**Danish Church Records Series:**

**Feast Days**

by Naomi D. Newbold, B.A., AG®

newboldnd@familysearch.org

**WHAT IS A FEAST DAY?**
The official definition of a feast day is “a day, especially a church holiday, for feasting and rejoicing.”

In Danish church records, many priests would record events according to feast days. For example, instead of recording a marriage as ‘6 April 1800’ in the church records, the priest would have written ‘Palmesøndag 1800 (Palm Sunday 1800).’ Feast days can be found in Danish church records clear up to the 20th century, but they are most commonly seen in records before 1814. In order to do proper Danish research, it is important to know how to “translate” feast days into recognizable dates.

**MOVEABLE VS. FIXED**
There are two different types of feast days – moveable and fixed. Fixed feast days always fall on the same day every year. Christmas is a great example of a fixed feast day. It is always held on the 25th of December. Moveable feast days are not held on the same day as the year before – the date “moves.” An example of a moveable feast day is Easter. Easter is always “observed on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox.”

The following is a list of feast days you will need to become most familiar with:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moveable Feast Day</th>
<th>Danish Name</th>
<th>Latin Name</th>
<th>Time of Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shrovetide</td>
<td>Fastelavn</td>
<td>Quinquagesima/Esto mihi</td>
<td>February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palm Sunday</td>
<td>Palmesøndag</td>
<td>Palmarum</td>
<td>March-April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easter</td>
<td>Påske</td>
<td>Pascha</td>
<td>March-April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinity</td>
<td>Treenighed</td>
<td>Trinitatis</td>
<td>May-June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advent</td>
<td>Advent</td>
<td>Adventus</td>
<td>November-December</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fixed Feast Day</th>
<th>Danish Name</th>
<th>Latin Name</th>
<th>Time of Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Year’s Day</td>
<td>Nytårsdag</td>
<td>Circumcisio domini</td>
<td>1 January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epiphany</td>
<td>Helligtrekongersdag</td>
<td>Epiphania</td>
<td>6 January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Saints Day</td>
<td>Alle Helgensdag</td>
<td>Omnium Santorum</td>
<td>1 November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Morten’s Day</td>
<td>Sankt Morten</td>
<td>Morten Bisp</td>
<td>11 November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas Day</td>
<td>Jul or Juledag</td>
<td>Nativitas/Natio Christi</td>
<td>15 December</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

KEY WORDS
Along with the name of the feast day, there are some key words used. Become familiar with the words in the table to the right in order to better understand the context of the feast day:

FEAST DAY CALENDAR
In order to ‘translate’ or ‘calculate’ a feast day you need to use a feast day calendar. For Danish research, the best feast day calendar to use is found on the FamilySearch Wiki. To use this calendar, follow these steps:


2. Scroll down the page to the “Research Tools” section. Under this section you will see many links. You will want the links that say “Feast Day Calendar (Moveable)” and “Feast Days (Fixed and Moveable).” Although you can use either link, click on the ‘fixed and moveable’ link.

3. On the ‘Fixed and Moveable’ page there are three sections.
   1) The first is an introduction and a link to the moveable feast days.
   2) Second is are links to the feast days in alphabetical order.
   3) The third section is a link to the feast days by month.

You can use any of these three links to find the feast day you need.

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Word</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dominica (Dom.)</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Søndag</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferie</td>
<td>Holiday (Holy day/Feast day)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post (p.)</td>
<td>After</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efter</td>
<td>After</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Før</td>
<td>Before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samme Dag (S. D.)</td>
<td>The same day [as above]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ditto</td>
<td>Same as above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>In</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Den (D.)</td>
<td>The</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dia</td>
<td>Day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Fixed and Moveable Feast Days for:
Denmark

---

Research Tools
- County List
- Copenhagen
- Dictionary
- District List
- English guide to accessing the digitized Danish records
- Feast Day Calendar (Moveable)
- Feast Days (Fixed and Moveable)
- Gazetteers (Finding Place Names)
- Nordic Given Names List
- Handwriting Examples
- Handwriting Guide
- Maps (counties/regions) > herreds > local communities
- Military Levy Numbers (Legdnummer)
- Military Levy Roll Abbreviations (Army)
- Parish List
- Parish Register Headings
- Denmark General
- Southern Denmark (Danish language)
- Southern Denmark (German language)
- Record Selection Table
- Strategies for Danish Research
- Timeline of Events in your Ancestors Life
- Typing Å, Ø, and Å
- Websites
- Word Lists: Danish, German, and Latin
- Vejledning til FamilySearch
4. Click on the ‘Moveable Feast Day Calendar’ link in the first section. This link will bring you to a page of years from 1501 to 1900. Click on the year you need.

5. You should arrive at a page full of feast days and their calculation. Find your feast day on the list and look for the calculated date in the middle column.

6. If your feast day is a fixed date, or you are unsure if it is fixed or not, use the second and third sections in step 3 to determine the date. Click on either the alphabetical letter or the month. This will give you a list that you can scroll through to find your calculated date.
Practice:

1. Kristi Himmelfartsdag 1787: ____________________________

2. Anden Juledag 1512: ________________________________

3. 6 p. Trinitatis 1690: ________________________________

4. Sankt Hans Dag 1815: ________________________________

© 2015 by intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this document may be reprinted or reproduced in any form for any purpose without prior written permission.