

A bonfire of straw with flames rising into the night sky.

2023
EDITION

SOLEMN ASSEMBLY

WEEK OF PRAYER
FEBRUARY 20-24TH

CONTENT

3	Welcome Page
4	Participant's Overview
5	About Lent
7	714 Pause
8	Intergenerational Prayer
9	Day of Repentance
11	Concert of Prayer
12	Family Prayer
15	Fasting




WELCOME

February 20 to 24th, 2023

The kingdom of God advances on its knees. Our King invites us to come to him, asking, seeking and knocking. He delights to give good gifts to his kids.

For Crosspoint, we want to see the kingdom of God come crashing into earth, as it is in heaven. We aspire to be a praying church, where knowing and seeking God becomes as natural as breathing.



HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE IN SOLEMN ASSEMBLY?

SA is a week dedicated to prayer, both corporately and privately. We invite you to seek God daily and connect with other Crosspointers to pray and pursue God during this time. Something powerful happens when God's people come together to pray. Jesus said he is with us when we gather in his name with others. We intend to form a united front of prayer against the forces of darkness.

The details for each of these options are found in the pages that follow.

LENT	On Ash Wednesday, commit to give something up for forty days so that you can take hold of God.
714 PAUSE	Set your alarm twice a day and join others as we pray for our world.
EVENTS	Join us for at least one of three unique prayer events on Monday, Wednesday, or Friday.
FAMILY PRAYER	Have your family join together to pray in moments that are creative and memorable.
FASTING	Set aside a time during the week to let go of your appetites and focus your attention on God.

LENT

GIVING UP AND TAKING HOLD

The season of Lent is drawing near, and we are inviting you to join us in this time of repentance, fasting, and prayer.

Lent is the six-week period before Easter. You've probably heard about it but might not know how it came to be part of the Christian calendar. It's not a biblical command or tradition but has been practiced by the church from as early as the second century. While it was originally just three days of fasting, the Council of Nicaea (325 AD) decided upon a forty-day fast to honour Christ's forty days in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1-2). The intent of the fast is to demonstrate repentance in preparation for Easter. The Lenten season begins on Ash Wednesday, then continues for the following 40 days (not including Sundays) right until Palm Sunday.

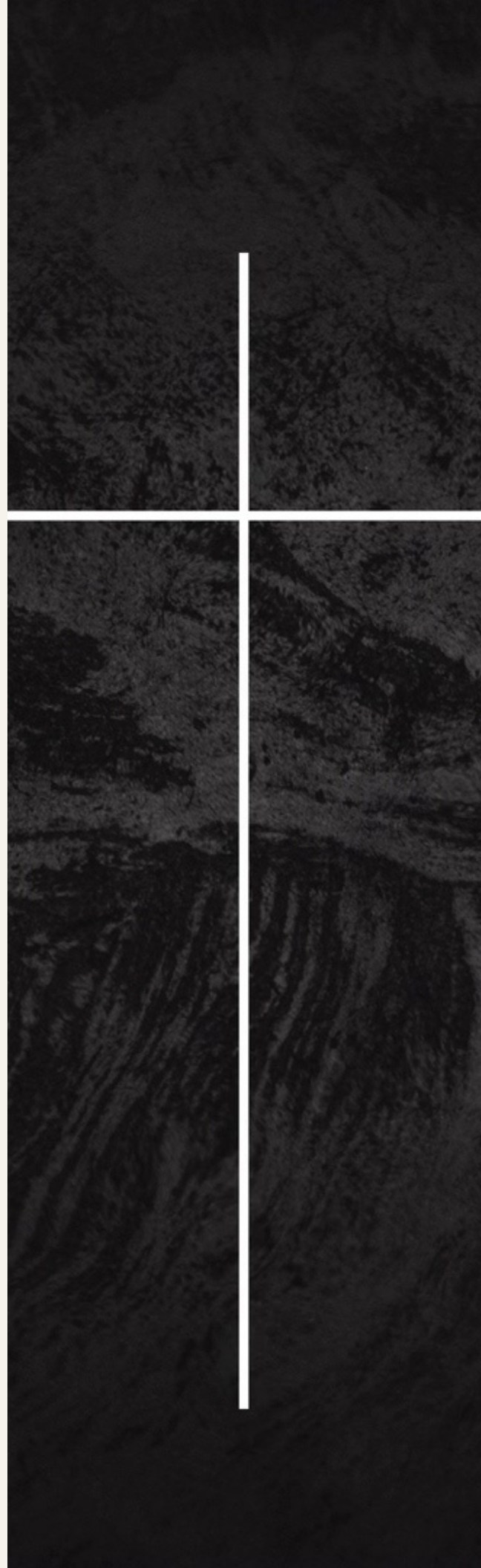
In many ways, the purpose and practice of Lent has become skewed in the modern world. For some, it is a competition: Who can fast the best? Who will give up the most? This is not what God intended fasting to become. In Isaiah 58, the Israelites wonder why God has not responded with favour to their fasting. This is what He says to them: "Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure and oppress all your workers. Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to hit with a wicked fist. Fasting like yours this day will not make your voice to be heard on high" (Isaiah 58:3-4). In their fasting, the Israelites maintained an incorrect heart posture; their actions reflected that they had remained unchanged. Fasting is intended to be a time of repentance, self-denial, and undivided devotion to God.

- cont'd on next page

Lent is a time to prepare your heart for remembering the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a time to draw near to God, by **giving up** something that might be hindering you from living in relationship with the Creator of the universe. Letting go of something that has a hold on your time and attention will allow you to refocus on God through reading His Word, reflecting in prayer, and taking time to worship.

What might you give up during Lent so that you can take hold of God? We encourage you to take inventory of your life; what is taking away from your time with God?

As you consider how you might participate in the practice of Lent this year, we invite you to join us at Crosspoint Church on Ash Wednesday for an interactive time of repentance. May your experience of Lent this year be intentional and life-giving, transforming your relationship with our almighty God.



714 PAUSE

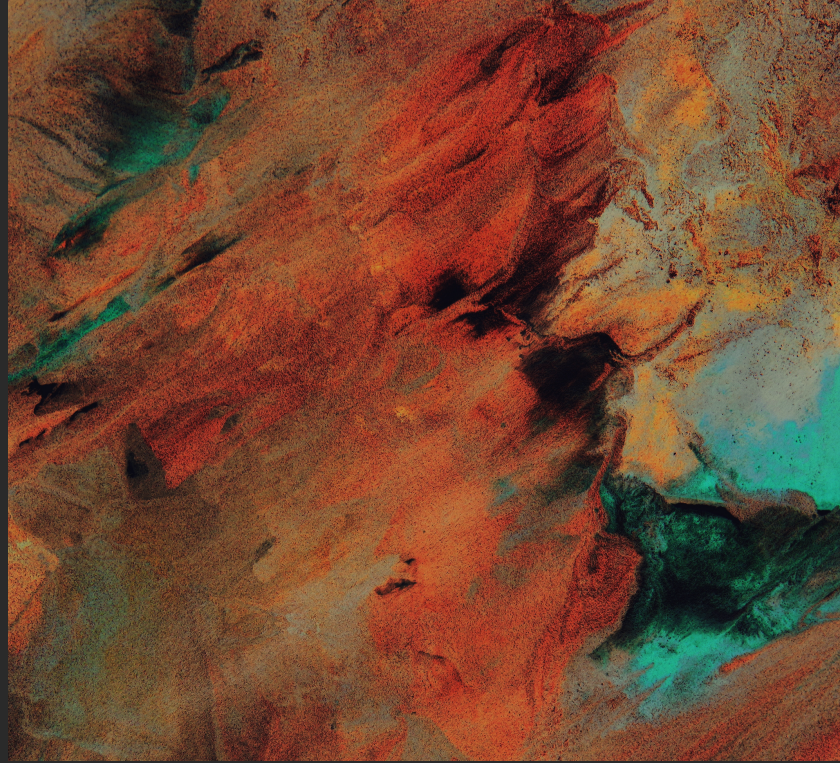
FIVE DAYS. TWICE A DAY. ONE VOICE.

2 Chronicles 7:14

If my people who are called
by my name humble
themselves, and pray and
seek my face and turn
from their wicked ways,
then I will hear from heaven
and will forgive their sin
and heal their land.

Using 2 Chronicles 7:14 as
our guide, we invite you to unite
in prayer, twice a day, for five
days. This will mean pausing at
7:14 every morning and evening –
so set your clocks! We are
praying for a spiritual awakening
in our church, our city, and our
world. We will publish a brief
post every morning on our social
media sites. As you pause and
pray, you can use the guide, or
else pray in your own way.

MONDAY PRAYER BY COLOUR



Join us on Monday,
February 20 at 6:30pm
as we use art and
creativity to connect
with God. All ages and
skill levels are
welcome!

We will begin by learning
how to do doodle prayers,
then meditate on Scripture
as we create individual art
projects. You are welcome
to bring your own art
supplies, or use the basic
supplies that we will
provide.

DAY OF REPENTANCE

ASH WEDNESDAY

Solemn Assembly's Day of Repentance falls on Ash Wednesday. The "day of ashes" is a Christian holy day of prayer and fasting. It is preceded by Shrove Tuesday and falls on the first day of Lent, the six weeks of penitence before Easter.

Ash Wednesday is important because it marks the beginning of the Lenten season leading to Easter, where believers celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus.

Ash Wednesday falls in the middle of our week of prayer. Traditionally, this day is set aside as a Day of Repentance. At Crosspoint, we want to take this opportunity to engage in the act of corporate and individual repentance where we can confess our sins and profess our devotion to our Lord Jesus.

-- cont'd on next page

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

Come to a safe place to experience both the sting of sin and the hope of Jesus Christ. We have created an interactive space where you can literally approach the cross as an individual in an environment that fosters focus, silent reflection, and prayer.

We have done this by creating a place of prayer with an aesthetic that will engage your senses and guide you in the process of repentance, communion, and worship.

- We encourage you to prepare for your prayer experience in advance. First, thoughtfully **examine** your life and determine if you have outstanding and unresolved sin that is interrupting your relationship with Jesus.
- We ask that you **bring an item** with you into the prayer space. This item should be a symbol of your surrender to Christ. You will literally set it down at the foot of the cross and leave it behind.
- You could accompany this prayer with the act of **fasting**. Please check out the fasting section in this guide for more guidance on fasting.

The Day of Repentance tent will be available for booking at thecrosspointchurch.ca/events.

Here you can book a fifteen-minute slot between 9 AM and 9 PM on February 22nd, 2023. Visit thecrosspointchurch.ca/event to book your slot.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Once you arrive for your booking, you will be checked in and provided with instructions.
- You will have the *option* of receiving a mark of repentance (ashes) for your forehead. This is applied with charcoal in the fashion of the cross.
- You will receive a simple prayer guide you can use during your time in the space.
- The attendant will then lead you from the campus lobby into the worship centre, where the prayer space is located.
- Once you are in the prayer space, the attendant will leave you alone and turn on some contemplative music.
- Use this time to wait on the Lord, listen, confess, pray, and repent of your sins. If you brought an item, remember to leave your item at the foot of the cross as a symbol of your surrender to Christ.
- When your timeslot has concluded, the music will fade to silence, and you can exit out the west campus doors.

FRIDAY CONCERT OF PRAYER

STARTS AT 7:00 PM

Our week of prayer will culminate with a evening concert of prayer. Join us on February 24th, as we gather together for scripture reading, singing, the Lord's Table, and prayer.

F

How can you
teach the next
generation to
pray?

A

M

I

FAITH AT HOME

Prayer is better
caught than
taught.

L

Y



TYPES OF PRAYER

for your family

ADAPTED FROM REAL KIDS, REAL FAITH BY KAREN MARIE YUST

PRAYERS OF LAMENT. These prayers allow us to acknowledge the real pain and suffering we experience, while still recognizing the reality of God's love and compassion. We start by naming the disappointments and despairing events in our lives, including our frustration with God about the situation. Next, we remember the ways He has cared for His people (including us!) in the past. In our prayer of lament, we can explicitly ask for divine help, and end with a statement praising God.

PRAYERS OF PRAISE. We and our children can express our delight in God's creation and goodness with words and bodily expressions of praise; this could include singing songs, creating shouts and cheers, or listing reasons to praise God.

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS. It is difficult to live well in relationship with one another all day, every day. People from the Bible struggled with this, and often turned to God to confess their errors and seek divine forgiveness. Go to Psalm 51 to see David's model of a prayer for forgiveness.

PRAYERS OF SUPPLICATION. These prayers are closely tied to letting go of worry. We and our children can ask God to provide for our needs rather than worry about if our needs will be met.

PRAYERS OF DISCIPLESHIP. Prayers such as the Lord's Prayer serve to remind us of the importance of embodying God's presence in our own lives. These prayers offer guidance for our spiritual journeys, as we commit to live according to our beliefs

TEACHING CHILDREN TO PRAY

ADAPTED FROM
LEARNRELIGIONS.COM

Teach Prayer as a Conversation.

Prayer is simply a conversation with God. We don't need formulas, and we don't want to recite words without meaning. We can and should speak to God in our own words.

Let Your Kids See You Praying.

The best way for kids to learn about prayer is for you to pray in their presence. Look for opportunities to practice prayer in front of them. Praying before meals and before bed is valuable, but God wants us to come to Him with all things at any time. Let kids see you praying throughout the day for a variety of needs; this will show them that God is interested in all aspects of our lives.



Encourage Age-Appropriate Prayers.

Keep the words and subjects appropriate to your child's age level and maturity. Remember that simplicity is key at every stage of the developmental journey.

Overcome Shyness.

Some children feel shy about praying out loud—they might say they can't think of anything to pray. If this happens, you can pray first, then ask your child to finish your prayer. You can also ask your child to repeat your prayers, but in their own words.

Be Supportive. Reinforce that we can take everything to God. No request is too small or insignificant. Encourage your child to talk to God about whatever is on his or her mind, be it a fight they had at school, the weather outside, or an epic tea party.

ABOUT FASTING

During this week of Solemn Assembly, we are inviting our Crosspoint family to fast for one meal, two meals, or an entire day. What is fasting? In a nutshell, it means abstaining from food or other necessities, in order to connect with God in worship and prayer.

When we fast, our attachments to food and other cravings emerge and are made obvious. When we deny ourselves, we are reminded that only Jesus can truly satisfy the deepest longings of our souls.

Jesus practiced fasting (Luke 4:1), as did Paul (2 Corinthians 11:27), and the early church (Acts 13:2-3). Jesus also assumed that his disciples would fast: "When you fast..." (Matthew 6:16).

Fasting isn't an attempt to manipulate God into doing what we want. It's not a means of self-aggrandizement (Matthew 6:17-18). We fast in order to focus our attention on God in worship and to let go of our appetites.

When we fast our physical emptiness reminds us of our spiritual emptiness and need for Jesus. It reveals the things that sometimes control us and helps us grow a more balanced perspective on them. Fasting also facilitates our effectiveness in prayer, guidance in decisions, and deliverance from bondage.

There are four basic types of fasting:

- Normal—Eating nothing

- Partial—Veggies only, or juice only

- Absolute—No food or water

- Special—Abstain from controlling influences like television, social media, junk food, coffee, comforts

Keep in mind that humans can survive forty days without food, three days without water, and forever without fast food or Netflix!

GUIDELINES FOR FASTING FROM FOOD

Adapted from Adele Ahlberg Calhoun in Spiritual Disciplines Handbook.

- Don't fast when you are sick, travelling, pregnant or nursing. People with diabetes, gout, liver disease, kidney disease, ulcers, hypoglycemia, cancer and blood diseases should not fast.
- Stay hydrated. Always drink plenty of water and fluids.
- If you are new to fasting, begin by fasting for one meal. Spend the time with God that you would normally be eating.
- Work up to longer fasts. Don't attempt prolonged fasts without guidance.
- Check with your doctor before attempting long periods of fasting.
- If you decide to fast regularly, give your body time to adjust to new rhythms of eating. You may feel more tired on days you fast. Adjust your responsibilities appropriately.
- Begin a fast after supper. Fast until supper the next day. This way you miss two, rather than three, meals.
- Don't break your fast with a huge meal. Eat small portions of food. The longer the fast, the more you need to break the fast gently.

- Don't fast if you are in a hurry and are fasting for immediate results regarding some decision. Fasting is not magic.

WHAT TO DO IN THE TIME SET APART FOR FASTING:

- Bring your Bible and a glass of water during your fast.
- Relax and breathe deeply. Place yourself in the presence of God. Offer yourself and your time to God by repeating Samuel's words "Speak Lord, your servants are listening." Or simply say, "Here I am."
- Spend some time worshiping God for his faithfulness. Thank him for where he has come through for you. Psalm 103:1-5 also provides a starting point for praise.
- Bring your desires to God. Ask him if this desire is in line with his will and his word for you and the church.
- Be still and listen. Offer your desires and prayers to God.



LET US SEEK HIS

FACE

TOGETHER