

CHURCH

A 50 Day Spiritual Encounter & Renewal

Welcome

Easter awakens a 50 day spiritual journey on the road to Pentecost – **May 10th marks day 29** in that 50 day journey. It has been a memorable time with the “stay at home” orders and social distancing. We have an ingrained craving for human interaction – we were designed that way. So, we connect via screens and phones and look forward to the time we can all be together. Along with the Bible, the Church (both local and Global) exist to be fellow partners in the process of spiritual formation. We thank God for such a community of faith that is fueled by the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

The Face of Delight



God Delights in the Growth of His Church!

In the Hebrew Bible, God’s people are regarded as the “apple of His eye” (Psa. 17:8; Zech. 2:8). To know that God esteems us that highly is humbling and empowering. You are special indeed — hand-crafted by God as his child. God delights in you; and God places his favor upon the Church that bears the name of his beloved Son. Nowhere is this more evident than on the road to Pentecost when the Church (*Ekklesia* — those “called together”) is officially formed and commissioned. Unlike Moses who was noticeably absent during the 40 days on Mount Sinai before the “first” Pentecost (reception of the Old Covenant), Jesus appears to his disciples, teaches and communes with them (Acts 1:3-4). And the God who gives good gifts has a special blessing in store, but they must wait for it. As the story unfolds in Acts 2, we learn of a God who gives to all liberally. — regardless of typical categories of favor. It’s like a vaccine

This Week ...

- **Write brief entries in your journal.** Preserve your experiences of fear & faith.
- **Share comments or posts** on Facebook at #AwakenMDCOC
- **Dig Deeper in Your Bible.**
Acts 1:1-11; 11:25-26; 12:1-5;
14:23; 15:1-29; Rom. 16:1-16;
Eph. 3:14-21; Col. 1:18-29.

Answer These Questions ...

- How does it feel that you/we are the "apple of God's eye?"
- Describe a time when you experienced spiritual growth?
- Where do you see great things in our church family?
- Where do you see God in the Global Church?
- How does the church help you in your walk with God?
- How are you using your gift(s) to bless church/world?
- Express appreciation to your moms: physical & spiritual.

A Prayer Blessing for You ...

May you be blessed with a church who partners in your spiritual growth. A gathering of people who edify, encourage and empower you to live faithful. And may you know that God delights in you and your participation with your local, imperfect family of fellow students of Jesus.

has been discovered against human strife and this Gospel healing is very contagious. On that day, about 3,000 students sign up to follow Jesus from varying backgrounds and are baptized. Mutual support and encouragement across barriers of ethnicity begins. A new era has dawned — God is not locked in a cultural prison. And this diversity will be a strength to unlock tremendous spiritual growth. May we celebrate the God who delights in us and enables us to cross cultural classification to enjoy harmony & purpose.

Pentecost = The Birthday of Jesus' Church



Everyone loves a great birthday party where God's creation of a special person is celebrated. ***Pentecost is sometimes called the Birthday of the Church.*** The Church of Jesus Christ is different than anything the World has ever known. This is a new body of believers, placed into an unbreakable communion with God through the sacrifice of Christ, a God who clearly (now) has no favorites regarding language, race, ethnic power, gender or economic ability — Jesus taught it and Pentecost powerfully confirms it. We find a common bond in the eternal God who has gifted us equally with the Holy Spirit — empowering us to live radically different lives. Even though the Church is flawed and imperfect, God ensures that this redeemed and empowered new community of believers will remain until Jesus comes to bring us home.