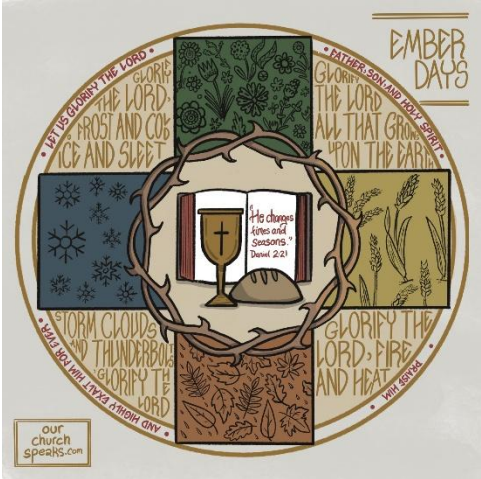


The Season of Pentecost is a time of learning, discerning what the Spirit is teaching us. The Gospel offers us the space to consider how we live our lives as followers of Jesus.

I am reminded of the passage from Hebrews 13:2: "Some have entertained angels without realizing it." Hospitality goes beyond providing socially accepted norms of behavior; it is also a mindfulness and respect for the person or space we encounter. Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday of this week observe the Ember Days, a time when we enter the new season of the year. As we transition from spring into summer, we ask God's blessing on the season of longer sunsets and hot temperatures. The seasons are our teachers. They have much to offer us, especially as we interact with each other. Perhaps we may encounter an angel.

**Ember Days**



Near the beginnings of winter, spring, summer, and autumn, the church pauses for fasting and prayer, asking God for provision and guidance in the coming season. This is a time for reflection and planning, personal prayer retreats, writing goals for the coming quarter, and reflecting on entries in the past quarter's prayer journal. In particular, the church prays for those seeking ordination and asks God to supply able and faithful ministers who will guide Christ's flock with the love and truth of Christ. Traditionally, at this time, those in the ordination process send a letter to their bishop, sharing updates and prayer requests. These four times of

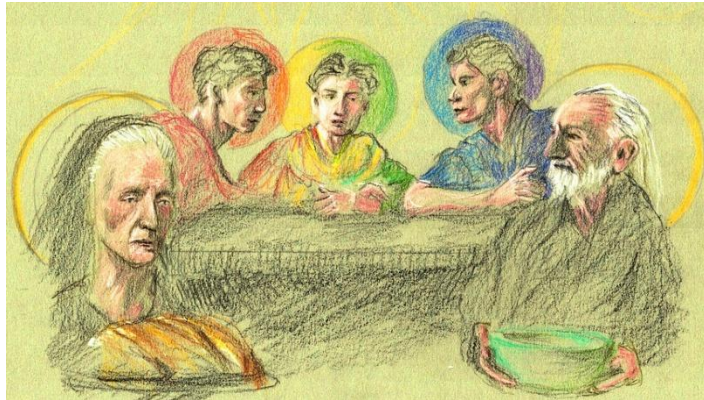
fasting, prayer, and reflection are called "Ember Days," and they are of such ancient origin that the definitive reason for this name has been lost. The Ember Days take place quarterly on the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday following St. Lucy's Day (13 December, Winter Ember Days), the first Sunday of Lent (Spring Ember Days), Pentecost (Summer Ember Days), and Holy Cross Day (14 September, Autumn Ember Days). These roughly match the solstices and equinoxes of the four seasons and serve as a regular reminder that our lives, our hopes, and our futures are always in the hands of our loving God in Heaven.

"Glorify God, frost and cold, ice and sleet. Glorify God, all that grows upon the earth. Glorify God, fire and heat, storm clouds and thunderbolts; glorify God. Let us glorify God, Creator, Redeemer, and Holy Spirit. Praise God and highly exalt God forever." - Benedicite, A Song of Creation

## Trinity Sunday (Pride Month)

### The Hospitality of Sarah and Abraham

The artist chose to portray the three angels, whom Abraham treated as an epiphany of the Lord, as three beautiful young men, with rainbow halos and garments.



Genesis records that God uses the rainbow as the sign of the covenant with humanity, so it is a marker of God's presence. (The Pride aspect lies in the fact that, in addition, two of the young men will go off to visit Sodom, while one remains with Abraham and Sarah. The two visitors

will be threatened with assault and gang rape by the people of the town. Modern readers have seen this as an early example of homophobic assault; that is, the villagers perceive the beautiful young men as gay and so want to teach them a murderous lesson. Given what is happening here in this country and other parts of the world these days, it is a good reminder that, as we do to the least of those among us, we do to God.