



LENT 2017

Life IN THE Spirit OF
Transformation

DONCASTER CHURCH OF CHRIST

*A guide for reading and praying
in the lead up to Easter*

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Life IN THE Spirit OF Transformation

Every year at Easter, we celebrate God's promise of New Life that we receive through faith in Jesus Christ. Every year during the 40 days of Lent that lead up to Easter, we can prepare ourselves for the gift of New Life. Lent gives us the chance to re-dedicate ourselves to God, to be cleansed by Him and to get ready – spiritually, but also mentally and physically.

Prayer and fasting are two of the most powerful traditional spiritual techniques that Christians use in this time of preparation. This year at Doncaster Church of Christ, you are invited to explore these spiritual disciplines for yourself and to make one or both of them part of your everyday life until Easter. They can be powerful ways for us to open ourselves even more to God, and to make room for His transforming work in us as individuals and as the people of this church.

We encourage you to pray, think and talk about how you might implement daily prayerful devotion and/or some form of fasting during Lent this year.

Here are some ideas about different ways to pray or to fast.

**ANY SORT OF PRAYER IS
A JOY TO GOD, AND THERE
NOTHING TO "GET WRONG"
ABOUT PRAYER!**

Prayer and Scripture

Any sort of prayer is a joy to God, and there nothing to “get wrong” about prayer!

If you decide to give it a go for the first time, we would love to be there for you and support you in any way we can. Please speak to anyone on the ministry team, or anyone in our church!

Prayer and Scripture go together. We strongly encourage everybody to include the Bible in your daily time of devotion. Each of your daily prayers could include the major themes of prayer, following the ACTS acronym:

**BE ENCOURAGED TO TRY
NEW THINGS OR TO
EXPAND YOUR ROUTINE
FOR A WHILE**

A – adoration: speak to God about your love for him; praise Him for who He is

C – confession: acknowledge to God what you need to leave behind, and ask His forgiveness

T – thanks: express to God what you are grateful for and name instances where you see His work in others or yourself

S – supplication: bring the needs or struggles of others before God; pray for someone else

When you think about your daily prayer routine, you might also want to consider some practical aspects:

When is a good time during the day for you to pray – early in the morning, during your lunch break, together with your children once they are back from school, instead of a TV show...? Where is a good place for your prayer – outside, while going for a walk, in a room that you don’t normally use much? Do you like silence, or would you like to put on some calm music? Do you prefer to get comfortable on the sofa, or sit at your table, or stand, walk, kneel or even lie on the floor...?

Be encouraged to try new things or to expand your routine for a while – especially if daily prayer is already part of your routine.

Fasting

The purpose of fasting is to make room for God, and to allow for “more of Him, less of me”. There are both traditional and unconventional ways to implement this – use your imagination to find a way of fasting that helps you to give more prominence to the God hope, love, joy and peace in your daily life!

**MORE OF HIM,
LESS OF ME**

Here are a few suggestions:

- ◆ The classic way of fasting: Quit certain types of food or drink – no meat, no coffee, no alcohol, nothing pink or fried...
- ◆ Quit certain habits like smoking, regular alcoholic drinks or that bowl of chips after dinner...
- ◆ Challenge yourself and take a break from other unhelpful habits like giving unsolicited advice to other drivers on the road, procrastinating, sharing news about others, driving unnecessarily, buying in bulk, leaving the TV on during the day...
- ◆ Take yourself off the pedestal: no selfies for 40 days; delete your favourite song list; order not your favourite drink or meal, but always the third one on the menu – whatever that might be; do someone else’s daily chores; keep the pronouns “I, me, mine” out of the beginning of each conversation you have...
- ◆ Consider some version of a “summer clean”: go through the contents of your house. Each day, find one thing to give away (piece of clothing, kitchen appliance that you never use, DVDs, tools, fabric...); at the end of each week, take it to your local op shop. Or do the full “40 bags in 40 days” challenge!
- ◆ Each Sunday, select a short Scripture passage to memorise; during the week, recite it every time before you check your messages, before you make yourself a cup of tea or before you start a meal

Readings

The Scripture readings in this booklet follow the story of God and His people and focus on God's plan and promises, and Jesus' fulfilment of them in His life, death and resurrection.

From the very beginning, God has been proclaiming His plan for Creation and for His people: a life lived in unity with Him and with each other. A life of joy, peace, and celebration that reflects God's passionate love and praises His glory.

God's plan has not changed. Through Jesus, His Son, He has put everything in place for *His* life to become reality in His world, and through His Spirit of transformation, He makes us His people – renewed and changed, becoming the image of Him.

As we approach Easter together, we can say yes to this transformation, and open ourselves to His work in our community and in ourselves as individuals. This year during Lent, you are encouraged to enter into a 6-week period of prayer and devotion. Throughout the history of God's church, people have set aside the time of Lent to make room for God. Daily prayer and Scripture reading is at the heart of this renewed focus on God – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

You are invited to use the Scripture passages in this booklet in your daily time of devotion. As you read Scripture each day, listen for words that strike a chord; watch for images that come before your mind's eye; allow for emotions that might be triggered. What is God communicating to you?

**THE SCRIPTURE READINGS
IN THIS BOOKLET FOLLOW
THE STORY OF GOD AND
HIS PEOPLE AND FOCUS
ON GOD'S PLAN AND
PROMISES, AND JESUS'
FULFILMENT OF THEM
IN HIS LIFE, DEATH AND
RESURRECTION.**

For each day between Monday and Saturday of the Lent season, one (or more) passage(s) from the Bible has been chosen. These readings follow a particular theme for each day and highlight different aspects. The decision about how much or how little you will read each is entirely yours, of course; still, we encourage you to immerse yourself in God's word.

On each of the Sundays of Lent, you are invited to join our community of faith at Doncaster Church of Christ for worship and celebration.

Please use the blank space on the following pages for any notes, comments or reflections.

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FIRST WEEK *Promise*

The reading of the first week of Lent focus on life – created, threatened, saved. God's words and actions speak of *His* desire for life to continue.

MONDAY 6 MARCH	TUESDAY 7 MARCH	WEDNESDAY 8 MARCH	THURSDAY 9 MARCH	FRIDAY 10 MARCH	SATURDAY 11 MARCH
<i>Creation</i>	<i>Praise of God's creation</i>	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Kain and Abel</i>	<i>Destruction and rescue</i>	<i>Abraham</i>
Genesis 2	Psalms 139	Genesis 3	Genesis 4:1 - 16	Genesis 6:9-22; 8:13-9:17	Genesis 12:1-9; 17:1-8

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SECOND WEEK

Wilderness

The readings of the second week flesh out God's promises, the reality of fallen human life, and the struggles of God's people to live life according to the heart of God.

MONDAY 13 MARCH	TUESDAY 14 MARCH	WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH	THURSDAY 16 MARCH	FRIDAY 17 MARCH	SATURDAY 18 MARCH
<i>Passover</i>	<i>Exodus</i>	<i>40 years in the wilderness</i>	<i>Cycles of sin and restoration</i>	<i>God's covenant with David</i>	<i>Promise of peace and unity</i>
Exodus 12:1-13	Exodus 13:17-14:31	Numbers 13:25-14:25	Judges 2:10-19	2 Samuel 7:1-17	Ezekiel 37:15-28

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THIRD WEEK

Prophecy

This week's Scripture passages draw us closely to God – who He is and what He does.

MONDAY 20 MARCH	TUESDAY 21 MARCH	WEDNESDAY 22 MARCH	THURSDAY 23 MARCH	FRIDAY 24 MARCH	SATURDAY 25 MARCH
<i>Promise of restoration</i>	<i>The work of God Almighty</i>	<i>God, the sovereign Saviour</i>	<i>The Servant</i>	<i>The King</i>	<i>Immanuel – God with us</i>
Jeremiah 31:7-37	Isaiah 43:1-21	Psalms 18	Isaiah 52:13-53:12	Zephaniah 3:14-20	Exodus 29:45-46

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FOURTH WEEK Immanuel

God has moved into His world. In Jesus' ministry, we begin to see how God goes about making His promises come true.

MONDAY 27 MARCH	TUESDAY 28 MARCH	WEDNESDAY 29 MARCH	THURSDAY 30 MARCH	FRIDAY 31 MARCH	SATURDAY 1 APRIL
<i>Jesus' birth</i>	<i>Jesus baptism and temptation</i>	<i>Jesus calls to repentance</i>	<i>Jesus heals</i>	<i>Jesus teaches</i>	<i>New Life</i>
Luke 1:26-33; 2:1-14	Matthew 3:13-4:11	Mark 1:1-14	Matthew 8	Matthew 5:1-6:18	John 3:1-21; 6:32-40

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FIFTH WEEK

Discipleship

This week's readings continue to flesh out who God is, and what Jesus' ministry means for the people who hear Him.

MONDAY 3 APRIL	TUESDAY 4 APRIL	WEDNESDAY 5 APRIL	THURSDAY 6 APRIL	FRIDAY 7 APRIL	SATURDAY 8 APRIL
<i>Son of God</i>	<i>The (suffering) Messiah</i>	<i>Servanthood – living upside down</i>	<i>Kingdom communities</i>	<i>Call into discipleship</i>	<i>Call to continue mission</i>
John 10	Luke 9:18-27	Luke 14:7-24	Luke 6:12-49	Mark 10:17-27	Matthew 28:16-20

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SIXTH WEEK

Holy Week

In the readings for the last week of Lent, we follow Jesus over the days of "Holy Week" from His arrival in Jerusalem to His return from death: the birth of New Life in Christ.

MONDAY 10 APRIL	TUESDAY 11 APRIL	WEDNESDAY 12 APRIL	THURSDAY 13 APRIL Maundy Thursday	FRIDAY 14 APRIL Good Friday	SATURDAY 15 APRIL
<i>Jesus enters Jerusalem</i>	<i>Love</i>	<i>Jesus in Jerusalem</i>	<i>Jesus Prays</i>		<i>God Rules</i>
Matthew 21:1-17	Mark 12:28-34	Luke 21:1-22:6	John 17		Isaiah 40



Easter Services

Join us in remembering God's promise of New Life at the following services:

- ◆ **Good Friday – 9:00am** in the worship centre
- ◆ **Easter Sunday – 6:00am for a 6:15am start** at the MC2 Civic Plaza, followed by breakfast at the church
- ◆ **Easter Sunday – 10:00am** in the worship centre for an all-church celebration service