

40 DAYS

OF

PRAYER & FASTING



2025 Guidebook

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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 through added times of prayer, choosing to fast a meal(s), abstaining from something significant, 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

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read "Michael", written in a cursive style.

I. INTRODUCTION

This guidebook commemorates Jesus' forty-day journey of prayer & fasting, found in Matthew 4 of the Bible, and moves us through the remembrance of Jesus' temptation, ministry, death, and resurrection.

40 Days of Prayer & Fasting, also known as Lent (celebrated throughout the world, since the early church), allows for a time of self-examination where we can notice our relationship with Jesus and the areas in which He's inviting us to walk with Him. This guidebook is founded on biblical practices and aims to help us establish personal rhythms with God. It will also allow for the opportunity to examine the ways we practice our faith in Christ, with others.

"I want to know Christ – yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead." - PHILIPPIANS 3:10-11

Jesus' death and resurrection were necessary, and by this, Jesus presents to us the gift of repentance: This is the good news! We can acknowledge our sin and see that Jesus is the one who took all of it and defeated death. We have the opportunity to acknowledge and turn from our sin, by facing and moving toward Jesus and the life He gives. No matter what we encounter, in all things, we keep in sight Jesus' resurrection and life. It is this hope and lens from which we gaze through all aspects of the path.

You are invited to follow and walk the human footsteps of Jesus. As you follow Him, 'may you be covered in His dust', even through all the messy aspects of life, being fed and transformed by our savior, King. On the following pages there will be some guidance on how to connect with Jesus and how to begin some rhythms to reorient our days. Over the next 40 Days there will be opportunities to pray, and at times, fast or abstain. Each person has their own starting point, and where you are with Jesus is between Jesus and you.

INVITATION:

If you don't yet know God and would like to follow Him, you can take your first steps today by simply calling out to Him.

In the Bible, Romans 10:9 reads, *"If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."* Later in that same chapter it says, for *"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

Our very lives depend on what Jesus accomplished by His death and resurrection. We hope that you'll respond today by praying this prayer and deciding to follow Jesus.

II. PRAYER & FASTING



Jesus prayed. He prayed in the morning, during the day, and at night. He prayed before important decisions, with others, and while alone. Jesus longed for these frequent moments of communing with His Father in heaven.

We too can commune with God and pray for others. We can pray by simply talking to God. God is available, and we also acknowledge that like in any great relationship, communication and intimacy are more than talking. Through listening to God's voice, we acknowledge God and His timing, as well as our own God-given limitations.

Father, Son, Holy Spirit are God. We read in the Bible that God exists, three persons in one: Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. It's good to acknowledge each person as distinct, as God, as well as together in one, as God. We can pray to the Father as found in Matthew 6. John 14 describes how we can ask in Jesus' name. Jesus also promises us the counselor known as the Holy Spirit. We can pray to God: Father, Jesus, and Holy Spirit.

Enter the path of prayer. What excites you in this moment about the idea of prayer? What do you notice as you pray? Perhaps you will notice God's presence in the most unexpected moment. Maybe you'll notice an invitation to turn from sin and toward God (repentance). We can ask friends to pray for us, and we can pray for others in person (Vineyard 5-Step Prayer Model). We can pray on behalf of others (intercession) or by reading Bible verses. No matter the heights or depths of life, there are many ways to pray and we can be sure that God hears our voice and speaks to us.

God is with us. Consider setting aside time for just you and the Lord. Perhaps turn off your digital devices in order to fully give, fully receive, and fully engage with others along the way.

Jesus fasted. He went without food for a period of time before His ministry, as we read in Matthew 4:1-11. For over a thousand years, fasting (going without food) has been a central practice for followers of Jesus.

We too can fast. There are various examples of fasting found in the Bible. You can always start small. How long do I fast? Some people start fasting one meal a week. Most examples of fasting are sun up to sun down (12 hours). Some examples are shorter or longer. This up to you and God. Remember, drinking water is very important.

God fills us. Prayer is a primary avenue to rely on and be filled by the bread of life, who is Jesus. Jesus said, *"It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"* – Matthew 4:4. God fills us in ways that physical food cannot satisfy.

We are spirit, soul, & body (1 Thessalonians 5:23). In fasting we acknowledge this, and give our whole selves to God. One beautiful story is found in Luke 2, about Anna and how "...She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying."

"In fasting, you are literally praying with your body, offering all that you are to God in worship. As you yield your body to God, you are breaking the power of the flesh to control you and opening up to the power of the Spirit in its place. You are learning to be joyful, even when you don't get what you want. You are practicing suffering and, through it, increasing your capacity for joy in all circumstances..."
– John Mark Comer

Please be aware, for some, fasting can be physically unwise. If you have health concerns you might not fast, but try abstaining from something significant (technology, social media, etc.). There is no biblical requirement from Jesus to fast. While there are real differences to fasting vs. abstaining from significant things, both have real value to our lives and are honoring to the Lord.

III. EVENTS



ASH WEDNESDAY

Wednesday, March 5th | 7-8pm

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.

WORSHIP & PRAYER

Friday, March 28th | 7-8:30pm

An extended evening of worship & prayer. We won't have a teaching, but we'll look to guided moments of communing with God, being led by the Holy Spirit.

FOLLOWING JESUS TO THE CROSS

Friday, April 11th | 5:30-8:30pm

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. (**Childcare available from 6:30-7:30pm*)

GOOD FRIDAY

Friday, April 18th | 7-8pm

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.

** Childcare is available for all of our 40 Days Events. See the limited hours for Following Jesus to the Cross (above). Please register by 5pm the day before each event. You can register on our church center app, online at vcdc.org, or by calling the church.*

IV. DAILY PATH



The **Daily Path** consists of daily prayer prompts and corresponding scripture to assist in meditation and prayer. This section begins and ends with timely devotions by VCDC members.

We will take new steps with Jesus through reflection, repentance, daily Bible reading, and prayer.

We believe that every time we pray we are connecting with God. We may hear His voice, feel His presence, or become connected to His heart. We also believe that our prayers have power - that what we do by the Spirit affects what happens in this world. Through God's word we've learned that He's asked us to pray for many things. So, we come with a heart of obedience, and pray for 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), etc.

Over the next 40 Days, consider spending a few minutes each day reading through the prayer prompts and praying for the different needs within our church, community, and world. If just one of our prayers has power, imagine the power of prayer from our collective church community!

The New Journey – With God, With Others

BY DARLENE KERR

While journeys may be shared and experiences corporately remembered, there are facets that remain personal – often adding dimension, flavor, even significance.

It was July 1966. My family piled into a blue station wagon with trailer in tow for a month-long trip from Ohio to California. Years later, all of us remember stopping at Hoover Dam, the Redwoods, Mount Rushmore, and Disneyland. Until I mention it, I alone recall newspapers taped over sun facing car windows as we traveled through the southwest. A small detail, yet one that is forever intertwined in my story of the big journey.

What will be your story? You are on the cusp of a new journey, a 40-day Lenten walk with Christ. Your VCDC sisters and brothers are your companions. Together you have participated in Ash Wednesday and are now anticipating Easter Sunday. You'll also experience personal moments to treasure.

Your journey is well planned. It offers gateways for reflection. Times of repentance. Moments of sharing in Jesus's suffering and ultimate victory. It's an opportunity to learn from His obedience to the Father in all things. The journey pauses for disciplines such as prayer and self-denial. The destination is knitting your heart to His in a fresh way.

Journeys transform. At the end of Job's journey with God, there's submission and repentance. As you conclude your Lenten journey with God, may you echo Job's final proclamation: *"I have heard about you before, but now I have seen you with my own eyes."*
– Job 42:5 (NLT).

Lord, open my eyes on this journey. I want to see you and not be satisfied with anything less. Transform me as only You are able to do. I acknowledge my propensity for wandering away from you. Guide my footsteps. I trust You to lead me into new intimacy with You.

WEEK 1

☐ Monday, 3/10 | **Psalm 42:1-2**

Pray for a deeper and more intimate journey with God over the next 40 days.

☐ Tuesday, 3/11 | **Psalm 95:1-5**

Pray with thanksgiving & song.

☐ Wednesday, 3/12 | **Matthew 4:4**

Pray for God's strength as you consider fasting or abstaining from something significant at some point during these 40 Days.

☐ Thursday, 3/13 | **Psalm 34:18**

Intercede for those who feel alone or heartbroken.

☐ Friday, 3/14 | **Matthew 9:37-38**

Pray for friends and family who don't know Jesus.

☐ Saturday, 3/15 | **Isaiah 27: 2-3**

Pray health and wholeness for VCDC & the Vineyard movement: to be watered, protected, and fruitful in the world for God's glory.

☐ Sunday, 3/16 | **Psalm 82:3-4**

Pray for the poor, the needy, and the oppressed.

WEEK 2

☐ Monday, 3/17 | **Mark 16:20**

*Pray God's power on our Beyond the Building ministries.
(vcdc.org/ministries/beyondthebuilding)*

☐ Tuesday, 3/18 | **Matthew 5:6**

Pray to hunger and thirst for right relationship with God, other people, and all creation.

WEEK 2 (continued)

☐ Wednesday, 3/19 | **Psalm 139:13**

Pray for the unborn and mothers-to-be.

☐ Thursday, 3/20 | **1 Thessalonians 5:12-13**

Lift up the leadership and congregations of Vineyard churches, both locally & globally.

☐ Friday, 3/21 | **Matthew 5:4**

Ask Jesus to come alongside those who are grieving.

☐ Saturday, 3/22 | **Proverbs 22:6**

Pray for our local schools, homeschooling parents & guardians.

☐ Sunday, 3/23 | **Matthew 5:10-12**

Lift up people & churches facing persecution around the world.

WEEK 3

☐ Monday, 3/24 | **Matthew 28:19-20**

Pray for our missionaries in Brazil and Angola.

☐ Tuesday, 3/25 | **John 20:22**

"Come, Holy Spirit."

☐ Wednesday, 3/26 | **1 Timothy 2:1-2**

Intercede for the United States, all nations, and all those in authority.

☐ Thursday, 3/27 | **Psalm 46:1**

Pray for those who need safety, shelter, or a home.

☐ Friday, 3/28 | **John 15:12**

Pray for love to abound in every relationship in VCDC.

WEEK 3 (continued)

□ Saturday, 3/29 | **Ephesians 3:21**

Intercede for every generation & age group in our church community.

□ Sunday, 3/30 | **Psalms 51:10**

Invite God to search your heart and speak to you. If prompted, take the opportunity to repent and turn to God.

WEEK 4

□ Monday, 3/31 | **Colossians 3:1-4**

Ask Jesus to help us to set our minds on Him.

□ Tuesday, 4/1 | **Isaiah 58:6**

Pray freedom over those struggling with any form of addiction and pray for the oppressed to be delivered.

□ Wednesday, 4/2 | **1 Corinthians 1:10**

Pray for unity within the church.

□ Thursday, 4/3 | **Romans 8:38-39**

Pray for those unable to leave their home, or those who are hospitalized.

□ Friday, 4/4 | **1 Corinthians 12:4-6**

Pray for all of the ministries and volunteers at VCDC.

□ Saturday, 4/5 | **Isaiah 40:30-31**

Pray a blessing over our children, youth, & young adults to experience and know Jesus.

□ Sunday, 4/6 | **Proverbs 4:23**

Pray blessing over the singles at VCDC.

WEEK 5

□ Monday, 4/7 | **Colossians 3:13-14**

Pray for the strengthening and healing of marriages within and outside our church.

□ Tuesday, 4/8 | **Psalms 138:7**

Intercede for those in prison and their families.

□ Wednesday, 4/9 | **Acts 2:42**

Intercede for our church plants: Delaware City Vineyard and Lewis Center Vineyard Church.

□ Thursday, 4/10 | **Matthew 5:44**

Pray a blessing over those we may consider enemies.

□ Friday, 4/11 | **Proverbs 16:3**

Pray a blessing on our local businesses & entrepreneurs.

□ Saturday, 4/12 | **Psalms 68:5-6**

Lift up widows and widowers in our church family, and that they'd sense the nearness of God.

□ Sunday, 4/13 | **Proverbs 3:5-6**

Pray wisdom and grace for all VCDC parents, including parents of special needs children.

WEEK 6

□ Monday, 4/14 | **Psalms 147:3**

Pray mercy and healing over victims of human trafficking.

□ Tuesday, 4/15 | **Psalms 71:17-18**

Ask Jesus for His comforting presence over both the elderly and the caregivers of aging parents.

WEEK 6 (continued)

□ Wednesday, 4/16 | **Matthew 28:16-20**

Intercede for those who have walked away from God or wrestle with doubt, and ask for steps of faith toward Jesus.

□ Thursday, 4/17 | **John 14:18**

Pray mercy over orphans and foster children. Ask for wisdom for current and future foster parents.

□ Friday, 4/18 | **Acts 2:16-18**

Ask the Lord for Himself, for His Spirit to pour into us and into our VCDC community.

Holy Saturday

BY BOB MORTON

"Come, let us return to the Lord. He has torn us to pieces, but he will heal us; he has injured us, but he will bind up our wounds. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence. Let us acknowledge the Lord; let us press on to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth." – Hosea 6:1-3 NIV

Holy Saturday, the day between Good Friday and Easter Sunday, does not get much attention. We know it was the day when Israel celebrated the Passover, a special Sabbath, commemorating freedom from bondage. But for the disciples, Holy Saturday was when their crucified Lord was laid in the tomb. The one they had hoped 'was going to redeem Israel' had just died. Imagine how hopeless they must have felt? After all, the dead remain dead, don't they?

In the hard things of life, do you sometimes find yourself having 'Holy Saturday moments?' We try to stay faithful, but cannot help wondering, 'where is Jesus in this?' We can take comfort in the promise that we are 'in Christ;' that we are under the care of the Good Shepherd. Even as Jesus walked through the valley of the shadow of death, he still trusted his Father, *"For he has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help."* (Psalms 22:24). In him we have hope, *"And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me but raise them up at the last day."* (John 6:39) He has also given us a Comforter, the Spirit, who comforts us in our darkest hour.

Take heart! Lift all your burdens in prayer to Jesus, the one in whom we have all of our help, hope, and spiritual blessing!

H A P P Y E A S T E R !
H E I S R I S E N !

V. REFLECTION



Over these 40 days **God has revealed:**



VINEYARD CHURCH

DELAWARE COUNTY