

UNITY OF CHANGE FAST
“TRY GOD
FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH &
POSITIVITY”



FORTY (40) DAYS OF PRAYER & FASTING
*(A Christian guide to forty days of prayer, fasting, and
meditation throughout the Lenten Season.)*

Rev. Dr. David R. Jarrett, Sr., Pastor
Rev. Dr. Beverly A. Hair, Coordinator Empowerment Prayer Ministry
Bethel A. M. E. Church
5050 St. Antoine Street
Detroit, MI 48202

INFORMATION ABOUT FASTING & SCRIPTURES

As we step into Lent in 2023, may we remember how quickly things changed for Jesus after His entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday-where He would be arrested, crucified, and then resurrected on Easter Day! What a mix of emotions the followers of Jesus must have experienced. What uncertainty!

Let's consider ourselves and others in the midst of this season of change during these uncertain times. Although the Coronavirus Pandemic has lessened its grips on us, we are still currently in the midst of it all, as we are still experiencing many with positive Covid19 test results, where individuals are still isolating themselves, there have been many lost jobs, homes, and we are still experiencing loss of lives. Plus, countless other issues including health and so much more that all of us have been challenged with.

Yet, Lent invites us into a deeper reflection on the unique and wonderfully made humans God has made us to be and what that means for our calling in the world.

Though we are made in the image of God, our world is full of voices vying for our attention and seeking to shape us towards their aims. Lent offers us an opportunity to repent of our sins and turn back to our truest selves in Christ. Often repentance makes us feel uncomfortable as we reflect, but it is really just the practice of turning towards that which is good in us – what brings us life rather than diminishes our spirit.

What is Christian Fasting? Biblically fasting is abstaining from food and/or drink to focus on a period of spiritual **growth/development/positivity**. Specifically, to humbly deny something of the flesh to glorify God, enhance our spirit, and go deeper in our prayer life. It also confirms the resolution that we are needy to sacrifice whatever we have to, even ourselves, to obtain that which we seek for, the Kingdom of God.

Why 40 days? In the Bible, we see many lives that God transformed in 40 days. Noah's life was transformed by 40 days and 40 nights of rain, Moses was in the mountain and fasted for 40 days and 40 nights and there he received instructions from God. When he came down, his face was radiant with the glory of the Lord.

The 12 spies who went into the Promised Land searched out the land for 40 days. Nineveh was given 40 days to repent during the time of Jonah the prophet. Jesus fasted 40 days and 40 nights when He was driven into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit. During this time angels ministered to Him. When Jesus rose from the dead, He stayed for 40 days. There was 40 days between Jesus' resurrection and ascension (Acts 1:3).

We believe the next 40 days are going to be transformational for us at Bethel A.M.E. Church.

As we review Scripture, you will notice that there are many instances of fasting. In the Old Testament, we will find that every year on the Day of Atonement, the entire nation of Israel fasted. Moses fasted for the 40 days and 40 nights when he was on Mount Sinai receiving the law from God (Exodus 34:28). Elijah fasted for 40 days while under severe threat from Jezebel (1 Kings 19:1-8). Nehemiah had a time of prayer and fasting upon learning that Jerusalem was still in ruins (Nehemiah 1:4). Daniel, was deeply troubled in his soul, and he fasted (Daniel 10:2). In Ezra 8:21, the King called for a fast by the River of Ahava.

As we move into the New Testament, we find Jesus fasting 40 days and 40 nights in spiritual preparation for His ministry which would involve warfare against Satan (Matthew 4:2). In the Sermon of the Mount Jesus taught not “if you fast,” but “when you fast (Matthew 6:2). The Church of Antioch fasted (Acts 13:2-3) and sent Paul and Barnabas off on their first missionary journey. Further examples of the early church fasting can be found during the appointment of the elders (Acts 14:23).

In the Bible, fasting always occurred together with prayer. You can pray without fasting, but you cannot fast (Biblically speaking) without praying. In the Prophet Isaiah’s time, the people grumbled when they had fasted yet God did not answer in the way they wanted (Isaiah 58:3-4). Isaiah responded by proclaiming that the eternal show of fasting and prayer, without the proper heart and attitude, was useless (Isaiah 58:5-9).

Through Bethel’s Church Wide fast, our congregation fasting and prayer will be in accordance to God’s will and will be done with the proper heart and attitude-for things that further God’s Kingdom, Honor and Glorify God. I pray that we will not grumble, gossip and complain about others, let’s stay positive and keep our hearts pure so God can answer our prayers in a Supernatural way this Lenten Season!

“Then your light shall break forth like the morning, your healing shall spring forth speedily, and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry; and He will say, ‘Here I am’ “ (Isaiah 58:8-9 NKJV).

UNITY OF CHANGE FAST

Pastor Jarrett along with the Empowerment Prayer Ministry are proclaiming a church-wide forty (40) days of prayer and fasting. The focus of the Fast is for the congregation to be in **unity** as we “Try God.” Scriptures and readings have been selected to reflect during this Bethel Church Wide Unity of Prayer and Fasting. The **purpose** of the Fast is: To engage the congregation as a whole, into unified action to “Try God.”

For this Season, 2023 we are using **2 Chronicles 7:14** “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (KJV). And

the Prayer of Jabez **1 Chronicles 4:10** “Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory” (NKJV). We will focus on spiritual growth / developing a Christ-like mindset, maintain a positive attitude, and discipleship as laid out by Jesus as our ‘means of action’ to enlarge our territory.

Spiritual Growth/Development/Positivity, I believe is the process by which we are equipped by the Holy Spirit to grow toward maturity in Christ. In order to grow toward maturity in Christ the process requires we be in the Word daily-studying it, praying over it, and obeying it. We believe that this will equip all of us to winning souls for Jesus.

As we grow spiritually and develop a positive attitude this allows us to be better equipped to be more like Jesus by making a difference in the Kingdom of God by winning the world to Himself, and Jesus staked His whole ministry on twelve men, His disciples. He did not leave it to chance that His disciples would by happenstance figure out how to bring others to Him. Jesus knew that He would have to “equip the saints” to be able to lead the multitudes to Him.

This is what we will embark upon for Bethel A.M.E. Church at the end of this period of forty (40) days of prayer and fasting in preparation to grow our spirits which will enhance our spiritual maturity for our ministries. We will be equipped to take the land and to make a difference in the lives of others and win souls for the Kingdom. In essence we will be better equip to be Jesus’ disciples; and the Christians God needs for us to be during these difficult days. Our families, church, community and even the world needs transformed Christians to be the light in darkness.

After His resurrection, on a mountain in Galilee, the risen Lord Jesus appeared to His disciples and issues the ‘Great Commission.’”

¹⁸ And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go ^[a]therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.” ^[b]Amen.

(Matthew 28:18-20, NKJV)

On Easter Sunday morning as we complete this period of Church Wide Unity of Change prayer, fasting and study of God’s Word, we will experience our own ‘resurrection’ of sorts. And just as Jesus commanded those whom He had trained to “...go therefore and make disciples of the nations,” we too, who have been transformed spiritually with a positive attitude will also be well able to go forth and make such an impact that we will draw others to Christ.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Please make sure to select a **Prayer Partner** for this Fasting period. This person must be someone who is not in your household. Make note of the guidelines below:
 - **Submit** the name of your prayer partner to Dr. Bev on Sunday February 19, 2023 – Wednesday February 22, 2023. (You can also text the name of your prayer partner to (231) 343-9360)
 - **Use** this time with your Prayer Partner exclusively for spiritual uplifting one another [whatever your spiritual, physical and emotional needs may be].
 - **Avoid** meaningless conversations about foods used during the fast period, or discussing Church business, etc. Please refrain from any form of gossip during this period and remember to remain positive and write in your Affirmation Journal daily.
 - **Remember** to keep your Pastor and the Clergy Team, Intercessors, Staff, their spouses, and our Bethel Family in prayer as we journey into this season of collective “Unity of Change.”
2. Follow the “Sample Day on the Unity of Change Fast” outline each day.

ITEMS NEEDED FOR THE FAST

1. Holy Bible
2. Natural Spring Water or Distilled Water
3. Lemons (fresh) – to take away metallic taste in water. You may add honey.
4. Food items listed in the “Unity of Change Fast” daily calendar schedule section.

DATES IN THE LENTEN CALENDAR

ASH WEDNESDAY – The first day of Lent

LENT – The period of forty (40) weekdays from Ash Wednesday to Easter, observed in Christian Churches by fasting and penitence (repentance)

NOTES:

- (1) If you are on medications or under doctor’s orders, follow those orders **EXPLICITLY!!! DO NOT participate** in this fast **without permission from your doctor.**
- (2) If you are unable to participate in the fasting, please join us in prayer, daily Scriptures, and meditation. Those who cannot give up food for medical reasons, make sure to sacrifice something; (example, going on Facebook/Twitter; limit television watching); give up specific foods (example, popcorn, chocolate, etc.)
- (3) All individuals participating in the “Unity of Change Fast” are strongly encouraged to drink at least 6-8 ounce glasses of water each day.

To aid you in your planning, the following is the list of foods to be used on the “Unity of Change Fast” for 2023:

1. Fruit Day
2. Dairy Day (Yogurt, Eggs, Cottage Cheese, and other Milk & Lactose free Products)
3. Juice Day
4. Unsalted Nuts, Raisins & Dried Fruit Day
5. Salad & Raw Vegetables Day
6. Water Day
7. Fish, Turkey, Chicken & Salad Day

Special Notes/Clarification/Modifications:

- * **Salad Dressing:** should be “fat free.” As a suggestion, an excellent dressing with taste is Ken’s Steak House Fat-Free Raspberry Pecan or Honey Mustard
- * **Gum/Mints:** Sugarless Gum/Breath Mints are recommended:
- * **Salt Substitutes:** such as Mrs. Dash, Nu-Salt (or equivalent) may be used
- * **Pepper:** (Black, Red, Lemon or White Peppers are preferred)
- * **Olive Oil, Canola Oil, Peanut Oil, or Vegetable Oil** may be used when cooking eggs.
- * **Baking:** When baking Fish, Chicken, or Turkey, the following ingredients may be used: Mrs. Dash, Pepper, Paprika, Garlic, and Onions.
- * **Lactose-free:** milk & dairy foods may be used on Dairy Day.
- * **Vegetables:** may be raw or steamed.
- * **Chicken/Fish/Turkey:** should be baked or broiled.
- * **Salt:** substitute may be added.

*****ASSIGNMENT:** (complete before fasting)

Prior to the start of the fast, please read and meditate on the Book of **DANIEL**. This book was chosen because it encompasses various aspect of this fast-prayer, fasting, knowledge, and wisdom.

The purpose of this assignment is to center our minds on being in unity s we approach the beginning to the journey we are embarking upon. As the Bethel Congregation enters into this period of prayer and fasting, we are all encouraged that we can obtain the blessings that God has for His people.

THE BEGINNING...

The following notes have been developed to aid you in understanding how you are to proceed. We have also included a sample day to show how these notes can be put into practice.

1. **FIRST**, read the **Daily Meditations** morning, afternoon and nightly each day before you begin your “Unity of Change Fasting Schedule.”
2. **SECOND**, pray to the FATHER in the name of JESUS. When you pray, include your objectives (**Proverbs 29:18**), bind the works of Satan (**Matthew 16:19**), believe that you have already received your blessing (**Mark 11:24**):
3. **THIRD**, read the designated Scriptures morning, afternoon and nightly each day as listed on the “UNITY OF CHANGE FAST” **Calendar of Daily Scriptures and Foods**.

SAMPLE DAY ON THE “UNITY OF CHANGE FAST”

TIME	ACTIVITY	NOTES
5:30 A. M.	- Get up and get in a quiet contemplative state. - Read the morning Meditation - Pray - Read the A. M. Scriptures	* Some may choose to spend morning prayer time during a quiet walk.
7:00 A. M. 7:30 A. M.	- Breakfast (Food for the day listed on the Fast Calendar). - Proceed with your day in your regular manner	
12 Noon	- Read the noon Mediation - Pray - Read the Noon Scriptures - Lunch (Food for the day listed on the Fast Calendar)	* You may spend time (over lunch, on the telephone) with your prayer partner during this period.
Evening (Select ONE of these times) 6 P.M. 7 P.M. 8 P.M. 9 P.M. 10 P.M.	-Reflective Time - Dinner (Food on the Fast Calendar) - Read the evening Meditation - Pray (If you have not been in touch with your prayer partner during the day, you should make contact at this time.) - Read the evening Scriptures - Reflect on the day, your commitment during the fast, personal growth you desire to happen as a result of fasting and praying, etc. <u>*You may want to keep a Daily Journal during the fast.</u>	NOTES: *You may choose early evening or late evening for your prayer/prayer partner, Meditation & Scripture time. *At the end of your day, before, or during driving time you can listen to inspirational music, or messages of encouragement.

OVERVIEW OF DAILY MEDITATIONS

The daily meditations are intended to anchor your thoughts on the specific three (3) areas of focus during the fast-prayer and fasting. Word of God, and discipleship.

1. Each morning you will start your day with a focus on prayer and fasting and meditating on examples in the Bible of the importance of prayer and fasting. As you move into your prayer time remember to pray for strength to endure the journey before us.
2. The afternoon meditation centers our thoughts on the importance of the Word of God in our daily existence. In your prayer time pray for greater knowledge and a deeper understanding of the Word. Also pray for wisdom in applying the knowledge of God's Word.
3. We will end our day with the evening meditation focusing on aspects of discipleship. Your evening prayer should include a petition to the Holy Spirit to infuse you with a greater spirit of commitment and willingness to be used as a vessel for leading others to Christ.

MORNING MEDITATIONS...PRAYER & FASTING/SPIRITUAL GROWTH/MATURITY

1. 1 Chronicles 4:10
2. 2 Chronicles 7:14
3. Ezra 8:21
4. Matthew 6:6
5. Matthew 6:16-18
6. Matthew 7:7-8
7. Esther 4:16
8. 1 Samuel 2:26
9. Hebrews 6:1
10. Col 2:6-7

AFTERNOON MEDITATIONS

KNOWLEDGE/UNDERSTANDING/WISDOM/SPIRITUAL GROWTH/MATURITY

1. John 1:1
2. 1 Peter 1:25
3. Proverbs 8:17
4. Matthew 10:27
5. James 1:5-6
6. Psalms 119:33-34
7. 1 Kings 3:9
8. Luke 8:14-15
9. 2 Peter 1:5-8

10. –And God gave Solomon wisdom and exceedingly great understanding, and largeness of heart like the sand on the seashore.

EVENING MEDITATION...SPIRITUAL GROWTH/MATURITY/DISCIPLESHIP

1. Romans 8:28
2. 2 Timothy 2:2
3. Acts 1:8
4. Acts 25-26
5. Joshua 1:4
6. Matthew 28:19G
7. 2 Peter 3:18
8. Luke 17:5
9. Psalm 92:12-14
10. Ephesians 4:15

NOTE: If you have favorite Scriptures that ministry to you, please feel free to add those Scriptures to your personal daily meditation.

Also if you find any mistakes in this document, please charge it to my head and not to my heart and if something does not make sense, do not hesitate to contact Dr. Bev at (231)343-9360.

May God bless us all SUPERNATURALLY, as we embark on this most Awesome Journey of Spiritual Transformation!