And The Journey Continues…

Early in February we began a journey throughout Lent to ‘walk to Jerusalem with Jesus’. We did walk but we also visited people, prayed, ran, worshiped and added all our miles for these events together trying to accumulate the number of miles that would help us reach Jerusalem. Maybe our goal was too ambitious. Maybe the weather stayed too cold too long. Maybe 33 people needed to walk a lot more miles than we ever thought!

So our journey continues. We are continuing our Walk to Jerusalem with Jesus and have extended our goal to Pentecost! As of today, we have only 2327.6 miles to go! Because we had a devotional guide as we walked up to Easter, I thought we ought to have a devotional guide for this other half of the walk too. The topics are as follows and they come from Amy Sander Montanez, D.Min @ <https://www.buildfaith.org/the-great-fifty-days-of-easter/amp/> plus some thoughts and ideas I had. Here are 6 suggestions I borrowed from her:

1. Pursue Virtue

2. Be Grateful

3. Easter Greeting

4. Enjoy Nature

5. Make a Special Delivery or share Easter in a special way

6. Be creative: Dabble in painting, try drawing, writing songs or poetry.

What I’ve come to realize is that we each need motivation. We each need to have a goal, a shared activity, a reason to get up and go. to walk, run, bike, pray, work, live. What’s your reason? How do you motivate yourself? I find I need a purpose each day. Maybe it’s writing or visiting someone. And when I am feeling really complacent or mentally tired, the little boost of getting more steps/miles by walking not only helps me recuperate but I enjoy that those miles help us as a group reach Jerusalem by Pentecost.

Life has more meaning when I spend time examining ‘what virtues do I need to work on?’ or ‘what am I grateful for?’ not just the same things that are easy to recite each day. These inner contemplations keep me looking deeper and living more intentionally each day. Some of these may be harder for us than others. I find I need to do the harder ones because they are the ones that stretch my life, heart or abilities a bit further than before. Stretching me to see what is really at the heart of my life and soul?

During this Eastertide, the 50 days between Easter and Pentecost (which is May 20th 2018) let us live enjoying that the resurrection is fully realized not only in the Bible but our own lives as well. May we discover the parts of us that still need Jesus and his resurrection truth moment by moment and experience his re-creation as we walk on in our journey with him.

If you are interested in all the rest of the activities for these six areas, they are included in the next two pages. If you’d like to join our Journey, contact me, Pastor Karen at gerrardstpc@gmail.com for your number and how to add your miles to ours on our Journey to Jerusalem with Jesus. On to Pentecost!

**Walk to Jerusalem with Jesus Part II**

Easter to Pentecost Devotional: Ways to be more in tune in our faith as we walk to Jerusalem during the 50 days to Pentecost. This was adapted from: 8 Ideas for Living The Fifty Days of Easter

**1. Pursue Virtue**

Pick a few virtues you would like to work/play with. Linda Popov has created virtue cards and the Family Virtues Guide. Pick one virtue a week for each week of Easter. Honesty, Discipline, Compassion, Gentleness, Cheerfulness, Prudence, Forgiveness, Kindness, Mercy (for more go to https://www.virtuesproject.com/Pdf/Poster.pdf ).

Gal. 5:22-26 NIV But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

As you walk this week meditate on what virtues or fruit you could use extra help with. Practice this virtue or fruit during Easter. Tell your friends or family what virtue you are holding in your consciousness and ask for their help.

**2. Be Grateful**

Notice and be grateful for something new for fifty days in a row. Really. Something you’ve never ever been grateful for before. Not the same old, “I am grateful for my family.” Or “I am grateful for our home”, but something you have never noticed before. More like, “I’ve never noticed the how the petals of that rose curl over at the edges.” Or, “Son, I never noticed how carefully you load the dishwasher.” Or, “You know, those new towels are really soft. They feel luxurious against my skin.”

NIV Colossians 3:15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

As you walk this week meditate on something new each day for which you can give thanks. Write your ‘gratitudes’ down and share them with someone.

**3. Easter Greeting**

Start every morning by saying to your family, “Happy Eastertide!” Wake your children with this life-changing message. “Good Morning, Child of Mine. Guess what? Love wins!” Kiss your partner with a “Happy Easter” wish. If you live alone, look yourself in the mirror and say, with enthusiasm, “Happy Easter, Beautiful!”The life giving work of Resurrection is ours every day.

Jn. 10:10-11 NIV The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

As you walk this week contemplate what the resurrection means in work life, home life, even as we re-create, and celebrate life this week. How does Jesus’ resurrection give me life to the full?

**4. Enjoy Nature**

Make an intention to spend extra time in nature. The life-death-life cycle is apparent this time of year. The hydrangea leaves come back on the dead wood. Amazing. The hosta that disappeared are poking out their first shoots and saying, “See, you just thought we were gone. We’re back!”

2 Cor. 5:17 NIV Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

As you walk this week meditate on the part of creation that insists that life comes back and beauty returns. What new creative shoots are springing up in you?

**5. Make a Special Delivery or share Easter in a special way**

Take an Easter basket to someone who needs a little love in their life. When they say, “But Easter passed a few weeks ago,” assure them that it is still Eastertide and that you are observing the fifty days of Easter. Have a party for Eastertide.

Acts 1:3 NIV After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

As you walk this week meditate on what Jesus is showing you during this Eastertide and how you can share Easter with others.

**6. Be creative: Dabble in painting, try drawing, writing songs or poetry.**

For example: try writing a haiku. If you’ve never tried it, play with the idea of creating some simple verses. The pattern for haiku is 5-7-5 syllables per line. Anyone can do it. Here’s one to get you started.

Fifty Easter days

Long enough for love to win?

Game over. Deep breath.

Isa. 65:17 NIV "See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.

As you walk this week meditate on God’s new heavens and new earth. God is still creator and we are made in God’s image. What creative ways is God calling you to respond to Easter?

He is Risen! Let’s celebrate Easter, this glorious time in our liturgical year. Soon enough we will be back to Ordinary Time. Happy Easter. Alleluia. He is Risen!

Many of these ideas came from: Amy Sander Montanez, D.Min., a licensed professional counselor, licensed marriage & family therapist and spiritual director for over twenty years. She blogs weekly at Amy Sander Montanez. https://www.buildfaith.org/the-great-fifty-days-of-easter/amp/