

40 Days of Prayer & Fasting for Lent

A Churchwide Journey of Renewal, Repentance, and Returning to Jesus

Wouldn't it be nice to just fast-forward through life right now? Imagine if we could skip all the waiting, wanting, uncertainty, and the constant noise of our world. While we can't fast-forward life, we *can* prepare our hearts for what God wants to do next. Things may never look exactly like they did yesterday, but God is always leading His people forward—and the way the church (that's you!) moves forward is on our knees in prayer and fasting.

Maybe you've never fasted before. Maybe you're unsure how to start. Maybe you're not even interested. I want to invite you to read this guide and take a step of faith. Join us as a church family as we seek God together for 40 days. I can't promise you'll lose weight or grow hair (that's not what fasting is about), but I *can* promise that you will encounter God's presence in a deeper, more personal way.

We look forward to walking through Lent with you.

WHY WE OBSERVE LENT

Lent is a 40-day season (not counting Sundays) leading up to Easter. Historically, Christians across traditions—long before denominational lines existed—set aside this time for repentance, reflection, fasting, and returning to Jesus.

Lent is not just a Catholic tradition. It is a Christian tradition rooted in:

- Jesus' 40 days of fasting in the wilderness
- Israel's 40 years of formation in the desert
- The early church's preparation of believers for Easter baptism
- The universal call to repentance and renewal found throughout Scripture

Lent is a season where we intentionally slow down, strip away distractions, and make room for God. It's not about earning God's favor—it's about responding to His grace. Lent helps us remember that resurrection always follows surrender, and new life always comes after laying something down.

WHAT IS FASTING?

Fasting is voluntarily denying yourself food or other comforts for a set period of time in order to pursue God more fully. Throughout Scripture, God's people fasted:

- To seek God's guidance
- To battle temptation
- To humble themselves
- To intercede for others
- To prepare for a new season
- To draw near to God

Jesus assumes His followers will fast. In Matthew 6:16 He says, "*When you fast...*"—not *if*. Fasting is not required, but it is expected. We don't *have* to fast. We *get* to fast.

Fasting is not about earning anything from God. It is about creating space for Him to work.

WHY WE FAST

Our lives are overloaded with things we rely on for comfort, distraction, or escape—food, entertainment, social media, schedules, habits, and noise. **Fasting intentionally removes something we depend on so we can depend more fully on God.**

Fasting helps us:

- Break unhealthy patterns
- Hear God more clearly
- Grow in spiritual hunger
- Strengthen our prayer life
- Intercede for others
- Become more aware of God's presence

When we fast, we are saying to God:

"I trust You more than I trust my comforts."

HOW WE WILL FAST FOR 40 DAYS

Below are the **fasting options** we are encouraging for our church family. Choose one or more based on your season, health, and spiritual readiness.

1. 40-Day Social Media Fast (Strongly Encouraged for Everyone)

We are inviting the entire church to step away from social media for 40 days.

Our church accounts will also be offline during this season.

This is one of the most powerful ways to quiet the noise and hear God's voice.

2. Food Fast Options

Choose a food fast that is wise, sustainable, and prayerful.

- Sun-Up to Sun-Down Fast
Eat before sunrise and after sunset. Use the daytime hours for prayer and Scripture.
 - Partial Fast (Daniel-style or selective)
Cut out a particular food or category (sugar, bread, meat, caffeine, etc.).
 - Absolute Fast
No food for a period of time.
Not recommended for beginners.
Consult your doctor before attempting.
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3. "40 Focus" Lifestyle Fast

This is a holistic fast—body, mind, and spirit.

The 40 Focus books are available at the Info Desk.

40 Focus consists of:

- 40 days with no sugar or alcohol
 - 5 days a week of exercise
 - Daily devotional reading
 - Daily journaling
 - Daily water intake goals
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PREPARING FOR THE FAST

- Pray and ask God what He wants you to set aside.
 - Ask the Holy Spirit to give you a clean heart and a steadfast spirit (Psalm 51:10).
 - Make a plan for daily prayer.
 - Set aside intentional times to be with God.
 - Prepare your heart for both the challenge and the blessing.
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HOW TO ENGAGE EACH DAY OF THE FAST

- Be patient. Wait on God. Don't rush.
- Meditate on Scripture.
- Journal what God is revealing.

- Pay attention to your emotions and temptations.
 - If fasting for someone else, pray for them during the times you would normally eat or scroll.
 - Notice what God is surfacing in your heart.
 - Keep notes on what you're learning about yourself and about Him.
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For 40 days, we are choosing less of the world so we can experience more of God.

Let's walk this holy season together—expectant, surrendered, and hungry for Him.

IF YOU ARE FASTING FROM FOOD

- Consult your doctor if you have health concerns.
 - Start small if this is your first time.
 - Expect to feel weaker, irritable, or distracted—this is normal.
 - Avoid strenuous exercise during a food fast.
 - Stay hydrated.
 - Use hunger as a cue to pray:
“Lord, fill me with Your presence.”
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THE HEART OF LENT

Lent is not about deprivation. It is about devotion.

It is not about punishment. It is about preparation.

It is not about proving ourselves. It is about returning to Jesus.