

Near the Cross Emmaus



April 2012
Volume 7, Issue 4

EMMAUS VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Walks #23 and #24 are quickly approaching and there is still much preparation and planning left to do. In final preparation for the Walks there are still opportunities available for you if you were not able to serve on an on-site team for either Walk. If you are interested please contact the Board Member listed for each committee.

AGAPE

Dining Table and Bed Agape are needed for both Walks. These are small items for everyone which usually include a Bible verse or saying designed to encourage the pilgrims or team members. These items are presented by Churches, Reunion Groups or individuals. Churches and Reunion Groups may have the name of the group and town on the agape; however, individuals should give their agape anonymously, in love. The number of pieces you can give are 31 for bed agape, 54 for dining table agape and/or 75 for the entire team. Contact Sara Frazier at wsfrazier@live.com.

LOGISTICS

The NEAR the Cross trailer contains all the supplies for each walk. We need volunteers to help organize and inventory after each walk. Also, if you would be interested in helping transport trailer to campsite contact Travis Emery at tlemery@landolakes.com.

REGISTRAR

We still have room for more pilgrims on both Men and Women's Walks. Pilgrim and sponsor applications can be found on our website www.nearthecrossemmaus.org. Please return to Bob Rogers (bobgoeagle@att.net) as soon as possible.

KITCHEN

In order to eliminate food waste on Walks, Snack Table Sponsorships were set up. This also allows reunion groups or individuals to give an act of agape. If you or your reunion group would like to sponsor a table please send a check for \$35 to Sherri Slaven, NTC Treasurer at 1189 Hwy 91, Bono, AR 72416. In the memo line of the check please write "Snack Table."

Also if you are available to help set up the campsite on Thursday at noon before each walk your help would be greatly appreciated. Contact Keith Churchill at kchurchill10@gmail.com.

PRAYER

Prayer is an essential part of preparation and Walk weekends. Please be in prayer for pilgrims, sponsors and team.

The 72-hour Prayer Vigil still has slots available. Log on to our website and sign up. Contact Betty Waser at betty018@centurytel.net.

LUGGAGE &TRANSPORTATION

Drivers are needed for Thursday and Saturday evenings and Sunday afternoon. Although a CDL license is required for the buses, you do not need a special license to drive the vans.

Volunteers are needed to load luggage at Cornerstone from Send Off and unload at campsite on Thursday evening. Volunteers are also needed to load luggage from campsite and unload at Cornerstone at Closing on Sunday. Contact Sherri Slaven at sherrislaven@yahoo.com.

CANDLELIGHT

Volunteers are needed to help set up Mt. Zion church at 6:00pm Saturday evening before Candlelight. And are also needed to stay until pilgrims leave church to clean up and reset the church for their Sunday morning services.

We are also needing 4th Day Speakers for Candlelight. The talk should be 15-20 minutes and discuss your 4th days since your Emmaus Walk. Contact Jeff Branch at branch@paragouldlawyer.com if you would like to assist in Candlelight setup/cleanup or giving a 4th Day Talk.

FOLLOW UP MEETING

Please attend the monthly Gathering at FUMC Saturday, May 5th at noon to welcome new members.

IMPORTANT DATES

April 12-15

Men's Walk #23
LD: Mark Belk

April 12

Walk #23 Send Off
Cornerstone UMC- 7:00pm

April 14

Walk #23 Candlelight
Mt. Zion Baptist - 7:00pm

April 15

Walk #23 Closing
Cornerstone UMC - 4:45pm

April 19-22

Women's Walk #24
LD: Linda Secor

April 19

Walk #24 Send Off
Cornerstone UMC - 7:00pm

April 21

Walk #24 Candlelight
Mt. Zion Baptist - 7:00pm

April 22

Walk #24 Closing
Cornerstone UMC - 4:45pm

September 13-16

Men's Walk #25
LD: Jim Markley

September 20-23

Women's Walk #26
LD: Shelly Fulks

WHAT HAPPENS IN EMMAUS REUNION GROUPS?

Persons traditionally refer to the follow-up groups as "group reunions" or reunion groups," though they have other names as well, such as "fourth day groups," "accountability groups," "share groups," "discipleship groups," and "Christian support groups." The follow-up groups have a common purpose: our perseverance in grace. Group members reinforce one another's desire to maintain constant communion with Christ and contact with other Christians who share a vision of life lived wholly in the grace of God.

Emmaus group reun-

ions meet at regular times, usually weekly for an hour. The meeting consists of persons' sharing the stories of their walk with Christ during the past week. The pattern on the reunion card, which everyone receives on the third day of the Emmaus Walk, guides the sharing.

First, each person reviews his walk with Christ through the practice of the threefold discipline of vital piety, study and service. Second, each person reflects on the ways she has experienced Christ's presence and calls to action. Third, each person shares plans for living out his or

Her discipleship in the week to come. The meeting concludes with announcements and closing prayers.

Men and women commonly form separate groups. But many groups form without regard to gender. Some people prefer groups that include men and women.

If you are not currently in a reunion group check out our website to see when a group meeting times that meet your schedule. Or contact Tom McDonald for more information on reunion groups and meeting times at tommcdonald@gmail.com

Opening Weekend of Deer Season

We took a little walk
Represented by a chicken
The scriptures were read
Sins took a lickin

Song after song all while we wait
Hoped I was wrong
But breakfast was late

We sought the Lord
We kept a walking
John, Joe and their buddies
They did the talking

Communion was great
Wish we had more
Sins in a basket
Dropped blood on the floor

I felt the Lord
I knew he was here
He saved my soul
And probably a deer

Anonymous Pilgrim

NEAR the Cross, Men's Walk #21

COMMENTS SOUGHT ON BY-LAWS CHANGE

Current By-Laws state:
Article VI: Walk to Emmaus, Section 9: Follow – Up Meeting. On the Tuesday evening after each Emmaus weekend a Follow-Up meeting shall be held with the new pilgrims to encourage them to form Group Reunions, to provide them instruction in Sponsorship, and to orient them to the Walk to Emmaus movement and the ways to promote sustaining the feeling by participation in monthly Gatherings, membership service on weekend teams and other service opportunities.

The proposed change reads:
On the Saturday of the first Gathering following an Emmaus weekend, a Follow-Up meeting shall be held with the new pilgrims to encourage them to form Group Reunions, to provide them instruction in Sponsorship, and to orient them to the Walk to Emmaus movement and the ways to promote sustaining the feeling by participation in monthly Gatherings, membership service on weekend teams and other service opportunities.

Article XI: Revisions of the By-Laws... "Any proposed revisions are to be reviewed and approved by a 2/3 vote of the Board, then submitted to the community for review and comments for a period of 30 days. The Board may then ratify the approved changes.

Please contact the Board if you have any questions or comments regarding the By-Laws change proposed.

Near the Cross Emmaus

President

Jim Markley
4109 Stephanie Drive
Jonesboro, AR 72401
jmarkley_best@msn.com

Registrar

Bob Rogers
P.O. Box 11
Blytheville AR 72316
bobgoeagle@att.net

Newsletter

Haley Mitchell
2004 Wild Turkey Trail
West Plains, MO 65775
haley_jo_01@yahoo.com

Newsletter Distribution Changes

In order to cut costs, we have recently updated our newsletter mailing list. If you or your spouse's email address is listed within our database you will begin receiving newsletters via email beginning in May. If you would like to continue to receive through mail and not email please let us know by sending an email to haley_jo_01@yahoo.com.

Check us out on the web!

www.nearthecrossemmaus.org
Find sponsor & work forms,
find reunion groups and
upcoming events.

"Thy servant hears" "Thy servant hears"

I Samuel 3:10

4th Day Talk Rev. Ted DeWeese

Do you remember how you responded to those two questions: "What did this walk mean to you, and what are you going to do about it?"

In my response, I described how I was feeling about myself and my ministry before the walk, and I wanted to make a bold response to the walk experience. I said that I came to the walk a broken man, tired, wounded, beaten down, ready to throw in the towel.

Ideally, Emmaus tells us not to encourage pilgrims to go on a walk in order to "fix" them. But that's exactly what I needed: to be fixed, healed, made whole again. I needed whatever the weekend had to offer. And because I had resisted ten years of invitations and encouragements to attend an Emmaus walk, my sponsor jumped on the opportunity to get me signed up.

My walk almost ended at send-off. However it happened, my name was left off the pilgrim list. I was so desperate to hear my name called, and then...nothing. I had to call my own name. Then as I followed the group to the conference room I could hear the lay director behind me speaking to someone and making light of the omission. I was crushed. Had he only known how fragile this pilgrim was...if my sponsor hadn't had that weekend responsibilities as Spiritual Director I would have demanded to leave.

But I stayed, and I'm so glad I did. In the nine years since my walk I have found so many opportunities to tell people that without Emmaus, and without such a wonderfully powerful experience of God's love and grace, I am no longer in ministry.

Before my walk, I was at a point of burn-out. I was set to become one of those statistics spoken of by my Bishop: over 50% of clergy leave ministry before they reach 10 years of service.

The turning point (and my answer to the second question) came to me during the Justifying Grace talk. My summary of that talk contained two words: "*I surrender*." The poster I made was simply a white flag. Everything about the walk and my future in ministry changed during that talk. I wanted to hand over control of my life to the Living and Loving God.

So on that Sunday afternoon, I said that I had a new message for my District Superintendent. Rather than say, "I quit," I was committed to telling him, "Not my will, but God's will be done."

I was ready to begin my fourth day journey with a song in my heart:

*"All to Jesus I surrender,
All to Him I freely give;
I will ever love and trust Him,
In His presence, daily live.
I surrender all, I surrender all.
All to Thee, my blessed Savior,
I surrender all."*

So I went home to my family and my church with a renewed sense of call, a new purpose, and a resolute commitment. Daily I would put myself in the hands of God.

I would trust God to take whatever I had to offer in ministry and turn it into fruit for his Kingdom. And more tellingly, I would trust that God was active in the appointment process, and that the Cabinet would match my name to the church where God wanted me to serve.

My commitment to experiencing good fourth days didn't last even to the end of the month! I had that consultation meeting with my District Superintendent. And I told him what I had said to God and to the Emmaus community. I was committed to living out, "not my will, but God's will be done." That all sounded so good and righteous.

But the truth told a different tale. I expected the D.S. to read between the lines, to remember how badly I wanted and needed a new appointment. I had done my part, and I had made my vow. Now it was his turn to get me out of that appointment! And you know what he did? He faithfully listened to my words and not my intent. He left me there! For two more years!

My unconditional surrender turned out to be very conditional. (Would you agree with me that "conditional surrender" is an oxymoron?) The song I was so intent on singing had changed if only by a single, all important word:

*"All to Jesus I surrender, Lord,
I give myself to thee;
Fill me with Thy love and power,
Let Thy blessing fall on me.
I surrender some.
I surrender some.
Some to Thee, my blessed Savior,
I surrender some."*

I had so wanted to give in, give up, let go. But I keep finding myself with my hands firmly gripping my life and future. It is much easier to say surrender than it is to actually trust God day by day.

Without realizing it I find myself in some kind of hot water. Every time I do, I fall again into that downward spiral of burn-out and defeat. Every time I do, the kingdom, the church and I all lose!

It is with the help of my Reunion Group, as well as my clergy covenant group, that I come back to my promise. It is with their encouragement that I once again accept the challenge to follow in the way of Jesus and surrender my will to God.

As this time of Lent began I remembered my vow from nine years ago, and I offered to give up something different this year. I told my congregation that I was giving up control: control over God, control over the church, control over my life. My job is *not* to be in control; my job is to be powerless. When I accept the gift of powerlessness and choose for God to be in control, my fourth days have much more likelihood of being both good and faithful.

When I take control, my days are not so good. And so I continually have to choose *surrender*.

My dear Emmaus sisters and brothers: remember. Remember your answers to those two questions. Remember the love of Jesus and the grace of God. And remember Jesus' promise to send the Holy spirit to help you on the journey. And remember, too, you have a community to help hold you accountable in all your fourth days.

De Colores!