



Monrovia

COMMUNITY CHURCH

MAKING FLOURISHING DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST

Dear MCC Church family,

A friend once shared that his favorite part of family vacations is everyone piled into the minivan, headed in the same direction. I love that image—because so often life pulls us in many different directions. Lent offers us 40 days to travel together as a church family, focused on Christ as we prepare for Easter.

In our Christian tradition, Lent (from the Old English *lencten*, meaning “springtime”) is a season of repentance, fasting, and renewed devotion. It is an invitation to grow closer to Christ and deeper in community.

I invite you to join us in practicing prayer and fasting in a more intentional way during this Lenten season.

Lenten Call to Prayer and Fasting

“Blow the trumpet in Zion; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Consecrate the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her canopy. Between the vestibule and the altar, let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep. Let them say, “Spare your people, O Lord, and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations. Why should it be said among the peoples, ‘Where is their God?’” - Joel 2:15-17

Theologian and pastor, Esau McCaulley says in his book *Lent: The Season of Repentance and Renewal*, “**Lent, is inescapably about repenting.** Repentance is a change in direction, a Spirit empowered turning around. Repentance, then,

is a the first step we make toward God. But to turn toward God we must turn away from something else. That something else is our sins. We should not see the season of Lent as a series of rules but as a gift of the collected wisdom of the church universal. It is one of the many tools of discipleship pointing us toward a closer walk with Jesus. Fasting, then, is not about us earning God's forgiveness; **it is about reminding ourselves through our fasting of our radical dependance on God."**

An Invitation: MCC Congregational Prayer and Fasting Rhythm. After dinner Wednesday until Thursday dinner, set aside this time to practice prayer and fasting. (Or if another time works better for you, by all means, practice prayer and fasting then.)

1. Pray that God would renew our first love as a congregation, and give us a renewed passion for his word and mission to make flourishing disciples of Jesus Christ.
2. Pray that God would strengthen the young families, youth, and children in our congregation and help them grow as followers of Jesus.
3. Pray that God would stir in the hearts of our preschool families and help them encounter Jesus Christ through the ministry of MCC.
4. Pray that God would help every person in our church belong and find their place in the body of Christ.
5. Pray that God would move in our church finances and give us wisdom in stewarding our resources so that we can fulfill the mission God has for us as Monrovia Commmunity Church.

During this time...

-You may choose to fast from food and drink only liquids.

-You may choose to not watch the news cycle during that period, or pray for the situation you are reading about.

-You may choose to read through the book of Ephesians. You may choose to use this time to memorizescripture on your drive, or on your walks, or in your favorite chair.

-You may choose to join a Grow Group during Lent. See the Welcome Table for info on our groups.

-You may choose to more intentionally engage in prayer for the vulnerable in our world and engage in acts of mercy, compassion, and justice. Visit ijm.org for more resources, or reach out to Pastor Joel for additional resources.

-You may choose something entirely different to fast from to help you grow closer to Jesus during this time.

I look forward to watching how God will meet us in this Lenten time as we prepare for Easter!

Grace and peace,
Pastor Joel

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. - 2 Corinthians 13:14