

40 DAYS OF PRAYER & FASTING

2023 Resource Booklet



VINEYARD CHURCH
DELAWARE COUNTY

Dear Church,

In Philippians 2:12-13 it says:

“Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.”

This verse is a reminder to me that in my relationship with God I have a very significant role to play. It also reminds me that there will be resistance in leaning into that significant role, but that my little efforts will be fueled by his presence within. Dallas Willard once said, “Grace is opposed to earning, it is not opposed to effort.”

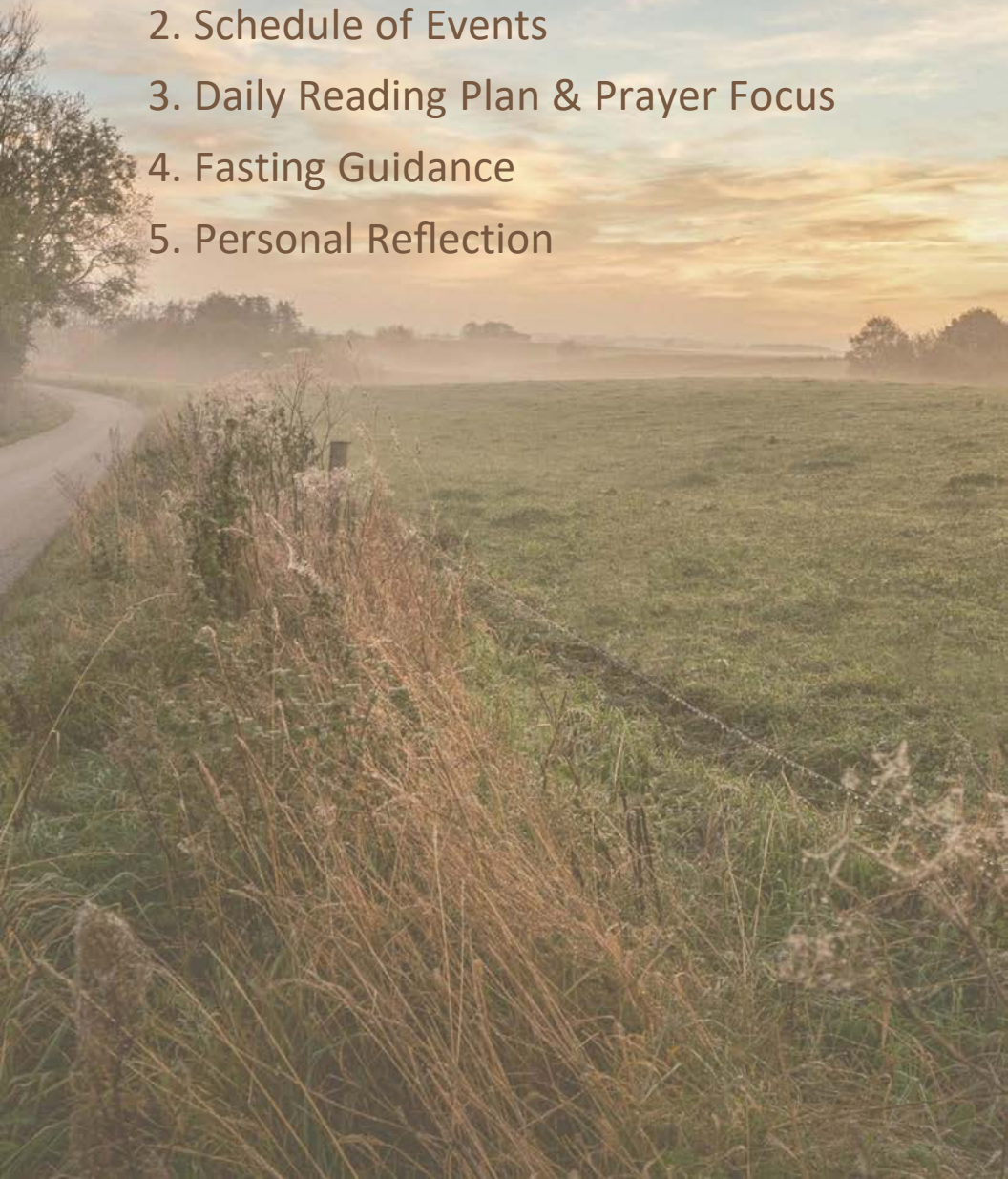
As we move into the *40 Days of Prayer & Fasting*, I want to encourage you to make an effort to lean into God, whether it is through adding times of prayer, choosing to fast from something, or committing to gather with the church at the different events. I pray that we as a church family will experience the life-changing presence of God in many powerful ways as we look forward to celebrating his resurrection at Easter!

Bless you,

Michael

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SECTION ONE

Introduction

40 DAYS
OF PRAYER
& FASTING

Take a deep breath.

Breathing is one of our body's natural rhythms.

Breathe in and breathe out.

As we enter into this season of *40 Days of Prayer & Fasting*, our hope is that we can start introducing helpful rhythms into our lives.

Deep breaths for our souls.


Rhythms of prayer and fasting allow us to more deeply connect to our Heavenly Father. We see them in the life of Jesus and throughout scripture. They aren't a duty, and they aren't an obligation. They are rhythms that can align our hearts with the heart of Jesus, deepening our relationship with him.

All relationships have rhythms: date nights, small group gatherings, regular coffee meet-ups, or walks with a friend. The reason we have these rhythms is to help us connect with one another. They lead to intimacy. The same is true with spiritual rhythms. We don't fast so God will love us more. We fast or pray because these disciplines allow us to better focus on Him.

Think about how this could impact your life. Think about what could happen in our church community if we collectively decided to start introducing these rhythms.

For centuries, people all around the world have taken this time to devote themselves to prayer and fasting, and we get a chance to join in with them. Over these *40 Days*, we will be providing Bible studies, prayer guides, and weekly events that allow space and rhythms for our souls.

Breathing in and breathing out.



SECTION TWO

Schedule of Events

40 DAYS
OF PRAYER
& FASTING

Ash Wednesday**Wednesday, February 22nd at 7pm***

An evening where we set aside time in preparation for our *40 Days of Prayer & Fasting*. The service will include a time of worship, teaching, and an option to receive ashes.

Sacred Seeing**Friday, March 3rd at 7pm***

A contemplative service where we will pair visual art with scripture to connect with and respond to God.

Night of Worship**Friday, March 17th at 7pm**

An evening of worship with no teaching, but a time to seek and worship God in an intimate setting.

Following Jesus to the Cross – Friday, March 31st from 9:30am-8:30pm*

An interactive experience that will allow you to explore the written and artistic expressions of the Stations of the Cross. We will focus on the events of Passion Week and how Jesus is revealing his love for each one of us today.

Good Friday**Friday, April 7th at 7pm***

A special service to worship and reflect upon the cross of Christ and the great sacrifice he made for each and every one of us.

**Limited childcare available for 1st Grade and younger with advanced registration. Childcare registration for each event will be available on our Church Center app, online at vcdc.org, or by calling the church.*

The background image is a serene landscape at dawn or dusk. A dirt road curves from the left side into the distance, partially obscured by tall, dry grass in the foreground. A misty or foggy atmosphere hangs over a green field, with silhouettes of trees visible on the horizon under a sky with soft, golden light and scattered clouds.

SECTION THREE

Daily Reading Plan & Prayer Focus

40 DAYS
OF PRAYER
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40 Days of Prayer & Fasting is a time for reflection, repentance, and renewal – when Christians are invited to prepare themselves spiritually for the celebration of the Lord’s resurrection. Join us in reading a passage and reflecting on the renewing power of God’s Word each day.

In addition, we believe that every time we pray, we actually connect with Jesus – a time where we may hear his voice, feel his presence, or become connected to his heart. Not only that, but we believe our prayers actually have power, that what we do in the spiritual realm affects what happens in the physical realm. The Bible tells us to pray for many things like signs and wonders (Acts 4:29-30), unbelievers (Romans 10:1), our political leaders (1 Timothy 2:2), our enemies (Matthew 5:43-44), foreigners (2 Chronicles 6:32-33), etc.

Over the *40 Days*, please take time each day to pray for the different needs within our church, our community, and the world. The scripture passage and prayer are not intended to correlate, but are listed together for your convenience. If just one of our prayers has power, imagine the power of prayer from our whole church community!

WEEK #1

Lord God, by your Word fill me with a spirit of repentance and forgiveness.

- **Monday, 2/27** **Psalm 51**
Engage in a prayer of thanksgiving.
- **Tuesday, 2/28** **Matthew 6:5-15**
Pray for a deeper and more intimate relationship with God.
- **Wednesday, 3/1** **Matthew 18:21-35**
Intercede for those suffering from physical illnesses.

WEEK #1 *(continued)*

Lord God, by your Word fill me with a spirit of repentance and forgiveness.

- **Thursday, 3/2** **Luke 15:11-32**
Pray for friends and family who don't know Jesus.
- **Friday, 3/3** **Ephesians 4:25-5:2**
Pray God's power on outreach and spreading the Good News.
- **Saturday, 3/4** **1 John 1:5-10**
Lift up churches that are facing persecution around the world.
- **Sunday, 3/5** **Psalms 130**
Pray for our local schools.

WEEK #2

Lord God, by your Word fill me with a spirit of hope and trust.

- **Monday, 3/6** **Genesis 12:1-9**
Ask Jesus to come alongside those who are grieving.
- **Tuesday, 3/7** **Genesis 22:1-19**
Pray for our missionaries in Brazil and Angola.
- **Wednesday, 3/8** **Isaiah 51:1-16**
Pray mercy for the poor, the needy, and the oppressed.
- **Thursday, 3/9** **Luke 12:22-34**
Intercede for our country and its leaders.
- **Friday, 3/10** **Romans 4:13-25**
Lift up other churches in our area.

WEEK #2 *(continued)*

Lord God, by your Word fill me with a spirit of hope and trust.

- **Saturday, 3/11** **Hebrews 6:13-20**

Pray for the unborn and mothers-to-be.

- **Sunday, 3/12** **Psalm 62**

Ask Jesus that those in the church grow to be more like him.

WEEK #3

Lord God, by your Word fill me with a spirit of gratitude and thanksgiving.

- **Monday, 3/13** **Luke 17:11-19**

Pray blessing on creativity and artistic expressions in our church.

- **Tuesday, 3/14** **2 Corinthians 9:1-15**

Intercede for the children and youth in our church community.

- **Wednesday, 3/15** **Ephesians 5:6-20**

Pray for marriages within and outside our church.

- **Thursday, 3/16** **Philippians 4:1-9**

Ask God to bless our church plants: Delaware City Vineyard, Vineyard Church of Morrow County, Cleveland City Vineyard, and Lewis Center Vineyard Church.

- **Friday, 3/17** **Colossians 3:1-17**

Ask Jesus to bring mental health and wholeness to our church.

- **Saturday, 3/18** **1 Chronicles 16:7-36**

Pray for greater unity within the church.

- **Sunday, 3/19** **Psalm 103**

Pray a blessing over our young adults.

WEEK #4

Lord God, by your Word fill me with a spirit of love and servanthood.

- **Monday, 3/20** **Matthew 23:1-12**
Pray breakthrough with racial reconciliation and unity.
- **Tuesday, 3/21** **Mark 10:35-45**
Pray a blessing over those we may consider as enemies.
- **Wednesday, 3/22** **John 15:1-17**
Intercede for those in prison and their families.
- **Thursday, 3/23** **Romans 12:9-21**
Pray a blessing on our local businesses.
- **Friday, 3/24** **Romans 13:8-14**
Lift up the leadership and congregations of Vineyard churches globally.
- **Saturday, 3/25** **1 Corinthians 13:1-13**
Pray mercy and provision over immigrants and refugees within the U.S. and those displaced from their homes around the world.
- **Sunday, 3/26** **1 John 4:7-21**
Pray blessing on the community of singles at VCDC.

WEEK #5

Lord God, by your Word fill me with a spirit of discipleship and commitment.

- **Monday, 3/27** **Luke 5:1-11**
Pray freedom over those struggling with addiction.
- **Tuesday, 3/28** **Luke 9:22-27**
Lift up widows and widowers in our church family, that they would sense the nearness of God.

WEEK #5 *(continued)*

Lord God, by your Word fill me with a spirit of discipleship and commitment.

- **Wednesday, 3/29** **Matthew 10:16-33**
Pray strength and hope for parents of special needs children who are dealing with trauma, mental health, and disabilities.
- **Thursday, 3/30** **Matthew 10:34-42**
Pray wisdom and grace for VCDC parents.
- **Friday, 3/31** **John 15:18-27**
Pray mercy and breakthrough over victims of human trafficking.
- **Saturday, 4/1** **2 Timothy 2:1-13**
Ask Jesus for his comforting presence over the elderly.
- **Sunday, 4/2** **2 Timothy 3:10-17**
Pray grace for those who are caregivers of aging parents and/or loved ones with special needs.

WEEK #6

Lord God, by your Word fill me with a spirit of obedience and humility.

- **Monday, 4/3** **John 13:1-20**
Intercede for those who have walked away from God or wrestle with doubt.
- **Tuesday, 4/4** **Philippians 2:1-11**
Ask Jesus for wisdom in pursuing rhythms of rest in your life.
- **Wednesday, 4/5** **Isaiah 52:13-53:12**
Pray mercy over orphans and foster children.

WEEK #6 *(continued)*

Lord God, by your Word fill me with a spirit of obedience and humility.

□ **Thursday, 4/6**

Luke 22:39-71

Pray for the love of Christ to be poured out through our Food Pantry and Medical Clinic.

□ **Friday, 4/7**

Luke 23:1-56

Ask the Lord for more healings, signs, wonders, and a greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Happy Easter!

He is Risen!



SECTION FOUR

Fasting Guidance

40 DAYS
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Fasting may be a new concept or idea for you. It may also be a practice that comes with a lot of baggage. It is important to understand that biblical fasting isn't some kind of 'work' that is commanded by Christ or required by Scripture. That doesn't mean, however, that fasting isn't an extremely beneficial part of our spiritual growth. Fasting is referenced all throughout scripture; in fact, Jesus fasted. In the book of Acts, believers fasted before they made important decisions (Acts 13:1-3, 14:23). Too often, the focus of fasting is on the lack of food, but the real purpose of fasting is to take our eyes off the things of this world and instead focus on God. Throughout Scripture, fasting and prayer are often linked together (Luke 2:37, 5:33).

Fasting is a way to demonstrate to God and ourselves that we are serious about our relationship with Him. It's not meant to punish ourselves, but to help us focus more on God.

Although fasting in Scripture is almost always fasting from food, there are other ways to fast as well. You may want to give up coffee, Facebook, TV, videogames, or practice a partial fast like one meal a day. Anything you can temporarily give up in order to better focus on God can be considered a fast and can greatly benefit your life.

Whatever you choose to fast from, we hope that it immensely impacts your life and draws you closer to Jesus.



SECTION FIVE

Personal Reflection

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