

A DEVOTIONAL GUIDE FOR

Lent

A Season for Growing New Life

February 18 – April 11, 2026



Community Missions of Niagara Frontier

How to Use This Guide

- + Start with Ash Wednesday, then follow one card per week
- + Each week includes a theme, plus daily reflections
- + You don't need to read every day — come back as you're able
- + No special background or beliefs are required; this is for everyone
- + Go at your own pace, and let what speaks to you stay with you

*This isn't about doing Lent "right."
It's about letting something good take root.*

*"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness,
and self-control."*

— Galatians 5:22–23

THE FIRST DAYS OF LENT February 18–21

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."

— Galatians 5:22–23

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me."

— Psalm 51:10

ASH WEDNESDAY — BEGINNING THE JOURNEY

February 18

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me." — Psalm 51:10

This is the beginning — but *not* the beginning of trying harder, doing more, or being perfect. Lent begins with desiring a clean heart — not a flawless one, but one open to being made new.

Over the next seven weeks, we will walk slowly through the spiritual fruits God wants to grow in us — not as goals to achieve, but as gifts we can make room for. This is not a checklist. It's a season of tending the soil. You do not have to be ready. You only need to be willing.

Prayer: *"Create in me a clean heart, O God. Not a perfect heart. Just one that can begin again."*

Now that we have begun, we spend these first days with three gifts that ground us — love, joy, and peace. Let them settle in before the journey ahead.

*"The fruit of the Spirit is **love, joy, peace**, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."*

— Galatians 5:22–23

THURSDAY — LOVE

February 19

Love is more than something we give. It's something we need. Something we can receive. Before you try to offer love this Lent, let yourself be loved. Let that be your starting point.

Today's question: *Can you let yourself be loved without earning it?*

FRIDAY — JOY

February 20

Joy is not the same as cheerfulness. It's not loud. It may not even smile. But it is real. And it often lives quietly beside sorrow, waiting to be noticed.

Today's prompt: *Notice one thing that brings you quiet joy.*

SATURDAY — PEACE

February 21

Peace isn't found by escaping. It grows in the middle of the noise, the ache, the waiting. You don't have to go far to find it. You just have to breathe where you are.

Breath practice:

Inhale: "Peace be..."

Exhale: "...with me."

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, *patience*, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."

— Galatians 5:22–23

Patience isn't just about waiting. It's how we hold ourselves — and others — while things take time. In recovery and in life, patience is a way of showing care in the middle of struggle.

SUNDAY

February 22

You don't have to feel peaceful to practice patience.

Practice: *Breathe slowly. Give yourself a little more time than you think you need.*

MONDAY

February 23

Progress doesn't always look like success.

Reflection: *Some things grow quietly. What might be healing in you, even if you can't see it yet?*

TUESDAY

February 24

Feeling impatience is not failure. It's a chance to figure out what really matters and make adjustments.

Question: *What is something you are impatient about that you could approach in a new way?*

WEDNESDAY

February 25

God's patience includes you, not just your progress.

Practice: *When you feel behind or stuck, try saying: "Growth comes one small step at a time. I am not standing still."*

THURSDAY

February 26

Not everything that takes time is wasted time.

Prompt: *Think of something in your life that took longer than expected — but turned out to matter.*

FRIDAY

February 27

Starting over is part of being human.

Invitation: *Begin again today without regret. Yesterday was practice.*

SATURDAY

February 28

Patience and kindness go hand in hand.

Inhale: "Be patient..."

Exhale: "...and kind."

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, *kindness*, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."

— Galatians 5:22-23

Kindness is more than being nice. It's how we treat people — especially when they're struggling, or when we are struggling. Kindness is healing.

SUNDAY

March 1

Kindness can be as simple as not making things worse.

Practice: *Offer a soft tone, a pause, or silence — where you might have once reacted.*

MONDAY

March 2

You don't have to feel strong to be kind.

Reflection: *Sometimes kindness is just staying present when someone else is struggling.*

TUESDAY

March 3

Kindness to yourself is not selfish.

Question: *What would it look like to treat yourself like someone worth caring for?*

WEDNESDAY

March 4

Kindness isn't always comfortable — but it is healing.

Practice: *When someone is difficult today, try seeing them as someone who might be hurting.*

THURSDAY

March 5

Small kindness counts.

Prompt: *Hold a door. Let someone go first. Say thank you. It adds up.*

FRIDAY

March 6

You have received kindness, too — even if you forgot.

Reflection: *Think of a time someone was unexpectedly kind to you. Let yourself remember it.*

SATURDAY

March 7

Kindness builds community.

Inhale: "Make me gentle..."

Exhale: "...make me kind."

WEEK 3 OF LENT March 8–14

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, **joy**, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."

— Galatians 5:22–23

Joy isn't the same as being happy. It's deeper than mood. It's what happens when we notice beauty, feel connection, or remember we are not alone.

SUNDAY

March 8

Joy can live beside sadness.

Practice: *Don't force a smile. Try to simply notice one small, good thing today. It is there.*

MONDAY

March 9

Joy isn't loud.

Reflection: *Remember a moment of joy and notice how you feel. Is it warmth, hope, relief, something else? Sit in that memory and feel.*

TUESDAY

March 10

Joy is allowed, even when life is hard.

Question: *Is there something you've kept yourself from enjoying? What would happen if you let yourself have it?*

WEDNESDAY

March 11

Joy can help you rebuild.

Practice: *Do one thing today that once made you feel like yourself — even just for a few minutes.*

THURSDAY

March 12

Shared joy grows stronger.

Prompt: *Tell someone when something made you laugh or feel light.*

FRIDAY

March 13

Joy is part of healing.

Reflection: *Recovery doesn't just mean surviving. It means making space for joy again.*

SATURDAY

March 14

Joy doesn't need to be earned.

Inhale: "Joy is near..."
Exhale: "...and it's for me."

WEEK 4 OF LENT March 15–21

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, *peace*, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."

— Galatians 5:22–23

Peace isn't the absence of conflict — it's the presence of steadiness, even when things are hard. It can be found in silence, a deep breath, an act of kindness, or accepting that you're not alone.

SUNDAY

March 15

Peace doesn't mean everything is okay.

Practice: *Notice if there is one small place inside you that feels calm. Let it be enough for now.*

MONDAY

March 16

You don't have to earn peace.

Reflection: *Peace can be a gift that arrives quietly when you stop trying to fix everything.*

TUESDAY

March 17

Peace can begin with a simple pleasure.

Question: *If peace was like music inside yourself, what would it sound like?*

WEDNESDAY

March 18

Peace can happen even when your problems don't go away.

Practice: *Instead of asking "How do I fix this?", try "How do I stay steady in this moment?"*

THURSDAY

March 19

Peace can make space for other people.

Prompt: *Let someone else finish their sentence before you speak.*

FRIDAY

March 20

Sometimes peace comes from letting go.

Reflection: *Is there something you're holding tightly that's wearing you out? Let it go.*

SATURDAY

March 21

Peace often begins with breath.

Inhale: "Let me be..."

Exhale: "...at peace."

WEEK 5 OF LENT March 22–28

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity,

faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."

— Galatians 5:22–23

Faithfulness isn't about perfection — it's about staying with what matters. In healing and in spiritual life, it means showing up again, even if we feel like we have fallen away.

SUNDAY

March 22

You don't have to feel strong to stay faithful.

Practice: *Just take the next step. That's enough.*

MONDAY

March 23

Faithfulness includes starting over.

Reflection: *What have you come back to, even after giving up?*

TUESDAY

March 24

God's faithfulness towards you doesn't depend on your faithfulness.

Question: *What if you accepted God's love for you, even when you have trouble loving yourself?*

WEDNESDAY

March 25

Faithfulness can be quiet.

Practice: *Keep a small promise today — to yourself or someone else.*

THURSDAY

March 26

Loyalty doesn't mean giving up your own right to choose differently.

Prompt: *Is there someone or something you've stayed loyal to at your own expense?*

FRIDAY

March 27

Faithfulness isn't the same as always getting it right.

Reflection: *What would it mean to trust yourself, even when you make mistakes?*

SATURDAY

March 28

Returning is a kind of faith.

Inhale: "Still here..."

Exhale: "...still trying."

+ Holy Week +

WEEK 6 OF LENT March 29 – April 4

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness,

gentleness, and *self-control*."

— Galatians 5:22–23

Self-control isn't about being strict or harsh with yourself. It's about choosing what helps you stay grounded. It creates space between feeling and reacting without thinking.

PALM SUNDAY

March 29

Self-control begins with noticing.

Practice: *Pay attention to how you react when you're stressed. That's the place to start — not to judge, just to see.*

MONDAY

March 30

You don't have to follow every feeling.

Reflection: *What's one feeling that often leads you into something that doesn't serve you well?*

TUESDAY

March 31

Self-control can be a form of self-care.

Question: *What would it mean to take small breaks and not just push through non-stop?*

WEDNESDAY

April 1

You don't have to go with your first impulse.

Practice: *Pause for five seconds before responding to something that stirs you.*

MAUNDY THURSDAY

April 2

You can choose again — even after reacting.

Prompt: *Think of a time you caught yourself, and changed direction. That second try counts too.*

GOOD FRIDAY

April 3

Self-discipline without compassion can lead to hurtful self-shaming.

Reflection: *Where in your life can you be a little more gentle with yourself?*

HOLY SATURDAY

April 4

Self-control grows over time.

Inhale: "Steady me..."

Exhale: "...with love."

EASTER WEEK April 5-11

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness,
gentleness, and self-control." — *New Life*

— Galatians 5:22-23

Easter is not just one day — it's a new beginning. Our journey still continues. There is more life ahead that will be filled with the whole range of human experience. The difference is that we now know that God is with us.

EASTER SUNDAY

April 5

New life doesn't erase the past — it transforms it.

Practice: *Let this day be a turning point. Begin again, not by forgetting, but by rising and moving forward.*

MONDAY

April 6

Resurrection happens in small ways, too.

Reflection: *In what ways does your life feel even a little more full than it did before?*

TUESDAY

April 7

New life often comes quietly.

Question: *What has begun to heal in you without you noticing?*

WEDNESDAY

April 8

You can carry hope and grief at the same time.

Practice: *Name one thing you're still holding on to — and one thing you're ready to grow toward.*

THURSDAY

April 9

Sometimes new life means new boundaries.

Prompt: *What are you no longer willing to carry alone and accept help from others to carry?*

FRIDAY

April 10

New life calls for gentleness.

Reflection: *What if you treated yourself like someone learning you want to help grow?*

SATURDAY

April 11

Resurrection is a process.

Inhale: "This is new life..."
Exhale: "...and I belong in it."



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