

Near the Cross Emmaus



January 2012
Volume 7, Issue 1

Tentative Walk Dates

(All dates are subject to
decision of Mt. Zion Baptist
Association after Jan. 2.)

Men's Walk #23

April 12-15

Mark Belk, Lay Director

Women's Walk #24

April 19-22

Linda Secor, Lay Director

Men's Walk #25

Sept. 13-16

Jim Markley, Lay Director

Women's Walk #26

Sept. 20-23

Shelly Fulks, Lay Director

Site

Mt. Zion Baptist Camp
near Walcott

Sendoff & Closing
1st United Methodist,
Jonesboro

Candlelight
Mt. Zion Baptist Church

1st Gathering of 2012 to be Jan. 7

Meet Your New Board Members

Marion Fleming, Cherokee Village.

Born in Malvern, Rev. Fleming grew up in Little Rock, graduated University of Arkansas, Monticello, and St. Paul Seminary, Kansas City. Among many churches he has served include Marked Tree, Salem, Pottsville, Corning and associate at First Methodist, Jonesboro.

He and Vicki have a son, Greg, and a grandchild, Katie. They lost two children and one grandchild in a tragic fire at Hot Springs in 2011.

Travis Emery, Caraway.

Attended school at Riverside, then college at Arkansas Northeastern and Arkansas State. He works in sales for Agriliance, a retail store for seed, chemicals and fertilizer. Travis and Casey have a new baby, Ava Noelle.

Sara Frazier, Pocahontas.

Born and raised in Minnesota, Sara married Willie and moved to Arkansas. They have been blessed with 3 children: Calvin, Skylar and Samuel. She is a teacher's aide in Pocahontas.

Shelly Fulks, Gosnell.

She calls herself an "Army Brat," living throughout the world. She and Steve have two girls: Arnie and Gracie. Shelly teaches at Gosnell and works with Steve in their family business.

Haley Mitchell, West Plains, Mo.

Haley grew up in Wilson, graduating from Rivercrest High and Arkansas State with a degree in journalism. She and Justin met at ASU, married in 2005 and opened Colton's Steakhouse and Grill in West Plains. She works at Great Rivers Distributing Co.

1st United Methodist, Jonesboro to Host

Gather at noon on the first Saturday in January to join other members of the Near the Cross Emmaus community in fellowship and worship of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Following a potluck meal we will hear a Fourth Day speaker and then celebrate Holy Communion.

Rev. Marion Fleming has scheduled outstanding speakers for us in 2011 and we are sure he will have others in 2012.

This is a time for our whole community to bond together, so please make every effort to attend. A strong community begins with well attended gatherings. Childcare will be provided.

Website Provides Forms You Need

www.nearthecrossemmaus.org

If you plan to sponsor a Pilgrim, go to the website for sponsor forms and Pilgrim forms.

For those wanting to work at an upcoming Walk, find worker forms on the website.

Also, you can contact Bob Rogers, PO Box 11, Blytheville AR 72316, call (870) 532-5066 or bobgoeagle@att.net

I was hungry... I was hungry...

Matthew 25:35

Rick Fahr

(Rick Fahr writes a column that appears in the *Jonesboro Sun*. A native of Weiner, he now is publisher of the *Conway Log Cabin Democrat*. This is reprinted with his permission. His e-mail address is: rick.fahr@thecabin.net

A teacher friend shared the story a few years ago. Since then it's alternated between the back and middle of mind.

She said that one day she noticed one of her second graders nearly dozing off in class. As the children made their way to the first recess, the teacher held back this little girl. She asked her why she was sleepy. Was she up too late the night before?

No. Well, yeah. She and her little brother were waiting for Mommy to come home. Mommy didn't come home — at all. The only thing in the "home" to eat was a can of corn, and so that's what she and her little brother ate the night before.

The girl had gotten herself and her brother ready for school. Still no Mommy. No breakfast.

The child's matter-of-fact recital of the heart-wrenching tale implied that this wasn't the first time the children had fended for themselves. It wasn't the first time they had been hungry. Likely, it wouldn't be the last.

The teacher took the child to the faculty lounge and found enough to compose a passable breakfast. With the child taken care of, the teacher allowed herself, behind a closed door, a few moments and more than a few tears.

Leave drugged-up, abusive or otherwise worthless parents for another day.

Child hunger is an issue that absolutely, positively can't have partisan, geographical or philosophical degrees. Can't rational human beings all simply agree that no child should go hungry? Ever?

Yet, depending on the organization compiling the stats, at least one in five

and probably one in four children in these United States faces hunger on a regular basis. Arkansas ranks among the top five for hunger issues.

Undernourished children, especially young children, can fall behind their peers cognitively and academically. They can't learn if they can only focus on where their next meal is coming from. We're setting them up to fail from the start.

It's not a child's fault that his or her parents aren't the Cleavers. The child had no say in the circumstances in which he or she lives. This is not a debate over social policy; it's a matter of life, of the quality of life and of death. Children find themselves between a rock and an empty cupboard and refrigerator. It's not their choice, but it is their lot in life, at least for the time being. Why don't they say something to someone who can help?

Shame and fear, their constant companions, along with a lack of energy and focus that makes each day one of mere existence, rather than of learning and growing.

These children aren't in ballet class or on the traveling baseball team, but they're not all poster material either. They can be the boy next door who takes two cookies from the offered batch, hoping no one notices, and the girl the cafeteria workers give a bit of extra potatoes because they know a hungry girl when they see one.

What are we doing to solve this awful truth?

To be sure, many charitable organizations offer meals to thousands and thousands, and food banks across the country serve local communities night and day.

Are federal leaders on the case?

They're busy trying to slice and dice their way to cutting funds that help combat child hunger by debating how much tomato paste turns a pizza slice into a vegetable-laden nutritious lunch.

School lunches and breakfasts are

the only meals millions of children receive each year. Targeting such programs for cuts while allowing tax breaks for nearly anyone is an unconscionable failure of adults to protect children. It can't stand.

Maybe solving this societal horror story is something as simple as individual effort. Volunteer at a soup kitchen one night. Take a box of food to school with instructions that a teacher give it to a child in need.

Leftovers? They might make a world of difference to the family down the street.

The young teacher's visceral response is the response all of us should have before it gets any closer.

It's already too close.

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How You Can Help

Contact counselors at your local school to find out how to fill a need.

Other Opportunities:

Salvation Army
(870) 932-3785

Helping Neighbors Food Pantry
(870)-935-7298

Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas
(870) 932-3663

First Baptist, Jonesboro
(contact Kathy Holler @ 932-3456)

Fisher Street Methodist, Jonesboro
(870) 932-4814

City Youth Ministries
118 Burke, Jonesboro
Rennell Woods @ 932-9398

If you find other helpers,
send email to:
tomnmcdonald@gmail.com