



ALTAR *and* FIELD

Ember Days

BY REBECCA TAYLOR

Ember Days

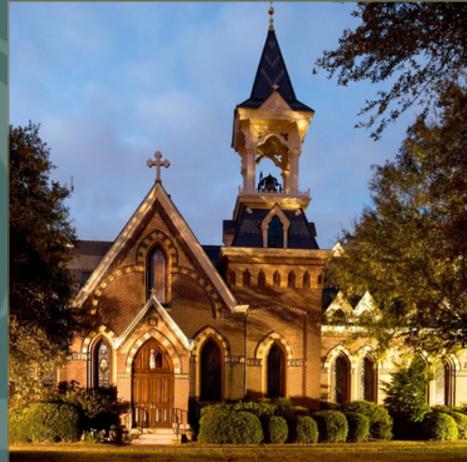
AND WHY THEY MATTER

What are Ember Days?

There are four sets of Ember Days in the Church year, one set for each season of creation. These days are set aside for prayer and fasting, particularly for those who are pursuing Holy Orders.

Postulants and candidates are canonically required to write a letter to their bishop each Ember Day to provide an update on their theological education and their personal and spiritual growth.

But Ember Days aren't just for seminarians. The Book of Common Prayer invites us all to pray for the Church's ministers, for the raising up of new leaders, and for all Christians in their daily life and work. Ember Days offer us time to pray intentionally for our local and diocesan leaders, and to listen more closely for how we're being called—again or anew—to participate in Kingdom mission.



Ways to Participate

Fast and pray

Read the appointed lessons

Pray for your clergy, bishop, and ministry leaders by name

Reflect on what God might be calling you to begin or re-up

Write a letter or send a text to your clergy, bishop, or ministry leaders with specific encouragement and gratitude

Pray the Collects on the following page

Dates

Ember Days are the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday after the following days: St. Lucy's Day (Dec. 13) | Ash Wednesday | The Day of Pentecost | Holy Cross Day (Sept. 14)

There are two mnemonic devices to help you remember the days:
"Lenty, Penty, Crucy, Lucy" or "Lucy, Ashes, Dove, and Cross"

Collects

FOR EMBER DAYS FROM THE BCP

For Those to Be Ordained

Almighty God, the giver of all good gifts, in your divine providence you have appointed various orders in your Church: Give your grace, we humbly pray, to all who are called to any office and ministry for your people; and so fill them with the truth of your doctrine and clothe them with holiness of life, that they may faithfully serve before you, to the glory of your great Name and for the benefit of your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

For the Choice of Fit Persons For the Ministry

O God, you led your holy apostles to ordain ministers in every place: Grant that your Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, may choose suitable persons for the ministry of Word and Sacrament, and may uphold them in their work for the extension of your kingdom; through him who is the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

For All Christians in Their Vocation

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sanctified: Receive our supplications and prayers, which we offer before you for all members of your holy Church, that in their vocation and ministry they may truly and devoutly serve you; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

For Clergy and People^{*}

Almighty and everlasting God, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift: Send down upon our bishops, and other clergy, and upon the congregations committed to their charge, the healthful Spirit of thy grace; and that they may truly please thee, pour upon them the continual dew of thy blessing. Grant this, O Lord, for the honor of our Advocate and Mediator, Jesus Christ. Amen.

*While this Collect is not specified for use during Ember Days, it is particularly well-suited. Consider adding "especially {names}" when you pray for bishops, clergy, and individual parish communities.



Symbolism

FOR THE SEASONS

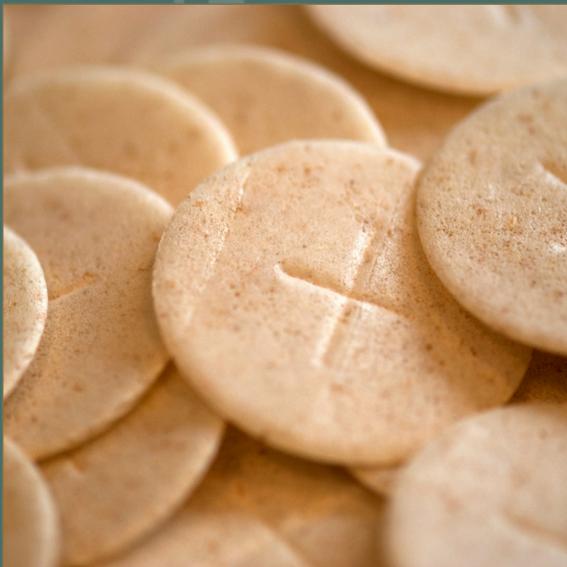
Because Ember Days have deep roots in the rhythms of creation, some traditions have paired each season's harvest with the rhythm of the liturgy.



Winter: Olives
USED IN HOLY OIL



Spring: Bees + Wax
USED IN CANDLES



Summer: Wheat
USED IN THE BREAD



Fall: Grapes
USED IN THE WINE