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Introduction

The Calendar and Lectionary introduced by the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship (ILCW) in Advent 1973 has become one of the most popular liturgical tools for contemporary worship and preaching. It is the answer to many requests in Lutheran churches for a revision of the church year and a new lectionary.

The church year calendar has been modified and modernized. The lectionary has been extensively overhauled by drawing on parallel efforts by the Protestant Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic churches.

The New Church Year Calendar

This new calendar is similar to all previous calendars in that Easter is still the heart of it, and the Gospel still tells the story of Jesus Christ throughout the year.

The revisions in the new calendar are these:

- The *gesima* Sundays, sometimes known as pre-Lent, are now listed as Sundays after Epiphany. The season of Epiphany is therefore lengthened, which makes possible a fuller development of Epiphany themes.
- The Sundays between Easter and Pentecost will be known as the Sundays of *Easter*, rather than *after Easter*.
- The Latin titles for the Sundays of Lent and Easter have been deleted.
- Passion Sunday has been moved from the Fifth Sunday in Lent to the Sixth Sunday (Palm Sunday).
- The Sundays in the Pentecost-Trinity season have been numbered *after Pentecost* instead of *after Trinity*.
- In color terminology, *purple* replaces *violet*, and *red* is suggested for use during Holy Week.

The New Lectionary

The new lectionary presents a three-year cycle of lessons for the church year. The texts designated for the specific year will be chosen alternatively from Series A, Series B, or Series C of this lectionary.

This lectionary follows the traditional pattern of appointing an Old Testament lesson, an Epistle, and a Gospel for each Sunday. During the Easter season, however, a reading from the Acts of the Apostles replaces the Old Testament lesson.

The Epistles of Series A

The first three volumes of *Augsburg Sermons* based on the Gospels are now available. Series A is based on Matthew; Series B on Mark; and Series C on Luke. *Augsburg Sermons*, Epistles, Series C is also available.

Beginning in Advent of 1977, Series A will again provide the texts for worship and preaching. This time, however, the Epistles will be highlighted, and therefore the present volume is offered as a year-long resource for preaching and meditation on the Epistle texts for the next church year.

This book, like its predecessors is offered in the hope that the sermons, the calendar, and the lectionary will contribute to the renewal of preaching.

