

# **Ecclesia Church 40-Day Lenten Justice and Economic Fast Document**

**Theme:** Standing in the Gap for Justice

**Dates:** Wednesday, March 5 – Thursday, April 17, 2025

## **Introduction: Standing in the Gap for Justice**

In times of great injustice, the people of God are called to stand boldly in faith, righteousness, and action. As disciples of Christ, we recognize that true transformation—both spiritual and societal—requires prayer, fasting, and strategic action. In response to Walmart and Target's decision to end their Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policies, we are calling for a **FORTY-DAY FAST** from both corporations, beginning **Wednesday, March 5, through Monday, April 17, 2025**.

### **Why We Must Act**

**"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."  
(Micah 6:8)**

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives ensure that all people—especially marginalized communities—are treated with dignity, fairness, and respect in the workplace and marketplace. By reversing their commitment to DEI, these corporations signal a regression in justice and equity, disproportionately affecting Black, Brown, and underserved communities.

Jesus teaches us that some strongholds—those entrenched in power and principalities—can only be dismantled through prayer and fasting (Matthew 17:21). Therefore, we must engage in both spiritual discipline and economic resistance to combat this attack on justice and equity.

## Biblical Understanding of the Lenten Season

Lent is a season of repentance, reflection, fasting, and preparation leading up to Easter Sunday, commemorating the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. While the practice of Lent itself is not directly mentioned in the Bible, its spiritual significance is deeply rooted in biblical themes of repentance, self-denial, and renewal.

## Purpose and Significance of Lent

- **Remembrance of Christ's Sacrifice:** Lent is a solemn reminder of Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection, calling believers to meditate on His love and sacrifice.
- **Preparation for Easter:** It is a season of spiritual renewal, leading up to the celebration of the Resurrection on Easter Sunday.
- **Transformation and Discipleship:** Through fasting, prayer, repentance, and almsgiving, believers are called to deeper discipleship and transformation.

## Summary

While the tradition of observing Lent developed in the early church, its spiritual essence is rooted in biblical themes of **repentance (Joel 2:12-13)**, **fasting (Matthew 4:1-2)**, **prayer (Matthew 6:6)**, **self-denial (Luke 9:23)**, and **generosity (Matthew 6:1-4)**. It is a powerful season of reflection and renewal, calling believers to align their hearts with the sacrificial love of Jesus Christ.

## Guidelines for the 40-Day Fast

### 1. Economic Fast:

- Abstain from shopping at Walmart and Target for the entire 40 days.
- Redirect spending to local, Black-owned, Brown-owned, and small businesses.

- Practice economic solidarity with communities impacted by the removal of DEI policies.

## **2. Spiritual Fast:**

- Choose a personal fast (e.g., food, social media, entertainment) to accompany the economic fast.
- Spend daily time in prayer, meditation, and scripture reading focusing on justice, generosity, and hope.

## **3. Acts of Generosity and Justice:**

- Donate to organizations fighting for social justice, equity, and community empowerment.
- Volunteer time and resources to support underserved communities.

# **Businesses To Shop From**

## **Black Owned Businesses**

- Kaliedeschope Hair Care, Camille Rose, Loyalty Book Stores, Beauty Bakerie, Pattern Beauty Hair Care, Black Sunscreen, Golde, Donna's Receipt/Tabitha Brown, Fitness Snobb, McBride Sisters, Afro Unicorn, Contents Hair Care Black Garnet Books, Black & Bold Coffee, KNC Beauty, and Canvas Beauty.

## **Grocery & Pharmacies Supporting (DEI)**

- Costco, CVS, Auntie Anne's, Kroger (Albertsons, Food 4 Less, Ralphs, Safeway, & Vons), Walgreens, Ben & Jerry's, Smart & Final, Dollar Tree, Cinnabon, Trader Joe's, & Jamba Juice.

## **Companies Supporting (DEI)**

- Apple, ELF Beauty Cosmetics, Sally Beauty, Macy's, Airbnb, Hilton, Sephora, Nordstroms, American Airlines, Logitech, Southwest Airlines, Old Navy, Marriot, Ulta Beauty, TJ Maxx, DD's

Discounts, Ross, United Airlines, Delta Airlines, World Wide Technology, and Lululemon.

## **Banking Institutions Supporting (DEI)**

- Deutsche Bank, JP Morgan Chase, One United Bank, and TD Bank

## **Tracking Black Dollars in Real Time**

- [www.OurMoneyUnited.com](http://www.OurMoneyUnited.com)
- <https://directory.fotmglobal.com/target-fast-iframe-form>
- Join the Movement: <https://www.targetfast.org>

## **Daily Devotional Structure**

Each day will consist of:

- **Scripture Reading:** A passage that calls us to justice, generosity, and hope.
- **Reflection:** A brief reflection connecting the scripture to present-day issues of justice and equity.
- **Prayer:** A prayer of repentance, intercession, and empowerment.
- **Call to Action:** A practical action step for economic justice and advocacy.

## **Weekly Themes and Scriptures**

### **Week 1: Prophetic Justice**

- **Day 1 (March 5):** Isaiah 58:6-9 – "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen..."
- **Day 2:** Amos 5:24 – "But let justice roll on like a river..."
- **Day 3:** Micah 6:8 – "To act justly and to love mercy..."
- **Day 4:** Isaiah 1:17 – "Learn to do right; seek justice..."
- **Day 5:** Jeremiah 22:3 – "Do justice and righteousness..."
- **Day 6:** Psalm 82:3-4 – "Defend the weak and the fatherless..."

- **Day 7:** Matthew 23:23 – "Justice, mercy, and faithfulness..."

## **Week 2: Generosity and Economic Justice**

- **Day 8:** Deuteronomy 15:7-11 – "Be openhanded toward the poor..."
- **Day 9:** Proverbs 31:8-9 – "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves..."
- **Day 10:** Luke 4:18-19 – "To proclaim good news to the poor..."
- **Day 11:** Matthew 25:35-40 – "Whatever you did for the least of these..."
- **Day 12:** Acts 4:32-35 – "They shared everything they had..."
- **Day 13:** 2 Corinthians 9:6-9 – "God loves a cheerful giver..."
- **Day 14:** James 2:14-17 – "Faith without works is dead..."

## **Week 3: Hope and Prophetic Vision**

- **Day 15:** Isaiah 61:1-3 – "To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor..."
- **Day 16:** Jeremiah 29:11 – "Plans to give you hope and a future..."
- **Day 17:** Habakkuk 2:2-4 – "Write the vision and make it plain..."
- **Day 18:** Romans 15:13 – "May the God of hope fill you..."
- **Day 19:** Hebrews 11:1 – "Faith is the substance of things hoped for..."
- **Day 20:** Revelation 21:4 – "He will wipe every tear..."
- **Day 21:** Psalm 146:5-9 – "The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down..."

## **Week 4: Radical Love and Belonging**

- **Day 22:** John 13:34-35 – "Love one another as I have loved you..."
- **Day 23:** Galatians 3:28 – "There is neither Jew nor Gentile..."
- **Day 24:** Ephesians 2:14-16 – "He has destroyed the barrier..."
- **Day 25:** Colossians 3:11 – "Christ is all, and is in all..."
- **Day 26:** Romans 12:9-10 – "Love must be sincere..."
- **Day 27:** 1 John 4:7-12 – "Perfect love drives out fear..."
- **Day 28:** Matthew 5:43-48 – "Love your enemies..."

## **Week 5: Resilience and Hope for Justice**

- **Day 29:** Psalm 37:27-29 – "Turn from evil and do good..."
- **Day 30:** Isaiah 40:28-31 – "Those who hope in the Lord..."
- **Day 31:** Galatians 6:9 – "Do not grow weary in doing good..."
- **Day 32:** Philippians 4:13 – "I can do all things through Christ..."
- **Day 33:** Romans 8:37-39 – "We are more than conquerors..."
- **Day 34:** 1 Peter 5:10 – "After you have suffered a little while..."
- **Day 35:** Revelation 12:11 – "They triumphed by the blood of the Lamb..."

## **Holy Week: The Ultimate Sacrifice and Victory**

- **Day 36 (Palm Sunday):** Matthew 21:1-11 – "Hosanna to the Son of David..."
- **Day 37 (Maundy Thursday):** John 13:1-17 – "Washing the disciples' feet..."
- **Day 38 (Good Friday):** Isaiah 53:4-5 – "He was pierced for our transgressions..."
- **Day 39 (Holy Saturday):** Psalm 22:1-2 – "My God, why have you forsaken me?"
- **Day 40 (Easter Sunday):** Matthew 28:1-10 – "He is not here; he has risen..."

## **Call to Action**

- **Advocacy:** Write letters to Walmart and Target demanding the reinstatement of DEI policies.
- **Economic Justice:** Support businesses that actively practice justice and inclusion.
- **Community Engagement:** Organize local discussions on racial equity, justice, and economic empowerment.

## **Closing Prayer**

**"Lord, empower us to stand in the gap for justice. Give us the courage to fast, pray, and act in faith. May our sacrifices inspire transformation and bring Your kingdom justice on earth. Amen."**

## **Week 1: Prophetic Justice**

*"But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!" – Amos 5:24*

### **Day 1: Isaiah 58:6-9 – True Fasting for Justice**

- **Reflection:** How does God define true worship?
- **Prayer:** Lord, help me to fast from injustice and feast on righteousness.
- **Call to Action:** Identify a justice issue in your community and research how to get involved.

### **Day 2: Amos 5:24 – Let Justice Roll**

- **Reflection:** How does justice flow like a river in our lives and communities?
- **Prayer:** God, may Your justice wash over the broken places in my city.
- **Call to Action:** Support an organization working toward systemic justice.

### **Day 3: Micah 6:8 – Act Justly, Love Mercy, Walk Humbly**

- **Reflection:** What does walking humbly in justice look like for you today?
- **Prayer:** Jesus, make me an agent of Your justice and mercy.
- **Call to Action:** Write down three ways you can act justly this week.

### **Day 4: Isaiah 1:17 – Learn to Do Right**

- **Reflection:** How can we "learn" justice in daily life?
- **Prayer:** Lord, give me a heart to defend the vulnerable.
- **Call to Action:** Speak up for someone who is experiencing injustice.

### **Day 5: Jeremiah 22:3 – Do What is Right and Just**

- **Reflection:** Where in your life do you need to align more with God's justice?
- **Prayer:** Father, let my life reflect Your righteousness.
- **Call to Action:** Take one tangible step toward advocacy.

### **Day 6: Psalm 82:3-4 – Defend the Weak and Needy**

- **Reflection:** How does this verse challenge your perspective on justice?
- **Prayer:** God, open my eyes to those in need around me.
- **Call to Action:** Serve someone experiencing hardship today.

### **Day 7: Matthew 23:23 – Justice, Mercy, and Faithfulness**

- **Reflection:** Where have we neglected justice in our faith walk?
- **Prayer:** Jesus, teach me to value what You value.
- **Call to Action:** Commit to participating in one justice focused activity.

## **Week 2: Generosity and Economic Justice**

*"Be openhanded toward the poor and needy in your land."* –  
Deuteronomy 15:11

### **Day 8: Deuteronomy 15:7-11 – Openhanded Generosity**

- **Reflection:** What keeps us from giving generously?
- **Prayer:** Lord, make me openhanded toward the needy.
- **Call to Action:** Give a sacrificial gift to someone in need.

### **Day 9: Proverbs 31:8-9 – Speak Up for the Voiceless**

- **Reflection:** Who in your community needs an advocate?
- **Prayer:** Father, give me the courage to speak for justice.
- **Call to Action:** Use your voice to support an oppressed group.

### **Day 10: Luke 4:18-19 – The Gospel and the Poor**

- **Reflection:** How is justice central to Jesus' mission?
- **Prayer:** Jesus, empower me to bring good news to the poor.
- **Call to Action:** Support a mission or ministry helping the poor.

### **Day 11: Matthew 25:35-40 – Serving the Least of These**

- **Reflection:** How does serving others reflect the heart of Jesus?



- **Prayer:** Jesus, help me see You in the faces of the hungry, the sick, and the imprisoned.
- **Call to Action:** Find a way to serve someone in need today—through a meal, donation, or kind act.

## **Day 12: Acts 4:32-35 – They Shared Everything They Had**

- **Reflection:** What would happen if we lived out radical generosity like the early church?
- **Prayer:** Lord, help me release my grip on material things and trust You as my provider.
- **Call to Action:** Give a financial gift to someone struggling financially or to an organization serving the poor.

## **Day 13: 2 Corinthians 9:6-9 – God Loves a Cheerful Giver**

- **Reflection:** How does generosity change both the giver and the receiver?
- **Prayer:** Father, cultivate in me a joyful heart to give freely and generously.
- **Call to Action:** Intentionally give beyond your comfort level today.

## **Day 14: James 2:14-17 – Faith Without Works is Dead**

- **Reflection:** How do your actions reflect your faith?
- **Prayer:** Lord, may my faith be active, alive, and visible through love and justice.
- **Call to Action:** Look for a need in your community and take action today.

## **Week 3: Hope and Prophetic Vision**

*"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him."*  
– Romans 15:13

## **Day 15: Isaiah 61:1-3 – The Year of the Lord's Favor**

- **Reflection:** How does Jesus' mission in Isaiah 61 shape our call to justice?
- **Prayer:** Jesus, use me to bring healing, freedom, and good news to the oppressed.
- **Call to Action:** Support a ministry or initiative that uplifts the marginalized.

## **Day 16: Jeremiah 29:11 – Plans for Hope and a Future**

- **Reflection:** What does it mean to trust God's plan in uncertain times?
- **Prayer:** Lord, even in seasons of struggle, I trust that Your plans for me are good.
- **Call to Action:** Write a letter of encouragement to someone experiencing hardship.

## **Day 17: Habakkuk 2:2-4 – Write the Vision and Make It Plain**

- **Reflection:** What vision has God placed in your heart for justice and change?
- **Prayer:** Father, give me the courage to pursue the vision You have placed in me.
- **Call to Action:** Journal your vision for justice and the impact you want to make.

## **Day 18: Romans 15:13 – God of Hope**

- **Reflection:** How can we be people of hope even in a broken world?
- **Prayer:** Lord, fill me with hope and let it overflow into my actions.
- **Call to Action:** Send a message of hope to someone who needs encouragement today.

## **Day 19: Hebrews 11:1 – Faith is the Substance of Hope**

- **Reflection:** How does faith sustain our hope for justice?
- **Prayer:** God, strengthen my faith to believe in Your justice even when I don't see it yet.

- **Call to Action:** Take a bold step in faith toward an act of justice today.

## **Day 20: Revelation 21:4 – No More Tears, No More Pain**

- **Reflection:** What does God's promise of restoration mean for us today?
- **Prayer:** Lord, help me be an agent of healing in a hurting world.
- **Call to Action:** Reach out to someone who is grieving or suffering.

## **Day 21: Psalm 146:5-9 – The Lord Uplifts the Oppressed**

- **Reflection:** How does God's justice bring hope to the broken?
- **Prayer:** God, let me be a voice and a helping hand for those who are overlooked.
- **Call to Action:** Support a cause that uplifts the oppressed in a tangible way.

# **Week 4: Radical Love and Belonging**

*"By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."* – John 13:35

## **Day 22: John 13:34-35 – Love One Another as I Have Loved You**

- **Reflection:** Jesus calls us to love as He loved—selflessly, sacrificially, and without conditions. How can we demonstrate Christ-like love to those around us?
- **Prayer:** Lord, help me love others as You have loved me—fully and unconditionally.
- **Call to Action:** Identify someone you have struggled to love and reach out with a kind word or action today.

## **Day 23: Galatians 3:28 – There is Neither Jew nor Gentile**

- **Reflection:** In Christ, all barriers of race, gender, and status are broken down. How do we reflect this unity in our churches and communities?
- **Prayer:** Father, remove any prejudice in my heart and help me embrace all people as You do.
- **Call to Action:** Connect with someone outside of your usual circle and listen to their story.

## **Day 24: Ephesians 2:14-16 – He Has Destroyed the Barrier**

- **Reflection:** Christ reconciles us to God and to each other. Where is God calling you to be an agent of reconciliation?
- **Prayer:** Jesus, help me break down walls of division in my heart and relationships.
- **Call to Action:** Reach out to someone with whom you have unresolved conflict and seek peace.

## **Day 25: Colossians 3:11 – Christ is All, and in All**

- **Reflection:** The Kingdom of God does not operate on worldly divisions. How does recognizing Christ in all people shape the way you love and serve?
- **Prayer:** Lord, may I see Your image in every person I meet today.
- **Call to Action:** Support a multicultural or diversity-focused ministry.

## **Day 26: Romans 12:9-10 – Love Must Be Sincere**

- **Reflection:** Love is not just words—it is action. What does it mean for love to be sincere?
- **Prayer:** Father, deepen my love for others so that it is genuine and transformative.
- **Call to Action:** Perform an act of love that requires sacrifice today.

## **Day 27: 1 John 4:7-12 – Perfect Love Drives Out Fear**

- **Reflection:** Fear often keeps us from loving deeply. What fears do you need to surrender to God so that you can love others fully?

- **Prayer:** Lord, remove the fear that keeps me from showing Your love.
- **Call to Action:** Show love to someone who may be difficult to love.

## **Day 28: Matthew 5:43-48 – Love Your Enemies**

- **Reflection:** Jesus calls us to love even those who oppose us. How can we demonstrate Kingdom love to those who have wronged us?
- **Prayer:** Father, help me love my enemies and pray for those who mistreat me.
- **Call to Action:** Pray for someone who has hurt you and, if possible, extend a gesture of love.

# **Week 5: Resilience and Hope for Justice**

*"Let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we will reap a harvest." – Galatians 6:9*

## **Day 29: Psalm 37:27-29 – Do Good and Seek Peace**

- **Reflection:** Choosing righteousness and peace requires perseverance. How can you actively seek peace today?
- **Prayer:** Lord, give me the strength to do good even when it is difficult.
- **Call to Action:** Mediate a conflict or work toward reconciliation today.

## **Day 30: Isaiah 40:28-31 – Those Who Hope in the Lord**

- **Reflection:** When we feel weary, God renews our strength. How is He calling you to rely on Him today?
- **Prayer:** Father, I place my hope in You. Strengthen me for the journey.
- **Call to Action:** Encourage someone who is feeling discouraged.

## **Day 31: Galatians 6:9 – Do Not Grow Weary in Doing Good**

- **Reflection:** Justice work is long and exhausting. How can you remain faithful in the struggle?
- **Prayer:** Lord, sustain me in my calling and help me not give up.
- **Call to Action:** Write down three reasons why you will keep pressing forward.

## **Day 32: Philippians 4:13 – I Can Do All Things**

- **Reflection:** Our strength comes from Christ, not ourselves. How does this truth impact your daily challenges?
- **Prayer:** Jesus, empower me to do what You have called me to do.
- **Call to Action:** Tackle something today that you have been afraid to do.

## **Day 33: Romans 8:37-39 – More Than Conquerors**

- **Reflection:** No trial, oppression, or hardship can separate us from God's love. How does this give you hope in times of struggle?
- **Prayer:** Father, remind me that I am victorious in You.
- **Call to Action:** Share your testimony of overcoming with someone.

## **Day 34: 1 Peter 5:10 – After Suffering Comes Restoration**

- **Reflection:** God promises restoration after suffering. What areas of your life need His healing?
- **Prayer:** Lord, refine me through my trials and bring restoration.
- **Call to Action:** Encourage someone who is going through a hard season.

## **Day 35: Revelation 12:11 – They Overcame by the Blood of the Lamb**

- **Reflection:** Victory is found in Christ. How can we declare this victory daily?
- **Prayer:** Jesus, thank You for securing my victory through Your sacrifice.
- **Call to Action:** Declare a promise of God over your life and others today.

# Holy Week: The Ultimate Sacrifice and Victory

## Day 36 (Palm Sunday): Matthew 21:1-11 – Hosanna to the Son of David

- **Reflection:** Jesus' triumphal entry was a declaration of His kingship. How do you honor Him as King in your life?
- **Prayer:** Lord, I welcome You as my King. Rule over every area of my life.
- **Call to Action:** Worship God intentionally today.

## Day 37 (Maundy Thursday): John 13:1-17 – Washing the Disciples' Feet

- **Reflection:** True leadership is servanthood. How can you serve others humbly?
- **Prayer:** Jesus, help me to love through humble service.
- **Call to Action:** Serve someone today in a meaningful way.

## Day 38 (Good Friday): Isaiah 53:4-5 – He Was Pierced for Our Transgressions

- **Reflection:** Jesus bore our sin and suffering. How does His sacrifice shape your gratitude and purpose?
- **Prayer:** Lord, thank You for Your sacrifice. Help me live in response to it.
- **Call to Action:** Share the Gospel with someone today.

## Day 39 (Holy Saturday): Psalm 22:1-2 – My God, Why Have You Forsaken Me?

- **Reflection:** In the waiting and uncertainty, God is still working. How can you trust Him in silence?
- **Prayer:** Father, I trust You even when I don't see the answers.

- **Call to Action:** Sit in silence before God today and listen.

## **Day 40 (Easter Sunday): Matthew 28:1-10 – He is Not Here; He Has Risen**

- **Reflection:** Jesus' resurrection changes everything. How does this victory impact your faith and justice work?
- **Prayer:** Jesus, You are alive! Fill me with resurrection power.
- **Call to Action:** Celebrate and share the joy of the resurrection!