

SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:

- **Men's Walk**
Apr. 23-26,
2015
- **Women's**
Walk Apr. 30
-May 3, 2015
- Board meet-
ing Dec. 13,
9 a.m. at
Richfield
UMC

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Minnesota Walk to Emmaus

WWW.MNEMMAUS.ORG

DECEMBER 2014

Come and share your master's happiness

A message from Linda Nelson, your Community Lay Director

His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' — Matthew 25:23

Sharing – that word has been going through my mind since the completion of Walk #106. The women at this walk shared their expressions of what the walk meant to them at the Closing. This is always so moving for those of us in attendance. It is an amazing thing to witness what God is able to do in a mere 72 hour walk for each life present throughout the weekend.

I was thinking about the team—and how beautifully they came together during the team formation process under the leadership of Lay Director Mary Ann Smith. They also shared their time and talents with those 15 newest members of our Community and with each other as they came together to prepare to share with the pilgrims on the weekend. And God blessed them richly for sharing their lives on the weekend.

The Agape Team shared too—behind the scenes—as they so beautifully do—with no thought of recognition, but with true sacrificial giving. And God blessed them for sharing, too! The sponsors shared the Walk to Emmaus with the person they sponsored and what the walk meant to them when they invited one of the 15 women to give up 72 hours to be with God. They shared with their presence at the various events throughout the weekend - sponsors hour, candlelight and closing – and made themselves available on the weekend in whatever ways they could to make the experience a rewarding one for their pilgrim.

The Community shared an expression of outpouring to the pilgrims through agape gifts of all kinds—letter writing, praying, attending candlelight and closing. At closing we were able to share in Holy Communion as we closed out another walk weekend and broke bread together as is the Emmaus tradition.

On behalf of the Board, I want to thank all who shared of themselves for the sake of another. In this season of Sharing, Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas, I am very grateful to all of you. Have a blessed Advent and Christmas!



Welcome New Community Members!

Women's Walk #106 was held October 30 to November 2 at Koronis Ministries near Paynesville. We would like to welcome the following new community members:

Rose Adams

Carol Warneke

Patty Lynn Ballard

Anna Williamson

Susan Berard

Lisa Braun

Judy Dorf

Julie Gerber

Florence Hacklander

Barbara Hanson

Diane Keyport

Susan Perrizo

Cynthia Skjei

Joanne Talbot

Joanne Vest

Please take time to welcome these new folks, and encourage them to join (or help them start) a reunion group.

Do not be afraid,
little flock, for it is
your Father's good
pleasure to give
you the kingdom.

-Luke 12:32

Fourth Day and Reunion Groups

Most reading this will have completed their Walk to Emmaus, many will have attended a Fourth Day Follow-up Gathering in their area (weather permitting), some have checked out how they might be involved in a Reunion Group and some of us are procrastinators.

Our "fourth days" are our reminder that we get together, or rather we get-to-gather. We have first received the gift of an Emmaus Weekend, a most memorable get together where we experience how much we are loved. This is followed by the hard work of understanding and living it out in the mundane and overwhelming experiences of our daily lives. That is why we get together; as receivers we get-to-gather to remember the support that is available to us.

"Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God." **1 John 4:7**

Audrey Benjamin

Ask the Board—Covenants

Q: Why do we have to follow the Emmaus model?

This is actually the perfect time to answer this question. As many of you know over the past two years the Board of Directors has been doing a lot of self-examination, discovering just how and why we strayed from the Emmaus model. I'll be honest with you, recently we have also come under a lot of criticism for trying to return to where the Upper Room would like to see us. This article touches on some very important points for every member of the community to understand.

ANSWER: There are two key elements to understanding this entire discussion. Those words are "covenant" and "model".

Covenant

The word "covenant" is mentioned in the Bible 280 times in the Old Testament and 33 times in the New Testament. "Experts" have varying opinions Biblically, as to what is a covenant. Most tend to feel that it is an agreement, or contract, or a commitment to either do or accomplish something. *Webster's Dictionary* describes it as "a formal, solemn, and binding agreement; contract".

We live in a world of covenants: Thou Shalt drive on the right hand side of the road; Thou Shalt follow the Ten Commandments; Thou Shalt go on Medicare at the age of 65. Everywhere you turn there are those covenants, agreements, and/or contracts starring us in the face. Try breaking one of those and suffer the consequences. Adam & Eve as a matter of fact were the first to go against God and his covenant, "Do not eat from the fruit of the tree of knowledge", and yet Adam & Eve did and the consequences are well known. Follow God's covenant, *Genesis 6:14-16:7:5*, as did Noah in building the ark, and we all know the vast rewards Noah experienced merely by following a covenant.

So how does all of this relate to the Minnesota Walk to Emmaus (MNWTE) Board and Community? Every Board Member is required to sign a document agreeing to follow the Emmaus Model annually. (We'll get into the model shortly.) Yes, actually sign a document saying that everyone on the Board and in the Community will follow the Emmaus Model. Period! No discussion. In the past it had been called a "covenant", "contract", and "agreement". No matter what, it requires all of us, Board and Community to follow "the Emmaus model".

So what is the Emmaus model? For the most part it is *The Upper Room Handbook on Emmaus*, a 158-page document which lays out specifics for every Community in the country to follow. When it gets down to Walk conduct there are three more documents that dictate what can and cannot be said, what the schedule is, and the conduct of Conference Room Team and Agape Team. Beyond that, there are many more manuals and publications that all focus on the word "covenant". Again the author of the handbook states, "*The manuals warrant adherence simply because and Emmaus community operates in covenant with The Upper Room*".

So what is the Board's covenant with the Community? For the most part, it is the bylaws. The Board agrees to conduct themselves in accordance with the bylaws which have been presented to and approved by the community. Hence, the Conference Room Team and Agape Team operate in covenant with the Board of Directors because each Board member, by his or her signature, has agreed that the Walks will be conducted according to the Emmaus model, no matter the Emmaus publication source.

The Emmaus Model

I wish there were a way to put into one short article what the Emmaus model says. Each Board member has been provided a copy of the handbook and is required to know the content or at least where to find information.

A little over two years ago, two Board members and a Community member



While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them . . .
-Luke 24: 15a

Ask the Board (continued)



*Be joyful always,
pray continually.*

-1Thes 5:16-17

were assigned the task of looking at all of the documents published, beginning with *The Upper Room Handbook on Emmaus* and continuing with more than 1,000 more pages of documents, local as well as national, to see where we strayed from the model. The three-month project involved hundreds of email exchanges, long drives, and numerous meetings but the sub-committee came up with seven pages of how we strayed from what the Upper Room covenant requires. In those seven pages were also found opportunities which we had failed to recognize. Honestly, few if any Board Members have ever gone through the extensive research the sub-committee did in three months.

Here is another interesting tidbit and the reason why The Upper Room is so adamant about following the model: Emmaus is the only three-day movement in the United States that is Ecumenical in nature and has a standard format to follow. That means that if you live in Minnesota and winter in a warmer climate, you can go to the area Emmaus Community and participate in a Walk, on team or agape, and participate in an Emmaus small group discussion. Walks in Florida follow the exact format as in Washington State. Talks given in Connecticut follow the same outline as in Arizona.

That principle of uniform programming is not new to the religious community. Bible Study Fellowship (BSF), the oldest Bible study in the country, teaches the same lesson plan at the same time, no matter where you are. Uniformity and conformity have benefits.

Imagine you are about to take a drive from Minnesota to California. You are obeying all of the laws, using your turn signal for exits and lane changes but in Colorado, you get pulled over. The officer explains that in all of the other states you are required to use your turn signal but in Colorado, it is illegal to use your turn signal at all. Now while that is pure fiction, you can see that since Emmaus is uniform from state to state, members are welcomed in all communities with a common set of standards and publications.

Options

At the Board level there have been options discussed in the past. One option was to dissolve our association with Emmaus and break out on our own. There are **ramifications. We would save \$13 per pilgrim but that's about it. We would have to** retain an attorney, incorporate, and file as an independent 501 c3. We would have to write our own three day event with standard outlines, and scripts. Dissolving has been done in the past. For example, Maryland Emmaus had been using clowns during their Walks. The Upper Room said no to that. Maryland continued and The Upper Room said no a little more emphatically. Maryland proposed dissolving their association with The Upper Room and 92% of their membership voted in favor of creating their own three-day event in Maryland. This was a recent event so it is hard to gauge their success or failure.

Dissolving or getting kicked out of Emmaus would have the same ramifications. The third option leaves us with complying with the Emmaus model.

I'll be honest with you; the model does cripple us in many ways. For example, the model prohibits Board members from sponsoring pilgrims or serving on the Conference Room Team. Not being able to serve on Team hurts us the most because when we make our phone calls to get good qualified candidates for the Board, 95% of the time we get rejected because of the inability to serve on Team for three years. The only leeway we were permitted was with issues relating to our large geographical region. We serve all of Minnesota and segments of Wisconsin and a sliver of Iowa. Trying to have representatives all over the territory has forced us to use GoToMeeting for some members of our Board.

In the future, an article will address how we resolve our geographical constraints. It will require help and cooperation from a large segment of our Community. I hope you will help.

—Pete Schenck

Important things to remember when you are ready to sponsor....

P	Pray	Prayer is so important in sponsorship. Pray first. Pray before ever asking someone to consider taking an Emmaus Walk. Ask God whom you should sponsor. Listen for God's answer. Don't rush the decision. Remember, we're on God's time and His time is perfect.
I	Inform	Pilgrims need to be informed. Don't rush their decision. Inform them about the objectives of the Emmaus Walk. Let them think about going. Ask them to pray about their decision. Meet with them a few times to answer questions. Help them make an informed decision.
L	Letters	The letters the Pilgrim will receive are so important. Start with the spouse. If the spouse has not attended a walk, ask them to write a private 'love letter' to their partner. Next, contact the parents and close friend to get other names. Explain the nature and purpose of the letters. Obtain just 8-12 letters.
G	Gatherings	Your job of sponsorship doesn't end at closing. Explain about the Gatherings before they fill out the registration form. Let them know that you will be picking them up for their first Gathering after their walk. This is another act of sponsorship agape.
R	Reunion Groups	As a sponsor, you should definitely help your pilgrim find a Reunion Group. Work with the Pilgrim, and the Community 4 th Day Chair to find the pilgrim an existing Reunion Group, or help your pilgrim start their own Reunion Group.
I	Invitation	Invite the Pilgrim to your home a few days following the end of their Walk. Use this time of discussion to share thoughts about their experience. Reinforce the goals of the Emmaus Walk Program. Make arrangements for attending the next Gathering and discuss Reunion Groups.
M	Marriage	Marriage is Holy. Invitations should be extended to both and they should both be encouraged to attend an Emmaus Walk. If one spouse refuses, it is best not to immediately invite the other. Instead, commit to praying about the decision for six months. If the two are still split on the issue, proceed very prayerfully.
S	Secrets	There are no secrets in the Emmaus Program! Give the pilgrim all the information they need to make an informed decision. People going through the program, knowing all about the talks, the communions and even candlelight, are still powerfully moved by the weekend. No Secrets.

Minnesota Walk to Emmaus
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Time and Talent—**It's all about You!** The Time and Talent sheets have been revised to reflect our new community structure. Please check our website in the near future to complete one of these. Information will be sent out via e-mail when the update on our site is available.

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