

# Near the Cross Emmaus



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## WALK #23 LAY DIRECTOR MARK BELK

After five years of his brother, David's, persistence, Mark Belk finally agreed to attend the Walk to Emmaus at Noah's of ARK. When he realized that the Walk weekend fell on his wedding anniversary, he knew he would be able to get out of going. But to his surprise, Jill, his wife, insisted that he attend Walk #82 in January of 2001.

Mark went on to sponsor several pilgrims and serve on Walks at Noah's of ARK, prior to the establishment of NEAR the Cross.

For several years he has

been involved with reunion groups as small as three and as large as eight. He currently is active in a reunion group with two other men.

Mark and Jill were both very involved in the establishment of NEAR the Cross. Mark served on the first Board and served two years as the Board Kitchen Chair. During his progressive servant hood he has served at least once in the conference room, agape, kitchen and prayer teams during Walk weekends.

He has received many blessings not only from his

Pilgrim Walk but also from serving on Emmaus teams. He gets charged up by seeing people of all denominations coming together to grow in Christ. Because Emmaus is Ecumenical, he has been able to sponsor pilgrims from six churches.

"I also think it is simply awesome to see what God does when we set aside 72 hours to push away from the rat race and be available to him," states Mark.

Mark and Jill reside in Jonesboro and have 3 children: Kaitlyn, 18; Kristyn, 14; and Nathan, 9.

## WALK #24 LAY DIRECTOR LINDA SECOR

Over 20 years ago, Linda Secor went on her pilgrim walk at Noah's of ARK Walk #18 in the Fall of 1990. During her pilgrim Walk, Linda states she was very quiet and shy but mostly because she was trying to take in all that she could during the Walk.

Since then, Linda has served on several Emmaus Walks in many different elements. She has served as Lay Director at Noah's of ARK Walk #69, AR Chrysalis Flight #11 and NEAR the Cross Walk #4.

Serving on Walks are not the only way Linda has

stayed connected with the Emmaus Community. She meets weekly with the West Memphis Searchlight Reunion Group and also with the Pancake Group, which consists of four to five Emmaus members that meet once a week and solve the world's problems over pancakes.

Linda's *DeColores* bumper sticker has also kept her in touch with Emmaus members in her travels. She says she is always amazed at the people who drive by her showing off their Emmaus t-shirts, key chains or bumper stickers at 70 mph on the highway.

When called to serve as LD on Walk #24, Linda said she took about a week to pray about it. And it was after a dream that she had about serving on an Emmaus Walk with her friend and Emmaus Sponsor Forrest Dunlap (now deceased) that she realized she needed to say "yes" to God's call once again.

With Walk #24 being exactly 5 years apart from the last Walk as serving as Lay Director, Linda says it all is coming together with the help of all of her Emmaus friends and Community just as God planned!

## IMPORTANT DATES

### March 9 & 10

Training-Walks #23 & #24  
Conference Room Team  
Cornerstone United Methodist  
(Childcare available on 10th)

### March 31

Training-Walks #23 & #24  
Conference Room and  
Support Teams  
Cornerstone United Methodist  
(Childcare available)

### April 12-15

Men's Walk #23  
LD: Mark Belk

### April 14

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

### April 19-22

Women's Walk #24  
LD: Linda Secor

### April 21

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

### September 13-16

Men's Walk #25  
LD: Jim Markley

### September 20-23

Women's Walk #26  
LD: Shelly Fulks

# AGAPE NEEDED IN THE PHILIPPINES

Over six years ago, many members of the Emmaus community gathered together to establish an Emmaus community in Northeast Arkansas. After lots of planning, preparing and praying the NEAR the Cross community held its first Walks in the fall of 2006.

Those serving on the steering committee and on teams for the first walks know first hand how much work went into starting a new Emmaus community. Several Emmaus communities from Arkansas, surrounding states and the nation sent not only their prayers but also endless amounts of agape needed for the Walks.

We now have the opportunity as an established community to send our prayers and agape to a new Emmaus

community in the Philippines.

The Philippines Emmaus Walk (PEW) has been underway for three years. Danny Hernaez, member of the Emmaus International Advisory Board, has been the leading force behind the new Emmaus community in the Philippines. Danny, resides with his wife in Humble, Texas and has had the honor of traveling around the US and Asia, upon invitation, to preach the Great Commission. Danny went on his Emmaus Pilgrim walk nearly 19 years ago and since then has served twice as Walk Lay Director, served on two community boards and has also served on a Kairos team.

The Men's Walk for PEW will be May 31-June 3 and the Women's Walk will be June 7-10.

Please be in prayer not only for the Pilgrims but also for Danny and those serving on teams for their upcoming Walks.

Full capacity with workers and pilgrims will be 72 for each Walk. If you or your reunion group would like to send agape you can send to the address below. Please do not send candy or other items that may not ship well through mail. All agape must be mailed by March 31st to make it in time for the Walks.

**Danny Hernaez**  
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Near the Cross Emmaus

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## Check us out on the web!

[www.nearthecrossemmaus.org](http://www.nearthecrossemmaus.org)

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

## PRAYERS & PRAISES

Let us know what is going on with you, your family, friends and other Emmaus Communities by logging on to [www.nearthecrossemmaus.org](http://www.nearthecrossemmaus.org). Post prayer requests, birthdays, anniversaries, deaths, upcoming Walks in other Communities and anything else you need your Emmaus Prayer Warriors praying for!

# He Will Lift You Up

When Marion called and asked me to speak I just couldn't believe they would want me to speak. I asked him why, and he said some women recommended me. Well, I was on cloud nine. In just a few moments the phone rang and it was Marion again. He said "I'm sorry but I made a mistake." I went from cloud nine to zero in five seconds flat. I thought he was going to say he had called the wrong person but instead he had told me the wrong date. Back up to cloud nine.

He asked me to tell you about my journey with Jesus and what Emmaus meant to me. Then it hit me! How can I speak in front of all these people with these tremors I have. I decided God has a purpose for it so I can do it. Sometimes I shake so badly I have to look and see if anything shook off of me. I attended Emmaus walk #20, table of Anna. When they were loading my bags on the truck I thought "what have I gotten myself into? Three days and nights of Bible study. How

wrong was that: constant love, forgiveness, prayers, laughter, skits. How much fun can you have in three days? Then there were letters from family members and friends to be read under God's trees."

These were days I'll never forget. The most important thing that was revealed to me is what can I do for God, not what can I do to make myself look good.

What a healing the world would have if everyone could go on an Emmaus walk!

As far as my life goes, my father was an alcoholic and my

**Glenda Bowers**  
**4th Day Talk**

I Peter 5:6

# He Will Lift You Up

## He Will Lift You Up

**(continued)**  
**Glenda Bowers**  
**4th Day Talk**

parents were not Christians when I was a little girl. My childhood at home was not a good one. I lived in foster homes for a while and I am sorry to say they were not good for me. I remember one place where this lady had many beautiful dresses, telling me that I could have them if I was good. Even if I was the best kid this world has ever seen I wouldn't get the dresses.

I was physically and mentally abused and molested. At another home, there was a little boy who wet the bed. They told him that if he went 3 or 4 days and didn't wet the bed, he could have the beautiful toy car that hung over the dinner table. Somehow, he managed not to wet the bed, but he didn't get the car.

On the brighter side, God gave me the best of grandparents. I couldn't wait to spend the summer at my grandparents in St. Joe. I would ride the tractor with my grandfather and had the time of my life!

When my grandmother asked me to dust mop the floor, I told her I couldn't do it because I was on vacation!

My other grandparents also were wonderful. My grand-mother would scoop me up in her arms in her old rocking chair and we would sing "The Old Rugged Cross" at the top of our lungs. I expected us to flip over backwards because we were rocking so hard. But we never did!

I was saved when I was 9 years old when neighbors took me to church with them. I loved it! I learned stories of Jesus and how He had been with me the whole time, holding my hand and loving me. I couldn't wait to get home to tell my family. My

aunt and her husband, along with my cousin, were there, and they laughed with me when I told them. Not my mom. Just the others.

I left home at 17 and went to work at the courthouse here in Jonesboro. I married a man 11 years older than I was. About a year later, when I wanted to laugh and be silly, he thought I was being stupid. That marriage lasted 6 years and I have two beautiful daughters from it.

I married again about a year later and had a precious little boy about two years later. My husband was a good person and good to me, but that was not my comfort zone. I sought turmoil, so in order to create some turmoil I had an affair. That ended another 6-year marriage.

This relationship was the worst. He was physically and mentally abusive that just about destroyed me. I called my cousin, Billy, who worked with the Little Rock police department to come and get me and the kids. My mother, who was a wonderful Christian, took the children and I stayed with my aunt and uncle (Billy's parents) for three weeks so I could get myself together. I needed to find a house and a job so I could take care of my family.

This is when God looked down and said, "Glenda, I have given you free will but you just aren't doing too well with it." It was time for me to take the wheel. He led me to a good job as office manager with an auction company. An apartment in Maumelle with three bedrooms "just happened" to be across the street from a new church with a wonderful young pastor. I will never forget Pastor Steve.

He taught me so much about the Bible and a Christian life. I was happy for the first time in a very long time.

Three weeks into my new job I had to have major surgery. My insurance had not been in effect long enough to pay for the surgery, so my boss and his wife paid for it. They also gave me six weeks off work with pay. And they wouldn't let me pay them back!

Their loving abundance continued as they frequently took our children out to eat and they took my son to places with their son since they were the same age. Being the office manager, I was aware of their generosity in giving to the church and many charities.

Best of all, this is where I met my husband of 30 years. He came to an auction looking for a bulldozer and found me! He has helped me raise my children as though they were his very own, never once complaining when they wrecked cars (there were lots of them!). He helped them through college, bought them cars, paid insurance, paid for weddings and on and on.

We are regulars in our Methodist church services and Sunday School services. We have five grandchildren now.

Health has been challenging for our family. My husband has had two kidney transplants, my daughter has fought cancer for two years and my health hasn't been great.

**God has my hand and I am holding tightly to His.**

As you leave this place of love, peace, prayer and laughter, to your normal life of children, jobs, problems, etc., remember this: God has been extending his hand for you. Just grab his hand and whatever you do, don't let go of it!

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