



LENT

2021 Mondays of
Prayer + Fasting

Weekly Reflections + Invitations

This year we are inviting the whole community to set aside every Monday in Lent (starting Feb 22) for Prayer and Fasting.

Fasting is a form of prayer. When we fast we voluntarily set aside something for a time in order to intensify our attention to and awareness of God - this attention and awareness is prayer. The things we are most reluctant to set aside are the very things that probably get in the way of our life with God. It is a practical discipline that helps us realize that God - not food, Facebook, friends, (fill in the blank) - is the real source of all pleasure, goodness and life. See www.WCVchurch.ca for more resources on fasting.

The invitation during this season of prayer and fasting is to prepare for the new growth that God has planted in us. This means creating a welcoming space for the work of God amongst us and in our own hearts. We cannot do the work ourselves - this is the task of God's Spirit. However, we do have a part to play by readying ourselves and welcoming the growth God wants to bring.

*"Plant the good seeds of righteousness, and you will harvest a crop of love.
Plow up the hard ground of your hearts, for now is the time to seek the Lord,
that he may come and shower righteousness upon you."*

Hosea 10:12

Week 1: February 22

Let's begin with **Gratitude**. There is much to be grateful for. Take some time to think about what God has brought us through as a community and you as an individual. Look for what is excellent and praiseworthy. Linger on what you notice allowing thanksgiving to rise up in your heart as you do. Gratitude will help us remain connected to The Vine.

Prayer Activity:

Write out three things you are grateful for on sticky notes and post them in a visible place (on the refrigerator or on the wall) as a reminder of the what you have noticed. Add to it throughout the week if you'd like.

Week 2: March 1

Today let's focus on **Repentance**. Invite the Holy Spirit to bring to your mind anything in your life and the life of our community that is not in line with God. Pray for new eyes to see and soft hearts to respond. "Search us, oh God and know our hearts. Test us and know our anxious thoughts." (Psalm 139)

Prayer Activity:

Choose a small stone to carry with you as a tactile reminder to repent of anything revealed in your life that is not in line with God. At the end of the day, or week throw the stone away as a symbol of forgiveness. You can also carry something soft as a reminder of the soft heart you want to foster before God.

Week 3: March 8

Today let's lean into **Endurance**. The Lord will do a good work in and through us. There are good things in store. Even though we may not see the tender shoots yet, the seeds have been planted. Germination is happening and these new sprouts are even now pushing up towards the light. So, we say to ourselves, as Paul said to the Galatians, "let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up." (Galatians 6:9)

Prayer Activity:

Plant a seed, or get a small plant that you can nurture. Use it during your reflection times as a reminder of the patience and endurance required to notice new sprouts.

Week 4: March 15

Today we are leaning into **Generosity**. Let us pray that we will be like Jesus who, in the face of betrayal and arrest, still set his face towards the cross. He freely and generously offered his life for the whole world. The temptation to hold on tightly is most fierce in times of scarcity. Let us pray that we, like Jesus, live generously and open-handed in these times.

Prayer Activity:

Place seven loonies or toonies (or something else) in your vehicle to hand out to people seeking assistance at a traffic light. Let these gestures remind you of God's generosity.

Week 5: March 22

Today we are leaning into **Blessing**. On Sunday we heard about how Peter denied even knowing Jesus. In that moment, Peter was not living his best self. To bless someone is to call out their best - to fan the flame of who God created them to be. When we bless someone, we speak life into them and call out what God sees. Let's pray that we grow in this prophetic, calling-to-life vocation.

Prayer Activity:

Ask God to bring to mind one individual who could benefit from having a word of life spoken to them. Ask God to give you a word of encouragement for them and then share it with them via text, email or phone.

Week 6: March 29

Today, at the beginning of Holy Week, we look to Jesus and his cross. Let us press in. Let us lean in. Let us look to the cross and to the empty grave beyond and ask the Lord for the release of **New Life** that has been sown and is growing amongst us. Let everything that needs to die be laid to rest. May the hope, joy and right-ness of Spring lift us and feed us.

Prayer Activity:

Repot the seedling or plant that you purchased. Water it and thank God for the new life that you have witnessed and are witnessing.



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