

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)

“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*).

Collects Ember Wednesday.—O Lord, we pray thee, to aid our infirmities with the healing of Thy loving-kindness: that we, which are made weak by the frailty of our nature, may be strengthened by the power of Thy mercy; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost: ever one God, world without end. **AMEN.**

Ember Friday.—Grant we beseech Thee, Almighty God: that we, who put our trust in Thee, may serve Thee acceptably both in body and soul; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost: ever one God, world without end. **AMEN.**

Ember Saturday.—Almighty and everlasting God, who dost command bodily discipline and hast attached promises thereto: grant that we may constantly serve Thee in soul and body, that no temptation may cause us to stumble; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost: ever one God, world without end. **AMEN.**

1 Luther himself wrote six hymns based on the parts of the Catechism.
2 See first Paragraph above.

Small Catechism

“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, ¹ 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

Catechism Schedule

- September 2022– Holy Baptism
- Advent 2022 – Confession/Office of the Keys
- Lenten 2023 – Lord’s Supper
- Pentecost 2023 – Daily Prayers
- September 2023 – Table of Duties
- Advent 2023 – Christian Questions with their Answers
- Lenten 2024 – Ten Commandments
- Pentecost 2024– Apostles’ Creed
- September 2024 – Lord’s Prayer

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).

+ Hymn	#402
+ “O Lord, open my lips...	p.208f
+ <u>Ascription of Praise</u>	p.209
“Praise to you, O Christ, Alleluia”	
+ <u>Pentecost Invitatory</u>	p.209
P. “The Lord has sanctified us	
in the true faith.”	
C. Oh, come, let us worship him.	
+ <u>The Venite</u>	p.209f
“Oh, come, let us sing...”	
+ Office HYMN.....	#224
 <u>Psalmody</u>	
Psalm 1	(insert)
Psalm 33	(insert)
Psalm 16	(insert)
 <u>Reading</u>	
Wed – Amos 9:13-15, Mark 9:17-29	
Fri – Hosea 14:2-10, Luke 7:36-50	
Sat – Leviticus 23:26-32, Hebrews 9:2-	
12, Luke 13:6-17	
Common Responsory	p.211
“Forever, O Lord, your Word...”	
<u>Catechism Reading</u>	
Wed – Holy Baptism, 1-2 (p.303)	
Fri – Holy Baptism, 3 (p.303)	
Sat – Holy Baptism, 4 (p.303-304)	
 Sermon	
Offering	
+ Te Deum.....	p.214-217
“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

CHAPTER 3: HOW THE OLD TESTAMENT FORETELLS HOLY BAPTISM WITH SAYINGS AND TYPES.

Baptism is a holy Sacrament of the New Testament instituted by God Himself since it is solely His domain to instigate and ordain the holy Sacraments as visible means of grace. Just as Amos 3:7 generally indicates that the Lord does nothing [without revealing] His secrets to His servants, the prophets, so then, it previously pleased Him also to permit passages about and types [of] this Sacrament [to] be directly proclaimed in the Old Testament. In keeping with the Old Testament style, the sayings which prophesy about holy Baptism are frequently couched in figurative words and must be clarified out of the New Testament.

Psa. 29:10 The Lord sits enthroned to initiate a flood. (Why holy Baptism is called a flood was clarified in the previous chapter.)

Psa. 46:5 Yet the city of God shall remain exquisitely cheerful with its fountain; there are the holy dwellings of the most High. (Within this City of God, the fountain of the Christian Church is also holy Baptism, through which we are washed from sin's filth.)

Psa.103:5 Who makes your mouth happy, and you become young again like an eagle. (We become young again and obtain new strength through rebirth, so that we rise up like eagles, Isa. 40:31. But then, holy Baptism is the bath of rebirth and renewal, Tit. 3:5.) {Page 16}

Isa. 44:3-4 Thus says the Lord: I will pour water upon the thirsty and streams upon the dry. I will pour My Spirit upon your seed and My blessing upon your descendants, so that they may grow like grass, like the willows in the water brooks. (In holy Baptism the Spirit of God is poured upon us, Tit. 3:5, which makes us fruitful for every good work .)

Isa. 49:22 They (the people) will bring your sons here, and carry your daughters upon their shoulders. (As with the Israelite children, this occurs in holy Baptism; the children are brought to Jesus through it, Mat. 19:13, Mark 10:13, Luke 18:15.)

Isa. 52:15 My servant will sprinkle many Gentiles. (This sprinkling occurs also in holy Baptism through Christ's blood because we are washed [cleansed from sin through it].)

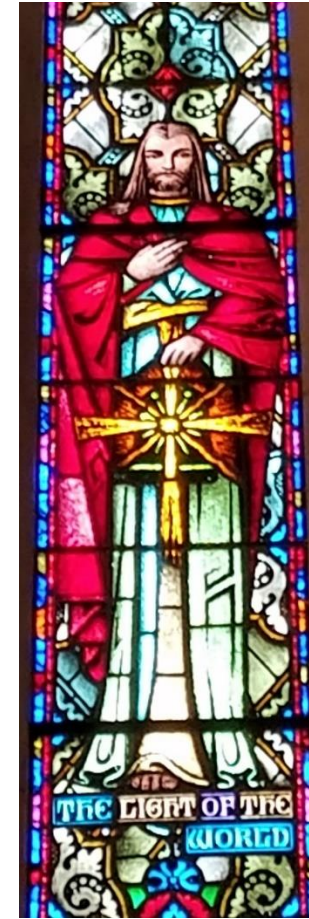
Isa. 61:10 He (the Lord) has put on me garments of salvation and clothed me with the Robe of Righteousness (Gal. 3:27: For as many of you who are baptized, you have put on Christ).

Eze. 16:9 I bathed you with water and washed away your blood. (Through the water of holy Baptism, we are washed [clean J of our blood-red guilt of sin, Eph. 5:26].)

Eze. 36:25, 26 I will sprinkle pure water over you, so that you become cleansed of all your uncleanness; And, I will give you a new heart and a new spirit, and take away from your flesh the .stony heart and give you a heart of flesh (Baptism is a Bath of rebirth and renewal of the Holy Spirit, Tit. 3:5).

(A Comprehensive Explanation of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper (1610) by Johann Gerhard, Repristination Press: Malone TX 1996, 2000.)

Ember Days after Holy Cross



The Light of the World – John 8:12

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Psalm 16



- 1 Pre-serve me, O God,
for in You I put my trust.
 - 2 O my soul, you have said to the Lord,
“You are my Lord, My goodness is noth-ing a-part from You.”
 - 3 As for the saints who are on the earth,
“They are the excellent ones, in whom is all my de-light.”
 - 4 Their sorrows shall be multiplied who hasten af-ter an-other god;
Their drink offerings of blood I will not offer, Nor take up
their names on my lips.
 - 5 O Lord, You are the portion of my in-her-it-ance and my cup;
You main-tain my lot.
 - 6 The lines have fallen to me in pleas-ant plac-es;
Yes, I have a good in-herit-ance.
 - 7 I will bless the Lord who has giv-en me coun-sel;
My heart also instructs me in the night sea-sons.
 - 8 I have set the Lord al-ways be-fore me;
Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved.
 - 9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glo-ry re-joic-es;
My flesh al-so will rest in hope.
 - 10 For You will not leave my soul in She-ol,
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see cor-rup-tion.
 - 11 You will show me the path of life;
In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are
pleas-ures for-ever-more.
- Glory be to the Fa-ther and to the Son,
And to the Ho-ly Spir-it.
As it was in the be-gin-ning,
Is now, and will be for-ev-er. A-men. *Repeat antiphon*

Psalms for Ember Days in September

Psalm 1



- 1 Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the
ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sin-ners,
Nor sits in the seat of the scorn-ful;
 - 2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord,
And in His law he med-i-tates day and night.
 - 3 He shall be like a tree planted by the riv-ers of wa-ter,
That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf
also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall
pros-per.
 - 4 The un-god-ly are not so,
But are like the chaff which the wind drives a-way.
 - 5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judg-ment,
Nor sinners in the congregation of the right-eous.
 - 6 For the Lord knows the way of the right-eous,
But the way of the ungod-ly shall per-ish.
- Glory be to the Fa-ther and to the Son,
And to the Ho-ly Spir-it.
As it was in the be-gin-ning,
Is now, and will be for-ev-er. A-men.**
- Repeat antiphon*

Psalm 33



- 1 Rejoice in the Lord, O you right-eous!
For praise from the up-right is beauti-ful.
- 2 Praise the Lord with the harp;
Make melody to Him with an instru-ment of ten strings.
- 3 Sing to Him a new song;
Play skillfully with a shout of joy.
- 4 For the word of the Lord is right,
And all His work is done in truth.
- 5 He loves righteous-ness and jus-tice;
The earth is full of the good-ness of the Lord.
- 6 By the word of the Lord the heav-ens were made,
And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.
- 7 He gathers the waters of the sea to-geth-er as a heap;
He lays up the deep in storehous-es.
- 8 Let all the earth fear the Lord;
Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.
- 9 For He spoke, and it was done;
He commanded, and it stood fast.
- 10 The Lord brings the counsel of the na-tions to noth-ing;
He makes the plans of the peo-ples of no ef-fect.
- 11 The counsel of the Lord stands for-ev-er,
The plans of His heart to all gen-er-a-tions.

- 12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord,
The people He has chosen as His own in-herit-ance.
 - 13 The Lord looks from heav-en;
He sees all the sons of men.
 - 14 From the place of His dwel-ling He looks
On all the inhabi-tants of the earth;
 - 15 He fashions their hearts in-di-vidual-ly;
He con-sid-ers all their works.
 - 16 No king is saved by the multitude of an ar-my;
A mighty man is not de-liv-ered by great strength.
 - 17 A horse is a vain hope for safe-ty;
Neither shall it deliver any by its great strength.
 - 18 Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him,
On those who hope in His mer-cy,
 - 19 To deliver their soul from death,
And to keep them a-live in fam-ine.
 - 20 Our soul waits for the Lord;
He is our help and our shield.
 - 21 For our heart shall re-joyce in Him,
Because we have trusted in His holy name.
 - 22 Let Your mercy, O Lord, be up-on us,
Just as we hope in You.
- Glory be to the Fa-ther and to the Son,**
And to the Ho-ly Spir-it.
As it was in the be-gin-ning,
Is now, and will be for-ev-er. A-men.
- Repeat antiphon*

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 Portuguese 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>