

# Thy Kingdom Come: Praying for our World



*A Lenten Prayer Resource*

Spring 2025



SINCE 1842

*“The Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.”*

*Romans 8:26*

The desire of this resource is to offer ways to pray for our world through the season of Lent, leaning into the different traditional spiritual disciplines of self-examination and confession; fasting; Bible reading; prayer; giving; and service. Each week offers a reflective prayer along the theme, one or two scripture readings, a brief reflection, and suggestions to guide your prayers for the week. The focus is on our world, and so there are also different links to organisations working in different ways around our city and our world, for you to learn more about their work and to pray more specifically for them.

## Ash Wednesday and the First Four Days of Lent

March 5 – 8, 2025

### SELF-EXAMINATION & CONFESSION

*O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

**Scripture Readings:** Matt 7:1-5, Matt 18:23-35

**Reflection:** When tensions are high, it is easy to look at people who hold opposing views or do things we disagree with as evil, wrong, *other*; and to see ourselves as innocent or right. Our scripture passages reminds us that before we jump to condemnation, we must examine ourselves and bring our own sins to God, honestly. The compassion and forgiveness that God meets us with can then inform our attitude to others.

#### **Prayer:**

- For openness to the Spirit's work in your own life, revealing places in need of healing and forgiveness
- For openness to forgiving those who have wronged you
- For the Spirit to soften the hearts of global leaders and their advisors, to see people as people

## The Week of the First Sunday in Lent

March 9 – 15, 2025

### FASTING

*Almighty and most merciful God, we remember before you all poor and neglected persons whom it would be easy for us to forget: the homeless and the destitute, the old and the sick, and all who have none to care for them. Help us to heal those who are broken in body or spirit, and to turn their sorrow into joy. Grant this, Father, for the love of your Son, who for our sake became poor, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

**Scripture Reading:** Matt 6:16-18

**Reflection:** Fasting is one of the less-practiced spiritual disciplines, and yet it can yield incredible spiritual fruit. As we give up something to which we are accustomed, we are forced to rely on God in a new way. Fasting also gives us empathy for those who hunger: 10% of the global population lives in extreme poverty, surviving on the equivalent of less than \$1.90 USD per day, and even in our own relatively wealthy city, more than 1 in 10 people rely on food banks. Visit the Daily Bread website to learn more about the state of hunger in our city: <https://www.dailybread.ca>

#### **Prayer:**

- For those living in poverty in our city
- For organisations working to alleviate poverty in our city: Daily Bread, Second Harvest, Scott Mission, Yonge Street Mission, and many others
- For our volunteers and leaders of our Good Food Market
- For all those who attend the Good Food Market, and all those who could benefit from it who don't know about it: that they would discover it to be a place of warmth, welcome, and abundance for all.

# The Week of the Second Sunday in Lent

March 16 – 22, 2025

## BIBLE READING & WORSHIP

*Lord Jesus, stay with us; be our companion in the way, kindle our hearts, and awaken hope, that we may know you as you are revealed in Scripture and the breaking of bread. Grant this for the sake of your love. Amen.*

**Scripture Readings:** Matt 4:1-11, Matt 26:26-29

**Reflection:** Romans 10:17 says that “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” One in five people in the world don’t have access to a Bible in the language they know best. For many others, it is illegal to possess or even read the Bible. It is easy for us to take for granted our ready access to the revealed word of God, which holds the hope of the world. Visit The Voice of the Martyrs website to read more about countries and places where Bibles are prohibited: <http://www.vomcanada.com>. Visit the Wycliffe Bible Translators website to read more about the ongoing work of Bible translation around the world: <https://www.wycliffe.ca/>.

### Prayer:

- For those who don’t have access to the Scriptures in their mother language, and for translation works in process around the globe.
- For those for whom even possessing a Bible is illegal, that God would make himself known to them.
- For the safety of those who risk their lives to distribute Bibles or to share the good news of the gospel in places where it is forbidden.
- That God would open our hearts more and more to his Word.

## The Week of the Third Sunday in Lent

March 23 – 29, 2025

### PRAYER

*Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom, you know our necessities before we ask and our ignorance in asking: Have compassion on our weakness, and mercifully give us those things which for our unworthiness we dare not, and for our blindness we cannot ask; through the worthiness of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

**Scripture Readings:** Matt 6:5-15, Matt 26:36-46, James 5:13-18

**Reflection:** Jesus taught us how to pray and modeled prayer himself, even to the extent of praying “Father, thy will be done” when he was heading to the cross. We are taught that prayer is a mighty weapon – we do not know exactly how it works, but we know that our prayers come before God as incense, and that he uses our prayers to accomplish his purposes in the world. In a time of global uncertainty, prayer is one way we can work for the healing of the world.

#### **Prayer:**

- That our spirits would be open to the Holy Spirit teaching us to pray.
- For every news item that caused you pain this week – that God’s Spirit would breathe his life and healing into the situation.
- Pray for the [International Justice Mission](http://www.ijm.ca) ([www.ijm.ca](http://www.ijm.ca)) and other organisations who are working to combat injustice around the globe, and bring about God’s shalom and peace.

## The Week of the Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 30 – April 5, 2025

### GIVING

*Almighty God, whose loving hand has given us all that we possess: Grant us grace that we may honour you with our substance, and, remembering the account which we must one day give, may be faithful stewards of your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

**Scripture Readings:** Mark 12:41-44, Exodus 16:1-30

**Reflection:** Generosity and gratitude are integrally linked - it is in practicing the art of gratitude that we are able to loosen our hold upon 'things' and enter into generosity. Gratitude acknowledges that all that we have comes from God and is gift to us. It works against the desire for 'more' that is currently at work in our culture and our world, depleting resources and destroying our planet. Gratitude opens clenched fists and allows us to trust that a good God who has given everything for us will provide daily everything we need in him, freeing us to freely give. In this time of global uncertainty, when many vital aid organisations have had their funding removed, there is ample opportunity to practice sacrificial giving.

#### **Prayer:**

- Pray the Lord's Prayer, noticing that Jesus teaches us to pray simply for our 'daily bread' – everything we need for the day, but nothing more. Thank God for his daily provisions.
- Pray for aid organisations who have had vital funding removed, to the hurt of the most vulnerable.
- Ask God to give you open hands and wisdom in discerning where, when, and how to practice generosity this Lent.

## The Week of the Fifth Sunday in Lent

April 6 – 12, 2025

### SERVICE

*Almighty God our heavenly Father, you declare your glory and show forth your handiwork in the heavens and in the earth: Deliver us from the service of self alone, that we may do the work you give us to do in truth and beauty and for the common good; for the sake of him who came among us as one who serves, your Son Jesus Christ the Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

**Scripture Readings:** John 13:1-17, Eph 4:7-8

**Reflection:** As Ephesians 4:7-8 says, God has equipped each of us with gifts that are unique to us, showering all of Christ's gifts upon his church so that as the Body of Christ, we are equipped to meet every single human need that arises. Frederick Buechner once wrote that "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." There is a deep joy in using our gifts and skills in a way that meets the needs of those around us.

#### **Prayer:**

- That the Holy Spirit would show us how we in our own giftedness can serve the people around us, to the glory of God
- For the staff and volunteers at Yonge Street Mission ([www.ysm.ca](http://www.ysm.ca)) and all others who serve on the front lines of society here in Toronto, working directly with the marginalised and the hurting.





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## GET IN TOUCH

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