

**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 1<sup>st</sup> 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. <sup>25</sup>When these parts have been well learned, you may assign them also some Psalms and some hymns, I based on these subjects, to supplement and confirm their knowledge. Thus our youth will be led into the Scriptures so they make progress daily.

<sup>26</sup>However, 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, <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>27</sup>The 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.<sup>3</sup>

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

2 See first Paragraph above.

**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**

- Lenten 2024 – Lord’s Supper
- Pentecost 2024– Ten Commandments
- September 2024 – Apostles’ Creed
- Advent 2024– Lord’s Prayer
- Lenten 2025 – Holy Baptism
- Pentecost 2025 – Confession/Office of the Keys
- September 2025 – Daily Prayers
- Advent 2025 – Table of Duties
- Lenten 2026 – Christian Questions with their Answers

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 “Draw Near and Take the Body of the Lord” #240**

- + “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 “O Christ, Who Art the Light and Day” ASBH #20**

Psalmody

- Psalm 25 (printed)
- Psalm 6 (printed)
- Psalm 91 (printed)

Reading

- Wed – Exodus 24:12-18, Mathew 12:38-50
- Fri – Ezekiel 18:20-28, John 5:1-15
- Sat – Deut. 26:12-19, 1 Thess. 5:14-23
- Responsory for Lent p.212
  - “We have an Advocate...”

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)

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

# THE LARGE CATECHISM By Dr. Martin Luther

## [Part Fifth.]

### OF THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR.

1] In the same manner as we have heard regarding Holy Baptism, we must speak also concerning the other Sacrament, namely, these three points: What is it? What are its benefits? and, Who is to receive it? And all these are established by the words by which Christ has instituted it, 2] and which every one who desires to be a Christian and go to the Sacrament should know. For it is not our intention to admit to it and to administer it to those who know not what they seek, or why they come. The words, however, are these:

3] Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread; and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and gave it to His disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me.

After the same manner also He took the cup when He had supped, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the remission of sins: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me.

4] Here also we do not wish to enter into controversy and contend with the traducers and blasphemers of this Sacrament, but to learn first (as we did regarding Baptism) what is of the greatest importance, namely, that the chief point is the Word and ordinance or command of God. For it has not been invented nor introduced by any man, but with out any one's counsel and deliberation it has been instituted by Christ. 5] Therefore, just as the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Creed retain their nature and worth, although you never keep, pray, or believe them, so also does this venerable Sacrament remain undisturbed, so that nothing is detracted or taken from it, even though we employ and dispense it unworthily. 6] What do you think God cares about what we do or believe, so that on that account He should suffer His ordinance to be changed? Why, in all worldly matters every thing remains as God has created and ordered it, no matter how we employ or use it. 7] This must always be urged, for thereby the prating of nearly all the fanatical spirits can be repelled. For they regard the Sacraments, aside from the Word of God, as something that we do.

8] *Now, what is the Sacrament of the Altar?* Answer: *It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, in and under the bread and wine which we Christians are commanded by the Word of Christ to eat and to drink.* 9] And as we have said of Baptism that it is not simple water, so here also we say the Sacrament is bread and wine, but not mere bread and wine, such as are ordinarily served at the table, but bread and wine comprehended in, and connected with, the Word of God.

10] It is the Word (I say) which makes and distinguishes this Sacrament, so that it is not mere bread and wine, but is, and is called, the body and blood of Christ. For it is said: *Accedat verbum ad elementum, et fit sacramentum. If the Word be joined to the element, it becomes a Sacrament.* This saying of St. Augustine is so properly and so well put that he has scarcely said anything better. The Word must make a Sacrament of the element, else it remains a mere element. 11] Now, it is not the word or ordinance of a prince or emperor, but of the sublime Majesty, at whose feet all creatures should fall, and affirm it is as He says, and accept it with all reverence, fear, and humility.

## Ember Days in Lent, 2024



## Trinity Lutheran Church & Early Childhood Learning Center

1000 North Park Avenue, Herrin, IL 62948  
Church 942-3401, Learning Center 942-4750

[www.trinityh.org](http://www.trinityh.org)

**Pastor Michael D. Henson · Deacon Gary K. Harroun**

*Pr. Henson and Dcn. Harroun are members of the  
Evangelical Lutheran Diocese of North America ([Eldona.org](http://Eldona.org))*