



Welcoming

Easter

40 Days of Prayer and Fasting



Grace Chapel
CHURCH OF CHRIST





Welcoming Easter Introduction

Welcome to our 2026 Journey to Easter, a 40-day season (excluding Sundays) that leads us toward Easter through repentance, renewal, prayer, and fasting. This year our theme is Welcoming Easter, and we'll focus on the incredible hospitality Jesus has shown us through His life, death, resurrection, and ongoing work in our lives.

You're invited to join in by choosing something to fast from or abstain from, by slowly reading through one of the Gospels, by watching the daily testimony videos we'll be sending out, and by celebrating Jesus each week through Sabbath and community. Our hope is that you'll prayerfully consider how you want to participate and jump in with us as we begin the journey together!



Welcoming Easter Day One

Read

God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble...
—Psalm 46:1-11 NLT

Reflect

When Clay faced his health crisis, uncertainty threatened to overwhelm him. Yet God showed up—not always in miraculous healings, but through the faithful presence of His people. The psalmist reminds us that God is not distant during our storms; He is present, near, and actively working. Like a coach calling after thirty years or a young man sending a timely text, God orchestrates divine appointments to remind us we're not alone.

Where are you experiencing uncertainty today? Look for God's presence in unexpected places—a phone call, a message, a friend's prayer. His presence transforms anxiety into peace, not by removing our circumstances, but by walking through them with us.

Questions

1. Where do you most need God to be your refuge and strength right now?
2. Who could you encourage today with a simple act of care or prayer?

Pray

Father, our refuge and strength, thank You that You are near in every trouble. When uncertainty feels heavy, help us notice Your presence—in a friend's prayer, a simple message, or a quiet moment of peace. Calm our anxious hearts and remind us that we are never alone. Show us someone who needs Your comfort today, and use our words and actions to reflect Your love. Walk with us through what we cannot change, and fill us with Your peace that passes understanding. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Welcoming Easter Day Two

Read

Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.
— Romans 15:7

Reflect

Emma's story begins in a very ordinary place: a middle school bus. A seatmate simply invited her to Grace Chapel. It didn't feel dramatic—just a small, simple welcome. But looking back, she can see that through that one invitation:

- She found a church where she felt there was a place for her.
- She discovered a place in Jesus' family.
- Years later, in that same church, she met her future husband.

Her faith wasn't built on one big moment, but on Jesus' steady, gentle invitation over time—through people, community, and ordinary Sundays. What started as a small act of welcome became the foundation for her faith, her community, and her family.

All of this is possible because of Easter. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus has welcomed us into new life with God. Now He calls us to do the same for others: "Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you." Your simple invitation—to church, to coffee, to sit with you—might be the beginning of someone else's story with Jesus.

Questions

1. Where do you most need God to be your refuge and strength right now?
2. Who could you encourage today with a simple act of care or prayer?

Pray

Jesus, thank You for welcoming me—often through the simple kindness of others. Thank You for the people and the church communities that have given me a place to belong and grow. Help me to welcome others as You have welcomed me. Show me one person I can reach out to this week. We praise You for Your death and resurrection, and for the new life we have in You. Amen.



Welcoming Easter Day Three

Read

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.
— 2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV)

Reflect

Jaden grew up convinced he could never lead. The idea of standing on a stage was daunting. So he stayed far away from leadership, believing it was safer not to try. But this past year, God started nudging him. Through his youth group, Jaden sensed Jesus inviting him into a leadership role he never would have chosen on his own. As he said yes, he discovered something important: in Jesus’ kingdom, leadership isn’t about being flawless—it’s about trusting a faithful Savior.

Jaden put it this way: Jesus has welcomed him “into his world of leadership,” and even if he fails or messes up, Jesus will love him anyway. That’s the heart of the gospel: we are not welcomed because we perform well; we are welcomed because we are loved.

Maybe your “stage” looks different—leading a small group, serving in a ministry, praying out loud, having an honest conversation, or sharing your faith with a friend. Underneath the fear is often the same question: “What if I fail—and what will people think of me?”

Easter answers that fear. Jesus went to the cross knowing every failure in advance and chose you anyway. His resurrection means your identity is secure. Your value is not defined by how smoothly you perform, but by His unchanging love.

Questions

1. Where might God be nudging you into something that feels scary or stretching right now?
2. How does knowing Jesus loves you even when you “fumble” change your willingness to step out?

Pray

Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for not giving me a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind. Thank You for welcoming me into Your presence, even when I feel afraid or unsure. Help me trust that Your love for me does not change when I stumble. Give me courage to say yes to what You’re calling me to, and use even my weaknesses for Your glory. In Jesus’ name, Amen.



Welcoming Easter Day Four

Read

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

— Proverbs 3:5–6 (NIV)

Reflect

In 2020, Chaela’s life felt like it shut down twice—first with a torn ACL, then with a global pandemic. She couldn’t go anywhere, and she couldn’t move well even if she could. But in that season of limitation, Jesus quietly welcomed her into something deeper.

Stuck at home, she turned to Scripture—reading her Bible every day, asking God why this happened and what His plan was. While her body was healing, God was strengthening her faith, her perspective, and her trust in Him.

A year later, she shared her story on Facebook—how God had met her and used a painful season for good. The next day, DJ messaged her to talk about faith and what God had done in her life. What felt like a setback became the pathway to one of the greatest blessings of her life.

This is often how God welcomes us into His plan—not by explaining everything, but by inviting us to trust Him in the middle of what we don’t understand. As we approach Easter, we remember that the cross looked like a dead end—but it was actually the center of God’s rescue plan. If God can bring resurrection out of a tomb, He can bring purpose out of your pain too.

Questions

1. Where do you feel “stuck” or confused right now?
2. How might God be quietly welcoming you to trust Him more deeply in that area?

Pray

Lord, thank You for welcoming me into Your plan, even when I don’t understand it. Thank You for the way You met Chaela in her injury and turned a painful season into a story of faith and blessing. Take the confusing and disappointing parts of my life and use them for Your purposes. Help me trust You with all my heart and not lean on my own understanding. Show me even a small glimpse of how You’re at work, and draw me closer to You this Easter. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Welcoming Easter Day Five

Sabbath Prayer

Lord Jesus,

As we begin this Journey to Easter, we pause to welcome You, the One who has first welcomed us.

Thank You for being our refuge and strength when life feels uncertain. Thank You for drawing near through Your people, through simple encouragements, and through the quiet work of Your Spirit in our hearts.

Thank You for the ordinary invitations that change our lives—an open seat, a kind word, a church that feels like home. Teach us to welcome others as You have welcomed us, with patience, humility, and love.

Thank You for calling us beyond our fears. Where we feel inadequate or afraid to step out, remind us that You have not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind. Help us trust that we are loved, not for how well we perform, but because of who You are.

Thank You that even our limitations and painful seasons are not wasted in Your hands. When we feel stuck or confused, help us to trust You with all our hearts and not lean on our own understanding. Use what we don't choose and don't understand to draw us deeper into Your presence and Your purposes.

As we walk these forty days, make us more attentive to Your welcome:

more aware of Your presence in our troubles,
more ready to invite others into Your family,
more courageous to follow where You lead,
more willing to trust You in the dark and in the waiting.

Prepare our hearts for Easter. Let the cross and the empty tomb reshape how we see our fears, our pain, and our future. Root us in Your unchanging love, and by Your Spirit, form us into a people who reflect Your hospitality to the world.

We surrender this season to You. Lead us, teach us, and meet us in ways we could not have planned.

In Your strong and welcoming name we pray,
Amen.





