer (5th Petition through “Amen”)

Saturday: Baptism

Holy Cross: Wednesday: Confession

Friday: The Lord’s Supper

Saturday: Morning & Evening Prayer, Table Prayer,

Table of Duties

The Order of Matins, p. 208

+ **HYMN**..... **#508**
 + “O Lord, open my lips... p.208f
 + Ascription of Praise for Lent p.209
 “Praise to you, O Christ,

Lamb of Our Salvation.”
 + Lenten Invitatory p.209
 P. “The Lord has redeemed his people.”
 C. Oh, come, let us worship him.

+ The Venite p.209f
 “Oh, come, let us sing...”

+ **Office HYMN**..... **#213**

Psalmody
 Psalm 25 (printed)
 Psalm 6 (printed)
 Psalm 91 (printed)

Reading
 Wed – St. Mathew 12:38-50
 Fri – St. John 5:1-15
 Sat – St. Matthew 17:1-9

Responsory for Lent p.212
 “We have an Advocate...”

Catechism Reading
 Wed – Apostles’ Creed, art. 1 (p.301)
 Fri – Apostles’ Creed, art. 2 (p.301)
 Sat – Apostles’ Creed, art. 3 (p.301-302)

Sermon
 Offering
 + Benedictus..... p.217-219
 “Blessed be the Lord God...”

+ The Prayers..... p.219
 Kyrie (“Lord, have mercy...”) Lord’s Prayer
 Salutation
 Collect of the Day (inside)
 Special Prayers
 Collect for Grace

+ **Benedicamus** p.222

3 Preface of 1529, Large Catechism, (Tappert, T. G. 2000, c1959. *The Book of Concord : The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. Fortress Press: Philadelphia).

THE LARGE CATECHISM

By Dr. Martin Luther

Part Second.

OF THE CREED.

1] Thus far we have heard the first part of Christian doctrine, in which we have seen all that God wishes us to do or to leave undone. Now, there properly follows **the Creed, which sets forth to us everything that we must expect and receive from God**, and, to state it quite briefly, teaches us to know Him fully. 2] And this is intended to help us do that which according to the Ten Commandments we ought to do. For (as said above) they are set so high that all human ability is far too feeble and weak to [attain to or] keep them. Therefore it is as necessary to learn this part as the former in order **that we may know how to attain thereto, whence and whereby to obtain such power**. 3] For if we could by our own powers keep the Ten Commandments as they are to be kept, we would need nothing further, neither the Creed nor the Lord's Prayer. 4] But before we explain this advantage and necessity of the Creed, it is sufficient at first for the simple-minded that they learn to comprehend and understand the Creed itself.

5] In the first place, the Creed has hitherto been divided into twelve articles, although, if all points which are written in the Scriptures and which belong to the Creed were to be distinctly set forth, there would be far more articles, nor could they all be clearly expressed in so few words. 6] But that it may be most easily and clearly understood as it is to be taught to children, **we shall briefly sum up the entire Creed in three chief articles, according to the three persons in the Godhead, to whom everything that we believe is related, so that the First Article, of God the Father, explains Creation, the Second Article, of the Son, Redemption, and the Third, of the Holy Ghost, Sanctification**. 7] Just as though the Creed were briefly comprehended in so many words: I believe in God the Father, who has created me; I believe in God the Son, who has redeemed me; I believe in the Holy Ghost, who sanctifies me. One God and one faith, but three persons, therefore also three articles or confessions. 8] Let us briefly run over the words.

Ember Days in Lent, 2021



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THE EMBER DAYS

Among some Christians, it is the custom to observe these clusters of three days roughly at the beginnings of the four seasons. They fall on the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday following:

The First Sunday in Lent
Pentecost Sunday
September 14th
December 13th (or, Third Sunday of Advent)

They are days of special prayer for those about to be ordained to the ministry, and some measure of fasting or abstinence, or partial fasting, or token fasting (such as not eating meat) is a customary part of their observance.

The entree shrimp tempura and its relatives, which we are accustomed to think of as traditional Japanese dishes, were invented by a Portugese missionary as meatless dishes for special days like the Ember days, and the word "tempura" is derived from the word "Ember."

The history of the days has been a subject of much dispute. Their name is apparently derived from the Latin quattuor tempora, or "The Four Seasons." They appear to have originated in Rome and to have spread from there. (The Qumran community ("Dead Sea Scrolls") had a similar observance, but apparently this is only a coincidence.) Originally there were perhaps only three sets of them, with the Spring Ember Days simply part of the days of Lent.

The prophet Zechariah speaks (Zech. 8:19) of "the fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth," and many Western manuscripts omitted the reference to the fifth. Counting from March as the first month, this would have been understood to refer to fasts in June, September, and December, and may have influenced the Christian observance. Again, there were pagan rites of purification connected with the times of sowing seed (December) and harvest (June) and vintage (December) and the Christian fasts may have been chosen to counter-act these.

It has been said that the Ember Days were first observed in the time of Pope Callistus I (218-225), but the earliest definite reference to them that we have is in the sermons of Pope Leo the Great (440-461). Pope Gelasius I (492-496) decreed that ordinations should take place at the end of the first full week of Lent, and it may be that he both (a) added the Spring Ember Days to the calendar and (b) introduced the connection between the Ember Days and ordination. (We have evidence that ordinations also took place on the third Saturday in December.)

By James Kiefer

The sources: <http://elvis.rowan.edu/~kilroy/JEK/LITCAL/EmberDays.html>

Catechism Reading

Wed – Ten Commandments (p.300)
Fri – Ten Commandments (p.300)
Sat – Ten Commandments (p.300-301)
+ Office HYMN..... #329
+ Preservice HYMN..... #331

Catechism Reading

Wed – Apostles' Creed, art. 1 (p.301)
Fri – Apostles' Creed, art. 2 (p.301)
Sat – Apostles' Creed, art. 3 (p.301-302)
+ Office HYMN..... #213

Catechism Reading

Wed – Lord's Prayer (p.302-3)
Fri – Lord's Prayer (p.302-3)
Sat – Lord's Prayer (p.302-3)
+ Office HYMN..... #431

Catechism Reading

Wed – Holy Baptism, 1-2 (p.303)
Fri – Holy Baptism, 3 (p.303)
Sat – Holy Baptism, 4 (p.303-304)
+ Office HYMN..... #225

Catechism Reading

Wed – Confession, Q. 1 and 2 (p.304)
Fri – Confession, Q. 3 (p.304)
Office of the Keys, Q. 1 (p.305)
Sat – Office of the Keys, Q. 2& 3 (p. 305)
+ Office HYMN..... #847
+ Office HYMN..... #93

Catechism Reading

Wed – Lord's Supper, #1-2 (p.305)
Fri – Lord's Supper, #3 (p.305)
Sat – Lord's Supper, #4-5 (p.305)
+ Office HYMN..... #93

Catechism Reading

Wed – Morning Prayer (p.305-306)
Fri – Evening Prayer (p.306)
Sat – Meal Prayers (p.306)
+ Office HYMN..... #433

Catechism Reading

Wed – Table of Duties (Not in LW)
Fri – Table of Duties (Not in LW)
Sat – Table of Duties (Not in LW)
+ Office HYMN..... #465

Catechism Reading

Wed – Christian Q.&A., #1-9 (p.306-307)
Fri – Christian Questions, #10-16 (p.307)
Sat – Christian Questions, #17-20 (p.307)
+ Office HYMN..... #249

Catechism hymns

+ Office HYMN..... #474 or #477