

HE IS RISEN!

A 50 Day Spiritual Encounter & Renewal

The Road Ahead

Road trips often accompany Easter holidays. Maybe not this year. It is a strange set of current circumstances for our state, country and the world. But, we can be sure that God is still working. God's power of resurrection is not restricted! Maybe God is inviting you to open your eyes, slow down and begin a new season of growth. Our souls are also in God's care. This is a great time to invest in your spiritual life.

A Family Activity

Over the next 50 days, we will watch God grow a small pea plant to symbolize the growth of our spirit. Post and share any pictures/comments at #AwakenMDCOC on Facebook. As supplies last, we will have pea plant packets (pot, seeds, soil and stickers) for you/family to participate



Easter to Pentecost 50 Days to Grow with God

Easter is the beginning of a big process; because of Jesus, a counting begins. Pentecost literally means “50 days” and is also called the Feast of Weeks because it is the end to seven weeks of counting days. We count our days to make our days count (Deut. 16:9-12; Lev. 23:15-16). Agriculturally, these 50 days are crucial to the growing season; the spring and fall harvest depend largely upon what happens during this time period. After seeds are planted, the fields where God grows needed food are vulnerable to all sorts of threats — rain, sun, wind — too much or too little could lead to famine. Farmers are a bit nervous during this season. So, God's people long ago counted these days and welcomed God to both grow their seeds and their souls amid constant threats because they depend on His provision.

Traditionally, the season of Pentecost has been a time for harvest festivals, celebration of the Bible, readings of the book of

This Week ...

- **Begin a 50 Day Journal.** Daily log brief entries that describe your experience of our current conditions, your feelings, your hopes, trust in God, how the Bible, online conversations, and the awakening of nature assure you of God's presence. Consider a **family based journal** for these 50 days.
- **Read Your Bible.** Mark 8:31-37; 9:30-32; 10:32-34; John 12:1-26; 20:1-31; 1 Corinthians 15:35-58.
- **Share posts** of pictures/ comments on Facebook, #AwakenMDCOC
- **Ask Each Other Questions:**
 - What scares you or makes you nervous?
 - What spiritual seeds can you plant for God's harvest?
 - How can Jesus' story help you face uncertain times?
 - When visible, what do the sprouts mean to you?



Ruth, invitations to trust, God's unbiased Holy Spirit, and the birth of the Christian Church (Acts. 2:1ff). It is the desire to express praise and thanksgiving to God who gives and grows. For thousands of years, the Jewish people journeyed with God in this growing season and early Christians received the promised Holy Spirit when the Church was born on this day in history. For Christians, these are not required observances, but a season of opportunity to welcome God's growth. The purpose of a spiritual renewal based on these 50 days is not merely to remember a series of days long ago, but it is to invite a new reality of God's Presence, a transformation of heart, mind, and action; to see ourselves in this season as God's plant and welcome a spiritual experience with a giving God who delights in growing people.

There is evidence that God is working on our behalf — **sprouts**. We usually race past them, just too busy or perhaps assuming growth on earth is the product of a scientific process or merely the result of my hard work. People of faith see the World differently — growth on earth and in the soul is the result of the tender care of a great Gardener. What a privilege that this God invites us to be growth partners in planting, watering and harvest. We have watchful eyes to gratefully nurture those seedling sprouts that God is growing (Children, new believers, good character traits etc). This is a time of intense nurture; while many things are completely out of your control, we have a vital part to play as receptive soil for the implanted Word of God.

Looking Forward ...

In all my personal problems, the hardships of my community and the uncertainties of this week, God is still growing a tiny seed under the surface — not yet visible. This week, join God in the growing season by 1) trusting, 2) walking in step with the Holy Spirit and 3) nurturing others in the growth of God's Garden.