

“On Mission Together”

Saskatchewan Conference of MB Churches

Fire & Ashes

Some things only happen among ruins.

“Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.”

1 Corinthians 3:13 KJV

“Many a life has come forth from the furnace of affliction more beautiful and more useful than before.”

Billy Graham



As of late summer 2026, Canada is enduring another severe wildfire season fueled by prolonged heat, drought, and frequent lightning. More than 850 active wildfires have burned nearly 3 million hectares of forest, with the greatest devastation occurring in British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, Manitoba, and the Northwest Territories. Thousands of residents have been evacuated, while over 5,300 firefighters, 300 aircraft, and international crews continue battling the blazes. Smoke has spread across Canada and into the United States, creating widespread health concerns and travel disruptions.

Scientists attribute these increasingly severe fire seasons to a combination of natural weather patterns and climate change. Warmer temperatures, earlier snowmelt, prolonged drought, and increased lightning have created conditions in which fires ignite more easily and spread more rapidly. There has never been a national wave of destruction like these wildfires, with no end in sight.

However, is there more to these wildfires than just destruction? For thousands of years, naturally occurring fires have played an essential role in renewing healthy ecosystems. Fire recycles nutrients by turning dead vegetation into mineral-rich ash that enriches the soil and encourages fresh plant growth. It clears thick layers of forest debris, allowing sunlight and rainfall to reach the forest floor.

Many plants regenerate quickly after fire, and some species, including lodgepole pine, rely on intense heat to release their seeds. Fire also reduces dangerous fuel loads by removing accumulated dead wood and dense underbrush, lowering the risk of even more catastrophic wildfires.

Wildlife often flourishes in post-fire landscapes as new habitats emerge. Fresh vegetation provides food for grazing animals, while standing dead trees become valuable nesting sites for birds. Fire also helps control insect infestations and plant diseases, contributing to stronger, more resilient forests.

Though wildfires bring undeniable hardship, nature transforms devastation into renewal. When fire occurs as part of natural ecological cycles, it replenishes the land, strengthens biodiversity, and prepares forests for future generations.

A wildfire reminds us that ashes do not always tell the whole story. Beneath the blackened ground, life is quietly preparing to emerge again. In much the same way, the ashes of

Director's Calendar

August

DM not travelling / Vacation / on call...

September

6 - Hafford Gospel Church
13 - Hillside Christian Fellowship Church (Beechy)
19-25 - NMT/NFLT Mtgs. (BC)

October

2-4 - Grace Community Church (Dallas Valley Ranch Camp): Marriage Retreat
11 - TBA
17-25 - Leader & Spouse Retreat

November

Nov. 5 NFLT Mtg.,
Nov. 14 Worship Training Event, Foam Lake

Please pray for travelling mercies.

disappointment, grief, failure, and suffering are not the end of God's story. They often become the setting for His greatest work of restoration. That is why Isaiah could proclaim God's promise: "...to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes..." (Isaiah 61:3).



I have lived through seasons when it felt like my life had been through a fire, leaving only ashes. However, I chose not to be ruled by my feelings; I chose to walk in faith. My life has been a testimony to God's rich blessings, and I was not going to doubt him in this trouble now. I remained in faith and near my Father—my refuge (Psalm 46:1). A wise friend counseled me, "If living in the present is hard, let's make our home in God's presence." Consider too that God permits 'fire' in our life to purify us, test us and shape us (Proverbs 17). Don't discount the redemptive purposes that hardship and trouble can bring (1 Peter 1:7). Look for what God is doing. God is in the business of bringing beauty where only ashes seem to remain.

Your life may feel like the aftermath of a forest fire—scorched, charred, a landscape of smoke and ashes. Don't let despair capture your heart; remain in faith. God will restore what was destroyed. Don't let bitterness take root; there is hope and help in the One who calls us beloved (Jeremiah 31:3; 1 John 3:1). Daniel and his friends, followers of God, were thrown into Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace. The Lord rescued them. Daniel's life and faith became increasingly robust and bold after this experience. In your time of trouble, he will walk with you through the fire and ashes, comforting, consoling, and eventually restoring (Daniel 3; Isaiah 41:10).

God's greatest expression of redemption and restoration is Jesus. He is the resurrection and the life for all who are dead in their sins or broken in their circumstances, those without help and hope (John 11:25-26; Ephesians 2:5). Jesus recreates us—soul, mind and spirit (2 Corinthians 4:17). Jesus suffered death and was raised from the dead (Acts 6:32). He can turn the tears about our life of ashes into tears of joy (1 Peter 5:8). We can trust Jesus because he gave his life for us (1 John 4:10). Trust him today to bring beauty from your ashes.

"With God, there will always be an afterwards."

Joel Osteen

Philip A. Gunther

Director of Ministry

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Supporting SKMB Churches and Camps in Making Disciples