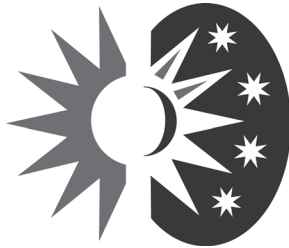


KEEPING TIME

The Church's Years



Using *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*

Volume Three

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Preface to the *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* Leader Guides

E*vangelical Lutheran Worship* includes a number of related print editions and other resources developed to support the worship life of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. The core print editions of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, released in 2006, include the following:

Pew (Assembly) Edition [AE]

Leaders Edition and Leaders Desk Edition [LE]

Accompaniment Edition: Liturgies

Accompaniment Edition: Service Music and Hymns

An encounter with these core editions and their introductions is important to an understanding of the goals and principles embodied in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*.

In addition to the core materials, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* includes other published resources that are prepared to extend the usefulness of the core editions and to respond to the developing needs of the church in mission. The *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* leader guides, which include the present volume, supplement the core editions in a variety of ways.

These resources are intended to provide worship leaders and planners with support for *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* in ways that would not be possible within the core editions themselves. Although the assembly edition includes more interpretive material than its predecessors, such as the annotated patterns for worship that complement the notes within the services, it provides only minimal guidance for leading worship in a variety of settings. Although the leaders edition includes a more extensive section titled Notes on the Services, it is not designed to accommodate deeper historical context, theological reflection, or extensive

practical counsel for those who want to lead worship with understanding and confidence.

The leader guides include a set of three volumes, Using *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. This set addresses as its primary audience pastors, seminarians, and church musicians—people who together take the lead in preparing the assembly’s worship week by week. In a time when many congregations have implemented a broader sharing in worship leadership and planning, however, the contents of these three volumes will be valuable also for assisting ministers with various roles, altar guilds and sacristans, worship committees, and worshipers who are seeking deeper understanding.

The Sunday Assembly, the first book in the set of three volumes, includes a general introduction to worship that is evangelical, Lutheran, and ecumenical. That is followed by in-depth historical, theological, and practical reflections on the service of Holy Communion and the Service of the Word. *The Christian Life: Baptism and Life Passages* is the second volume in the set and takes up the service of Holy Baptism and related services such as Affirmation of Baptism, together with the services of Healing, Funeral, and Marriage. This book, *Keeping Time: The Church’s Years*, the third volume in the set, addresses the church’s calendar of Sundays, festivals, and seasons; the place of the lectionary and other propers; and the cycle of daily prayer.

The leader guides series includes two volumes focused on assembly song. *Musicians Guide to Evangelical Lutheran Worship* presents essays on the musical leadership of assembly song in a variety of styles and genres, and offers music performance helps for each piece of liturgical music and every hymn in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. The *Hymnal Companion to Evangelical Lutheran Worship* includes detailed background on the words and music of the hymns, together with an overview of the role of hymnody in the church’s worship. Both of these volumes, while having particular appeal to church musicians, will be useful also to pastors, seminarians, worship committees, choir members, and other worshipers.

Other reference and interpretive resources will be included among the leader guides as needed. *Indexes to Evangelical Lutheran Worship* is one such volume, with an extensive list of suggested hymns for the church year and an expanded set of other indexes.

Many of the church's gifted teachers have contributed to the writing and assembling of the leader guides. They have sought to discern and give additional focus to the vision for worship among Lutherans that emerged from the five-year Renewing Worship process (2001–2005) that engaged thousands of people across the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada in encountering provisional materials, sharing creative gifts, and evaluating various stages of the proposal. To be sure, this vision is one marked by a great diversity of thought and practice, a diversity the contributors seek to reflect in these volumes. Yet these gifted teachers also bring to this work their own distinctive points of view, shaped by their own experiences and by their encounters with other teachers, rostered leaders, and worshiping communities around the world.

The *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* leader guides thus do not intend to provide definitive answers or official positions in matters related to worship among Lutherans. In these volumes, however, we are invited to engage in conversation with teachers of the church, to consider how their insights and guidance may best inform and inspire the many different contexts in which local leaders guide the worship life of their communities. In so doing, these leader guides in their own ways seek to do what also the core editions set out to do: “to make more transparent the principle of fostering unity without imposing uniformity,” so that ultimately all these resources might “be servants through which the Holy Spirit will call out the church, gather us around Jesus Christ in word and sacrament, and send us, enlivened, to share the good news of life in God” (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, Introduction, p. 8).

1

My Times Are in Your Hands

Time, the fourth dimension of earthly existence, is both blessing and bane. It allows for measured progress, for the joys of watching a child's development, for anticipation of holidays, weddings, reunions. It also allows for the dread of less happy future events: a risky surgery, a confrontation. Time gives order to our lives, so that matters don't just come at us randomly, but it also can take over to such an extent that we may feel we are serving the clock, the calendar.

Think of how our lives are bound to appointments. It is time for school or work. It is time for a meeting. It is time for teeth cleaning. Our lists go on and on. Clocks measure seconds, minutes, and hours but do not speak to the significance or content of events that fill time. Calendars list appointments and important dates but can only hint at the deeper realities those events may contain. For all its centrality in our daily existence, chronological time or clock time is empty, moving space waiting—even demanding—to be filled. When we don't fill that time we sometimes say that we are “killing time” or “wasting time.”

The church certainly knows *chronos*, or clock time. We use calendars, we announce services and other activities at certain times, and the schedules of church professionals are as crammed as anyone's. But the church also knows another kind of time. Biblical time—*kairos*—is filled with God's gracious actions and presence. Time is viewed as a gift of God and filled with grace. Beginning his ministry, Jesus proclaims that “the *time* is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near” (Mark 1:15). After Jesus' sermon in the Nazareth synagogue, he amazed the worshipers when he said, “*Today* this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:21). In a similar way, the apostle Paul says to the Corinthian congregation that has heard the gospel proclamation: “See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation!” (2 Cor. 6:2). The promises of God are now fulfilled: “When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son . . .” (Gal. 4:4). God's will for the world in the entry of Jesus into the world's history is viewed “as a

plan for the fullness of time” (Eph. 1:10). This is not just “once upon a time” but perpetually: Jesus “is able for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25). And we trust the promise and anticipate that Christ “will appear a second time . . . to save those who are eagerly waiting for him” (Heb. 9:28). So Christians not only mark the days on the calendar or fill in the boxes in our appointment books (chronos), but we discover in the patterns of biblical time (kairos or “pregnant” or “life-giving” time) the rich meaning of time filled with God and time fulfilled in Jesus.

A classic biblical description of times and seasons is given us by the writer of Ecclesiastes: “For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted . . .” (3:1-8). This reinforces for us the wisdom of not forcing events at unsuited times, a tendency to which we often fall prey under the influence of the clock and the calendar. Rather, this writer advises, pay attention to God-given times and seasons and enjoy the blessings of the right thing done at the right time.

In one of his sermons, the apostle Peter urged: “Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19-20). Times of refreshing! What a marvelous description of Sunday worship and daily prayer! Because we are “in Christ,” now our time is bound up with God’s mission in Christ in the power of the Spirit: “Be careful then how you live . . . making the most of the time” (Eph. 5:15-16). Christian living values the time we spend with others: “Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the time” (Col. 4:5).

About our present time as the gospel is proclaimed, the apostle Paul says, “You know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep” (Rom. 13:11). So there can be urgency in kairos, though this urgency is underscored not by a deadline but by a holy need.

We teach children to tell time. Our appointment books and electronic calendars keep us aware of commitments and schedules of time. Even the church’s schedule organizes times daily, weekly, and yearly around gospel and mission content. But in an era when we have specialists in

time management, the church year provides a complementary way of understanding and making use of time. Working through *kairos* offers a pattern for the church's ordering of time in service of the gospel and a way to let our time be in God's hands.

The Church Keeps Time

Sunday. Easter. Like the planets orbiting the sun, the six days of the week orbit or revolve around Sunday. Likewise, the days and festivals of the year orbit or revolve around Easter. This basic pattern has been followed since the earliest days of the Christian church.

The common point for Sunday and Easter, and the reason for their centrality, is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Jesus was raised from the dead on the first day of the week, on the day within the calendar year that we now celebrate as Easter. The same day points us both backward and forward. Jesus' resurrection on the first day of the week echoes the beginning of the creation of the cosmos in the first chapter of Genesis. Within the Judeo-Christian tradition, that account of creation is what has given shape to the seven-day week that ends with the seventh-day sabbath. Luke's gospel (24:1) makes the connection between the resurrection and this counting of days: "On the first day of the week, at early dawn, [the women] came to the tomb. . . ." And Paul reminds us of the connection between the first creation and the world remade through Christ's resurrection: "If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17). This sense of the new covenant and the new creation in Christ that invites all the baptized to "walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4) sometimes has been expressed by dubbing Sunday the *eighth day*. That is, this is the day that breaks the confines of normal life, the day every week that we remember and celebrate the Easter good news of Christ's death and resurrection to make all things new in the world. As early as the late first or early second century, *The Epistle of Barnabas* presented God as speaking of Sunday as the eighth day:

The present sabbaths are not acceptable to me, but that which I have made, in which I will give rest to all things and make the beginning of an eighth day, that is the beginning of a new world. Wherefore we also celebrate with gladness the eighth day in which Jesus also rose from the dead, and was made manifest, and ascended into heaven.¹

When one considers that the early Christians had been formed by the long tradition among Jews of keeping the Sabbath (our Saturday), one realizes that a powerful reason or event must have influenced the emerging church's practice of gathering for worship on the first day of the week (later named Sunday) instead of on the Sabbath. Because of the Easter or Paschal gospel, this first day of the week, or eighth day, came to be called "the Lord's day" (Rev. 1:10). In the book of Acts, Luke implies a weekly practice when he gives a time reference for a worship gathering: "On the first day of the week, when we met to break bread . . ." (Acts 20:7).

Therefore the first day of the week (later called Sunday), or the eighth day, has been central to the church's and individual lives for two thousand years. It was the day that the Christian community gathered eagerly around word and sacrament, together with prayers, praise, fellowship, and offerings for the poor. Gerhard Frost, a 20th century theologian, described Sunday's gathering for worship as the dinner bell of the soul.²

Sunday has been the way most Christians observe the third commandment of the Decalogue. Luther's explanation of the third commandment in the Small Catechism (AE p. 1160) stresses that this day provides and preserves time for the proclamation of God's gracious gospel. It is time, as Luther stressed, for receiving God's Word in both audible and visible (edible/drinkable) forms. Sunday is time for communal sharing in worship. That central action every Sunday in worship renews our communal and personal lives. The challenge of the church is to claim the life offered in the risen Christ: "The church of Christ, in every age beset by change, but Spirit-led, must claim and test its heritage and keep on rising from the dead" (ELW #729).

Keeping the Day Holy

The two statements of the commandment to keep the sabbath (our Saturday) holy (Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5) suggest not oppressive law but festivity, freedom, deliverance, refreshment, and renewal. In the Exodus account, the sabbath is a time for refreshment and renewal, a time to reflect on the good gift of creation and life itself.

Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son

or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it. [Exod. 20:8-11]

In Deuteronomy, sabbath is a festival of freedom that celebrates the deliverance of God's people from bondage and slavery.

Observe the sabbath day and keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work—you, or your son or your daughter, or your male or female slave, or your ox or your donkey, or any of your livestock, or the resident alien in your towns, so that your male and female slave may rest as well as you. Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day. [Deut. 5:12-15]

One might say that the sabbath is, for Moses' descendants, the weekly religious version of the United States' annual secular Independence Day.

But what does it mean to keep the day holy? Much of the vigor of Judaism comes from rabbinic interpretations of the Torah's teachings. Also in the case of the sabbath commandment, many layers of interpretation built up, some of which Jesus saw as obscuring, even sometimes contradicting, the intent of the commandment. Over against the restrictions that fenced in life on the sabbath, Jesus brought a new vision of what sabbath meant. Jesus observed the third commandment and did attend the synagogue regularly: "When [Jesus] came to Nazareth . . . he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom" (Luke 4:16). However, he also broke many interpretations that had grown up around this holy day. Challenging the extensive rules about what religious authorities considered work and not rest, Jesus proclaimed that "the sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath; so the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath" (Mark 2:27-28). In effect, the message is: the sabbath is meant as a blessing, but finally, Jesus is our rest.

Another challenge was addressed to the restriction on healing or helping someone on the sabbath. Jesus said, “So it is lawful to do good on the sabbath” (see Matt. 12:9-14). Again the message may be that Jesus is our health and healing. Further, the sabbath is not only for one’s self but for the neighbor in need. In another sabbath synagogue event, of healing a woman of a long-term disease, Jesus sets her free from her eighteen-year bondage to ill health. This spirit of sabbath keeping recalls God’s deliverance from Egyptian bondage.

Because of Christ’s resurrection on the first day of the week, Christians have transferred their observance of the sabbath to that day, Sunday. For Christians’ weekly remembering of that one day, the new sabbath, brings all the days of the week into focus around what God was doing in Jesus, what God has been up to in the history of the world, and what God promises to do for the healing and health of the nations.³ Since their beginnings, both Jews and Christians have seen the week through the eyes and focus of sabbath or Sunday. Sunday gives a new vision for our ordinary days. For Christians, Sunday proclaims and reminds us that Jesus is our life, our new creation, our deliverance, our rest, our hope. Our gathering on the Lord’s day reminds the baptized that we belong to Christ; and because we belong to Christ, we belong to one another. The theologian Jürgen Moltmann suggests that “the sabbath opens creation to its true future.”⁴

But as the prophet Amos reminds us, sabbath or Sunday worship that does not work for justice, does not care for the poor and the oppressed, does not live out God’s care for the earth during the days of the week, is not acceptable. In fact, Amos says God will not listen to our music or take delight in our solemn liturgies if our worship on that one day is not lived out in the days of the week. What happens in church does not stay in church but is lived out in all our days. Far from being separate entities, regular keeping of Sunday gives a gospel rhythm to all our days and to our entire lives. Then we can say with the psalmist about every new day: “This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it” (Ps. 118:24).

Biblical accounts reflect times when God acts on behalf of the creation and all people. There are times of deliverance, redemption, salvation, and blessing that give all time significance, meaning, and hope. This leads the psalmist to pray, “So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts to wisdom” (Ps. 90:12). The writer of

Lamentations asserts, in the midst of a great national tragedy, the gift of each day lived in faith in the faithfulness of God: “The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness” (Lam. 3:22-23). This promise for each day is grasped by many who sing with such gusto Thomas Chisholm’s hymn (#733) based on this text; they claim in all circumstances “strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow.”

A good visual image of the way the church year works in the community of faith is the spiral. The circle may suggest simple repetition, like the squirrel cage, without going anywhere. But the spiral can suggest bringing the past with its revelatory, saving, and blessing acts of God into the present moment, even as we are thrust into God’s promised future. This suggests the continuity and change that God works in the church and in our individual lives. That sort of “time across time” is just what *kairos* seeks to express.

As pastors, musicians, and lay planners/leaders prepare worship for their local worshiping assemblies, a hard reality faces them. In the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, nearly 70 percent of congregational members are absent from Sunday worship in the average week. (The proportion is similar for other mainline denominations.) The challenge for leaders is to find ways to communicate the centrality and the gift of Sunday, the eighth day, the day for communities of faith to focus and refocus their lives around the resurrection message of the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ for the sake of the world.

Even when widespread persecution could have kept them away from worship, early Christians were committed to this weekly gathering for fellowship, for sharing the proclaimed word, and joining in “the cup of blessing . . . [and] the bread that we break” (1 Cor. 10:16). The martyrs of Abitina said, “We have to celebrate the Lord’s Day. It is our rule. . . . we could not live without celebrating the Lord’s Day.”⁵ The challenge for our day is to again grasp and celebrate the great gift of grace that can center individual and congregational life around the Easter gospel in each Sunday’s gathering for communal worship.

A three-year daily lectionary, new to *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (AE pp. 1121–1153), also supports the centrality of Sunday for all the days of the week. Daily texts for Monday through Wednesday draw out implications of the *previous* Sunday’s texts and themes, while daily texts for Thursday through Saturday point us toward *next* Sunday’s assembly

and its appointed biblical texts and themes. In order to make these texts available to worshipers, it is helpful if the citations are printed in the Sunday worship folder and included in the congregation's newsletter or Web site.

The Year Centered on Easter

As the days of the week orbit around Sunday for Christians, so the days of the year orbit around Easter (or the Three Days, with its focus on Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection). This annual feast of feasts centers the whole year.⁶ As we can speak of every Sunday as a "little Easter," so we can speak of Easter as a "big Sunday." Easter and Sunday reinforce each other as Christians seek to keep all their days focused in the gospel of the God who is from everlasting to everlasting and who encounters us through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Time is encompassed in this crucified and risen Jesus Christ who gives meaning to all our days: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (Rev. 22:13).

Although we do not know exactly when an *annual* celebration of Easter began to occur throughout the early Christian communities, its *weekly* observance on the first day of the week, when Jesus was raised from the dead, certainly gave focus to the life and mission of the earliest Christian communities. Indeed, still today "Sunday is the principal festival day of Christians" (*The Use of the Means of Grace* 6A, printed as Appendix C in *The Sunday Assembly*). The development of the church year is layered on top of this fundamental, weekly celebration.

As a yearly pattern started to form, the annual Easter festival was a logical beginning, a reflection of the center of the Christian faith that focused in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It also grew naturally out of the Christian church's origins within Judaism. A center of Jewish temporal life is the celebration of the Passover and God's deliverance of Israel from death into new life.

The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance. [Exod. 12:13-14]

Associated from the beginning with the Passover celebration and its annual observance, Easter proclaimed the paschal gospel of God's deliverance and salvation in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Very early it also became the preferred time for baptisms, as converts were baptized into Christ's death and raised in Christ to newness of life.

The Three Days (Triduum) and Holy Week clearly and emphatically draw out and focus the church's attention on the crucial core of the Christian gospel. In its focus on the Three Days and Holy Week, the church or liturgical year takes its cue from the four biblical gospels. If Jesus' life on this earth was thirty-three years, then he lived among us for a bit over 1,700 weeks. However, the four biblical gospels devote 25 to 40 percent of their accounts to this one week, the last week of his life, which focused on final teaching, the institution of holy communion, his death on the cross, and the resurrection. This Holy Week shines its saving message on all the other fifty-one weeks of the year. The message is that there is good news from all the graveyards of life. It reminds all worship planners of the central core of the church's faith, which illumines and holds in orbit the worship of the whole year. Later, Lent and the Easter season filled out what we now call the Easter cycle.

The origins of the Lenten season of fasting, its duration, and scheduling are a subject of much scholarly debate. What can safely be said is that at least in some areas, such a period of fasting developed within the first few centuries after Christ. It was variously promoted as a time of mourning, of cleansing, and of preparation for the Three Days to come. At first, the length of this fast varied; it was only in the Middle Ages that the idea of a forty-day fast became common. The choice of that length probably had various reasons, including Jesus' post-baptismal time in the wilderness, which in turn echoed the Israelites' forty-year wandering in the desert. Another source of some consternation has been how to make that forty-day number match the calendar. Some do that by counting all the days except Sundays from Ash Wednesday through Saturday of Holy Week. Others count the Sundays but drop the Three Days as well as the days before the first Sunday in Lent. Such numerical gymnastics are, finally, unimportant. The forty-day count is less important than the concept of setting aside the time.

But set aside for *what*? The oldest traditions seem to reflect a practice of preparation for adult baptisms during this time before Easter.

An intensive instruction into the basics of the Christian faith, and examination of the candidates to make sure they were truly ready to become part of the Christian community, would culminate in their baptisms at the Vigil of Easter. Later, in medieval times, the number of adult baptisms had waned, so the nature of the Lenten season became more penitential, more focused on Christ's suffering and death and on human sinfulness as the cause of that. In recent times, the church has tried to achieve a balance—not losing the richness of hymns and other resources that built up around the passion-centered Lent, but lifting up again the baptismal emphasis that resonates with Luther's concept of ongoing baptismal renewal, of daily dying and rising with Christ.

As we have seen, Easter—the Resurrection of Our Lord—is the principal feast in the Christian year. The day, Easter Sunday, is also a *hinge*, as the church celebrates the culmination of the Three Days while also beginning the great fifty days. For centuries, the church has acknowledged that Christ's resurrection from the dead is too important an event to be limited to a single-day observance. Rather, Easter is celebrated over fifty days, from Easter Sunday through the Day of Pentecost. Sometimes this is referred to as a week of weeks—seven times seven—with the Day of Pentecost seen as not standing on its own but as the “capper” to this grand festival. For it is on that day that we recall the resurrection promise fulfilled as the Holy Spirit comes to enable the church to be the risen body of Christ here on earth.

The next annual festival relating to Christ that developed after Easter was probably Epiphany. This was the opportunity for the church to reflect on the meaning of the incarnation, God's Word made flesh in Jesus, becoming the “light for revelation to the Gentiles” (Luke 2:32). Later, the Western church added the December 25 celebration of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, though the Epiphany on January 6 remained the Eastern church's primary celebration. Between the doublet of Christmas and Epiphany we have the twelve days of Christmas. Because of school vacations and the ending of the frantic preparations for this festival both in secular society and the church, perhaps more attention can be given during these days to the significant meaning of God's offer of light and life to the world in Jesus Christ. For Christians Christmas is not over after December 25.

The lesser festivals that fall during the twelve days of Christmas bring a realistic perspective to what often can be a sentimental mask covering

the clash caused by God's challenge to the principalities and powers of the world. On December 26, we remember the first Christian martyr, Stephen. He reminds us that Christians have been willing to make their witness to Christ even under threat of death. They understood that Christ could not be isolated as a helpless, harmless baby.

The festival of St. John, apostle and evangelist, on the next day exemplifies the great cloud of witnesses who took the good news of the child grown to be Savior and spread it abroad through word and deed.

The third lesser festival, on December 28, commemorates the Holy Innocents, martyrs. The gospel text for this commemoration recounts how the person in power, King Herod, sought to exterminate any threat to his position and power by executing all the children around Bethlehem two years old and under. Perhaps this reminds the church and individuals to stand up against child abuse in our society, to help feed the children who are threatened with death by lack of food and all the forces that militate against the possibilities inherent in each human life.

Finally, the festival of the Name of Jesus, falling on New Year's Day, demonstrates among other things how *kairos* intersects with and plays off of *chronos*.

These four commemorations are outlined here as an example of the way, here within the twelve days of Christmas but also in other times, that the major days and seasons of the year can be supplemented and enhanced through creative use of the lesser festivals and commemorations. In that calendar we have endless material for contemplating the Christian life. These commemorations will be taken up in more detail in chapter 4.

By the fourth century, the season of Advent had been added before the celebrations of Christ's nativity: a preparatory and anticipatory period that considers God's faithful promises in times past, God's fulfillment in the fullness of time, and the hope of God's presence that opens up a new future offered to the whole world. Advent came to mark the beginning of the church year. Together with the time after Epiphany that ends with the feast of the Transfiguration, we have what is often called the Christmas cycle.

These two cycles centered on the nativity and the resurrection cover approximately half the church or liturgical year. In the other half of the year, the time after Pentecost (as well as the time after

Epiphany), Sunday reasserts its primacy without any overlay of particular seasons or feasts. During these times, readings draw out the significance of God's mission in Jesus Christ for the world and Jesus' prayer for and charge to the church: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (John 20:21).

Chapter three in this volume spells out in more detail the centrality of Sunday and dimensions of the festivals of the church year for worship planners and leaders. As we consider the whole sweep of the liturgical year, it is wise to remember that "the Lord's day is the original feast day . . . the foundation and nucleus of the whole liturgical year."⁷

The Gift of Keeping Time Today

For two thousand years Sunday has been a day to celebrate the crucified Christ's resurrection and receive God's promised grace around word and sacrament. The weekly celebration of holy communion keeps the church walking in newness of life as we eat this bread and drink the cup and "proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Cor. 11:26).

However, until the imperial decree by Emperor Constantine in 321, the first day of the week (our Sunday) was not a day off from work, so Christians either worshiped at sundown on our Saturday, which was the start of the first day of the week, or early on Sunday morning before work started. In most areas today, the work day is no longer an impediment to gathering for worship on Sunday; political and public support for Sunday as a day for worship has been in place for nearly seventeen centuries. Today, though, other forces come into play. As the church has become less dominant in society, Sunday has been claimed as a day for shopping, for leisure, for sleeping in, for youth and spectator sports, and many other things. We know that most congregations only have one-fourth to one-third of their members in worship on the average Sunday. These challenges suggest a reconsideration of the meaning of Sunday as the Christian sabbath. This is a place where congregations and individual Christians may need to be countercultural in purposely receiving the gift of Sunday and discovering how all the days of the week can be blessed by observing and keeping Sunday time.

One excellent and realistic attempt to do so in our contemporary context is Dorothy Bass's book *Receiving the Day*, a worthy resource for people seeking to observe God's gift of time amid the busyness of life and its hectic schedules. Bass notes:

Sources of Prayers of the Day in Evangelical Lutheran Worship

This listing is intended to provide an overview of the sources of prayers of the day in Evangelical Lutheran Worship. Many of the prayers can be traced back to multiple sources, some of which have only tangential influence on the present wording. This listing provides sources that are recognizably antecedent to the prayers in their current form. The symbols following a citation give some idea of the level of alteration that has occurred along the line from the original to its form in Evangelical Lutheran Worship. One asterisk indicates minor alteration (as, for instance, the addition or deletion of a single phrase), while two asterisks indicates a more extensive reworking of the prayer. Absence of a symbol indicates that the prayer is substantially unchanged from the original.

Day	ELW #	Source
Advent 1 A	1	Gregorian Sacramentary #778*
Advent 1 B	2	Gregorian Sacramentary #778*
Advent 1 C	3	Gregorian Sacramentary #778*
Advent 2 A	4	Gelasian Sacramentary #1125**
Advent 2 B	5	Gelasian Sacramentary #1125**
Advent 2 C	6	Gelasian Sacramentary #1125**
Advent 3 A	7	Gregorian Sacramentary #894**
Advent 3 B	8	Gregorian Sacramentary #894**
Advent 3 C	9	Gregorian Sacramentary #894**
Advent 4 A	10	Gelasian Sacramentary #1121*
Advent 4 B	11	Gelasian Sacramentary #1121*
Advent 4 C	12	Gelasian Sacramentary #1121*
Nativity of Our Lord I	13	Gelasian Sacramentary #5*
Nativity of Our Lord II	14	Liturgy of the Hours*
Nativity of Our Lord III	15	Collects of Thomas Cranmer, p. 10*
1st Sunday of Christmas A	16	Gregorian Sacramentary #147*
1st Sunday of Christmas B	17	Leonine Sacramentary #1239*

Index of Psalms and Psalm Refrains

Psalm	Day	Refrain
1	Oct. 23–29, Lect. 30 A	Their delight is in the law of the LORD. (v. 2)
1	Easter 7 B	The LORD knows the way of the righteous. (v. 6)
1	Sept. 18–24*, Lect. 25 B	They are like trees planted by streams of water. (v. 3)
1	Epiphany 6, Lect. 6 C	They are like trees planted by streams of water. (v. 3)
1	Sept. 4–10, Lect. 23 C	They are like trees planted by streams of water. (v. 3)
2	Transfiguration of Our Lord A	You are my son; this day have I begotten you. (v. 7)
4	Easter 3 B	The LORD does wonders for the faithful. (v. 3)
5	Martyrs	All who take refuge in you will be glad. (v. 11)
5:1–8	June 12–18*, Lect. 11 C	Lead me, LORD, in your righteousness; make your way straight before me. (v. 8)
6	Day of Penitence	Heal me, LORD, for my bones quake in terror. (v. 2)
7:1–10	James, Apostle	God is my shield and defense. (v. 10)
8	Name of Jesus	How majestic is your name in all the earth! (v. 1)
8	New Year's Eve	How majestic is your name in all the earth! (v. 1)

**denotes psalms related to the semicontinuous series of first readings in the time after Pentecost*