



Resources for Churches

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1. Ember Days

Ember days, which occur four times a year, are aligned with the changing of the seasons and are times of thanksgiving for the gifts of nature and times of prayer for those to be ordained and for vocations. They have traditionally been observed on the Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays within the weeks before the Third Sunday of Advent, the Second Sunday of Lent and the Sundays nearest to 29 June and 29 Sept.

Ember days are natural times both to raise the profile of vocations with the Church, and for the church to pray for vocations.

There are **liturgical resources** available from “Times and Seasons”, here: [Embertide Resources](#).

2. Potential sermon resources for Embertide

1. *Setting the Scene*

- Introduce the specific natural season and the liturgical season (e.g., Spring, Autumn, Advent, or Pentecost).
- Explain the historical origin of Embertide (from the Latin *Quatuor Tempora*, or “Four Times”) as a historic week of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

2. *Thanksgiving and Stewardship*

- Focus on the lectionary’s seasonal themes, thanking God for the gifts of nature and the earth’s bounty.
- Connect this to Christian stewardship— encouraging the responsible use of the earth’s resources.

3. *Fasting and Penitence*

- Address the penitential nature of the Ember Days (traditionally Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays).
- Discuss how fasting helps re-align and open our hearts to God’s grace.

4. *The Harvest of Souls and Vocations*

- Transition from the agricultural harvest to the “harvest of souls”. Draw on Scripture (e.g., *Matthew 9:37-38*: “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few”).
- Ministry and Ordinations: Traditionally, Embertide is closely tied to the ordination of deacons and priests. Encourage the congregation to ask for God’s blessing upon all those in holy orders and lay ministries.

5. *Conclusion: Call to Action*

- Practical Response: Exhort the congregation to observe the fast, pray for vocations, and engage in acts of mercy or almsgiving.

3. Hymns that may be appropriate for ember tide/vocations

Hymn

- All my hope on God is founded
- All to Jesus I surrender
- Be thou my vision
- Brother, sister, let me serve you
- From heaven you came (The Servant King)
- Go forth and tell
- I, the Lord of sea and sky (Here I am, Lord)
- Just as I am, without one plea
- Make me a channel of your peace
- One more step along the world I go
- Take my life and let it be
- We have a Gospel to proclaim
- Ye servants of God your master proclaim
- Will you come and follow me
- Forth, in thy name, O Lord, I go
- Jesus calls us! O'er the tumult
- May the mind of Christ my Saviour
- O Jesus, I have promised

Contemporary Songs

- Build my life (*Housefires*)
- God of justice (*Tim Hughes*)
- I will offer up my life (*Matt Redman*)
- Lord I give you my heart (*Michael W Smith*)
- The Stand (*Hillsong*)
- This is our God (*Graham Kendrick*)
- One thing remains (*Jesus Culture*)
- My lighthouse (*The Rend Collective*)

4. Prayers for personal discernment

Lord, as you called your disciples,
call us now.
Open our ears to listen to you calling;
Open our eyes to see you;
Open our hearts to your love.
Help us to hear you,
to experience your presence with us,
and to love you.
And loving you, let us serve you,
our servant King.
Amen.

Almighty God,
author of my life,
help me learn to read what you have written on my heart.
Give me discerning eyes
and an untiring spirit
to look within myself
in order to understand how to respond to your call.
And once I have begun to read you aright,
give me the generosity to help others to read you,
That they in turn may offer themselves in your service.
Amen.

God our Father,
You have a plan for each one of us,
You hold out to us a future full of hope.
Give us the wisdom of your Spirit
so that we can see the shape of your plan
in the gifts you have given us,
and in the circumstances of our daily lives.
Give us the freedom of your Spirit,
to seek you with all our hearts,
and to choose your will above all else.
We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Prayer of St Thomas Merton

My Lord God,
I have no idea where I am going.
I do not see the road ahead of me
Nor do I really know myself,
And the fact that I think I am following your will
Does not mean that I am actually doing so.
But I believe that the desire to please you
Does in fact please you.
And I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.
And I know that if I do this,
You will lead me by the right road
Though I may know nothing about it.
Therefore will I trust you always though,
I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.
I will not fear, for you are ever with me,
And you will never leave me to face my struggles alone.
Amen.

Prayer for Abandonment

(St Charles de Foucauld)

Father,
I abandon myself into Your hands;
Do with me what You will.
Whatever You do may I thank You:
I am ready for all, I accept all.
Let only Your will be done in me,
And in all Your creatures.
I wish no more than this, O Lord.
Into Your hands I commend my soul:
I offer it to You with all the love of my heart,
For I love You, Lord,
And so need to give myself to You,
To surrender myself into Your hands,
Without reserve and with boundless confidence,
For You are my Father. Amen.

Prayers for many to hear God's call

Almighty God,
you have entrusted to your Church
a share in the ministry of your Son our great
high priest:
inspire by your Holy Spirit the hearts of many
to offer themselves for the ministry of your Church,
that strengthened by his power,
they may work for the increase of your kingdom
and set forward the eternal praise of your name;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen

God our Father, Lord of all the world,
through your Son, you have called us into the fellowship
of your universal Church:
hear our prayer for your faithful people
that in their vocation and ministry
each may be an instrument of your love,
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.