

**SPECIAL  
POINTS OF  
INTEREST:**

- Men's Walk  
Apr. 23-26,  
2015
- Women's  
Walk Apr. 30  
-May 3, 2015
- Board meet-  
ing Mar 14,  
9 a.m. at  
Richfield  
UMC

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# Minnesota Walk to Emmaus

WWW.MNEMMAUS.ORG

MARCH 2015

## Spring Walk Season is Upon Us!

A message from Linda Nelson, your Community Lay Director

This spring's Walk season is upon us and we all have opportunities to bless each Walk with prayer and participation. The leadership and teams for Walks 106 and 107 are in place and will begin their orientation and team training together on March 7 at Hilltop United Methodist Church in Mankato under the guidance of Lay Directors, **Bruce Schroeder and Terry Berg**. The teams will enjoy a very powerful experience as they are formed and bond for the common purpose of leading and serving the Pilgrims on their journey with Christ as a new Pilgrim. The presence of the Holy Spirit is ever so evident through Team Training, each Team Meeting, and with every celebration of worship and Communion throughout the team formation meetings. Prayer is an important component for the walks and as mentioned above, we have the opportunity/privilege to support each Walk with our prayers. Please keep the teams, sponsors and potential pilgrims in your thoughts and prayers over the coming months in the following ways ...

Pray for the Walks, that they meet our Father's purpose and give glory to our Lord

Pray for the team members who have accepted the call to serve

Pray for the Sponsors, that the Holy Spirit guides them to seek people that God is placing on their heart to attend this Walk and that they have the courage to plant that seed, perhaps go out of their comfort zone – and invite the prospective pilgrim to hear the invitation

Pray for the potential Pilgrims that they hear the offer with open minds and hearts

Pray for the Clergy as they commit their time to offer spiritual leadership and participation for this ministry

Lastly, we need you to pray for our 4th Day Community to be Sponsors.

Without Sponsors, we won't have Pilgrims and without Pilgrims, we won't have a Walk. Imagine the impact on our community if everyone reached out to share the Emmaus opportunity with someone. We call this "Each One Reach One." If you have never sponsored someone before and want more information, visit our website at [www.mnemmaus.org](http://www.mnemmaus.org) where you'll find forms, sponsorship checklist, and a PowerPoint presentation to help you. With our **EARLY BIRD DISCOUNT** (see below for details) - there IS NO BETTER TIME TO ACT! Abundant Blessings to you all!

**EARLY BIRD DISCOUNT RATE APPLIES UNTIL MARCH 23 FOR THE MEN'S WALK AND MARCH 30 FOR THE WOMEN'S WALK, PROVIDING A DISCOUNT OF \$50.00 FOR A PILGRIM. THE TOTAL COST OF \$125.00 MUST BE PAID IN FULL BY THE DATE LISTED TO RECEIVE THE DISCOUNT.**

## Board of Directors Update

At the board retreat in January, the board agreed on two initiatives to work on throughout this year ...

1. **To engage the community through improved communication**
2. **To develop a strategic plan of sponsorship**

Progress so far ... **Darlene Vandermyde** is heading up activities for **Initiative #1** and is in the process of contacting former leadership to serve in an advisory capacity. Several enhancements have been made on the website thanks to Deni Seablom, including a fillable form for membership to update contact information, a tab for Team Interest for community members to let us know of their interest in serving on a team, and an Agape Central tab to let the community what is needed for the walks in terms of all kinds of agape.

Other improvements in communication have also been made. Feel free to check out the website at [www.mnemmas.org](http://www.mnemmas.org) and have a look. We have also resurrected our Facebook page. Be sure to "like" our page to receive "up-to-the minute" communication.

**Jim Rottinger** is taking on the leadership role for **Initiative #2** and has formed a subcommittee of board and community members who will be presenting at several churches in the next several months and beyond. Churches have been identified and contacts are being made.

## Calling all former Lay Directors

I want to extend an invitation to all former Lay Directors and Community Lay Directors. We value your experience and knowledge which we feel could be beneficial to our Emmaus Community.

The invitation is to be involved in a small group discussion to tap into your Emmaus experience. We would be pleased to receive input and feedback from you as leaders of the Emmaus Community. I plan to set up discussion times and places in several geographic areas of our State.

Please let me know of your availability/interest either by email [d\\_vandermyde@yahoo.com](mailto:d_vandermyde@yahoo.com) or by phone 612-781-9839 cell or 612-781-9839 home.

I will look forward to hearing from you. I am excited to begin these discussions.

Darlene Vandermyde

MN Emmaus Board chair leadership/training



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

*-Luke 12:32*

# Thanks for your Feedback



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

Last month's article on Covenant and Following the Emmaus Model elicited several emails from the community - and we thank you for your positive feedback and comments. I want to clarify that our intent was not to be critical of anyone - community members, former board members, or former walk leadership members. If you were offended by the remarks or took them personally, please accept our sincere apology.

To understand the mindset of the board regarding the model, it is important to go back in time to January, 2013. Our board members were told by our regional leaders from the Upper Room at our board training session, that our community isn't "dead yet, but you're on life support." It was very difficult to hear those words. We were challenged by Nashville to read Nehemiah Chapters 1-4 on rebuilding and dig deep into the manuals to learn the intent of those manuals for quality control and consistency.

In the months that followed, the board took a hard look at why and how we got there, and if we were at the point of needing to close down this community. We discovered many things in this process, most of which had to do with the board and how *we* operated. We discovered that we were way too involved in "putting on walks" versus *over-seeing* the committees formed from the community to conduct walks.

It has been the goal of the board to move forward and to the very best of our ability to follow the covenant we sign with the Upper Room every year. We asked the question as we sought answers "what is the intent of the model?" Also, when questions arose about the walks, we would change our response from "on my walk, we ..." to "let's see what the manual/model says."

Let me give you an example. On my walk (some of you may have had a similar experience), Dying Moments included hand washing as part of the very powerful worship and communion experience. This is not part of the model, though many would argue that this was a very significant part of moving them closer to Christ during their walk. That hand washing was done for a great reason; people were getting sick passing germs to one another in taking each other's broken off piece of bread. The board at that time wanted to ensure we sanitized hands to prevent the spreading of germs. Great intention. Wonderful symbolism. What could be wrong with that?

Several years ago the board decided that it was not part of the model and discontinued the practice. Many have been disappointed to see that removed from the experience, but boards across time have resolved to stay true to the model.

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Be joyful always,  
pray continually. .

-1 Thes 5:16-17

## Feedback (continued)

Items added, enhanced or deleted from the model impact consistency from walk to walk which may detract from the full experience for which the model was designed. The Walk to Emmaus model is a *proven* three-day spiritual renewal for its participants.

### What are some of these essential elements that make the Emmaus Model so successful?

**Prayer** – Emmaus is not just undergirded with prayer, it's lavished with prayer - sacrificial and extravagant prayer in response to God's sacrificial and extravagant Love for us.

**Intentional Seeking of God's Leadership** – In Emmaus, we not only pray for it and light candles acknowledging it, we are excited by the prospect that God is going to do things beyond anything we can imagine if we can just stay out of the way, and are open to God's leadership in every aspect of the Walk from Team Selection to Closing.

**Focus on Agape Love and Humble Service** – "Small things done with Great Love" - recognizing that the Great Love is not our love, but God's Love flowing through us. It's what Agape is all about. Sacrificial and extravagant love is the natural result of sacrificial and extravagant prayer, and humble service is the natural result of intentionally seeking God's Leadership.

**Based on Scripture and Inclusive Theology** – Not just the talks, but the entire model is based on scripture. Emmaus is intentional in including all Christian heritages. The theology presented is inclusive, not because it is watered down to the point no one can disagree, but because the focus is on letting God speak through the talks rather than "this is what I believe."

**Frequent Experiences of Worship and Grace** – From morning and evening devotions to joyful praise and Communion every time we get together, Emmaus is filled with holy moments and means of Grace. But it is not what we do or how we do it that makes Emmaus worship so powerful; it is our openness to God's presence resulting from all of the above that leads to true worship.

**Spirit of Community** – Emmaus is a community of people bonded together by a common experience, an experience of God so powerful in our lives that it overshadows all of our diversity and breaks down the walls we build between ourselves and others. And a community open to the Spirit of God is a community transformed by God into the Body of Christ.

—Linda Nelson

## From Your Community Spiritual Director

Dear Friends in Christ:

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord!

Allow me to introduce myself. I am Rev. Rob Pesola, pastor of two wonderful congregations in Mora and Ogilvie, Minnesota. I am also the new **Community Spiritual Director** for Walk to Emmaus. I have been on board for only a few months and am still learning the position, so I ask for your patience. One of my duties is to write an article for our Walk to Emmaus newsletter, so here I am!

I trust all is well with each of you and you are seeking the Lord deeply during this season of Lent. Lent is a time for self-examination of our hearts and renewed commitment of our faith in Christ. Quite often, during the Lenten season in my parish, I preach about hindrances to our spiritual walk with the Lord, so today I would like to bring a word on the danger of harboring **bitterness** in our lives.

I have found that bitterness is a depressant and it has been my experience there are no happy bitter people. Criticism, cynicism, negativism, pessimism are the marks of a bitter person. Bitterness will depress you and sadden you and even get you to the point where you cannot even function normally.

Edwin Markham was a great poet, who having reached the age of retirement, found out that his banker had defrauded him out of a great sum of money. Instead of retiring to a life of ease, he thought he had earned he ended up penniless and broke. He became so bitter he could no longer even write poetry. The candle of joy had been blown out in his heart by the blaze of bitterness. He became so obsessed with wanting to do this man harm, that all he could do was think about it, and brewed over it. He was obsessed with what this man had done to him and with how he could get even with this fellow. One day, in a depressed funk, he was sitting at his desk just doodling, drawing circles on his paper, thinking about this banker who had stolen all of his money, and he said that the Holy Spirit spoke to him and said, "**Markham, if you do not deal with this thing, it is going to ruin you. You cannot afford the price you are paying. You must forgive that man.**" That great poet said, "**Lord, I will forgive him, and I do freely forgive him.**"

At that exact moment Markham said he could feel the root of bitterness being pulled out. He could feel the river of joy begin to flow back in his heart, and when he did, he said his mind was unshackled, his pen was loosened, and he then sat down and wrote perhaps his most famous poem entitled: **Outwitted**

He drew a circle that shut me out -  
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout;  
But Love and I had the wit to win:  
We drew a circle that took him in.

My friends, bitterness will block the joy that God intends to flow through your heart, mind, soul, and body until it is broken and shattered by the hammer of forgiveness. If you are locked in the prison of bitterness, I encourage you to ask God to give you the strength to forgive. You will find the freedom that He intended you to have and joy will flood you like a mighty rushing river. (continued next page)



Be joyful always,  
pray continually.

-1 Thes 5:16-17



Be joyful always,  
pray continually.

-1Thes 5:16-17

## Community Spiritual Director (cont)

I John 4:20-21 tells us you cannot say you love God and still hate your brother. ***"If someone says, 'love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen...and this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also."***

Don't let bitterness rule your life! God has a higher purpose for you! Amen!

If I can be of any spiritual help to you, please do not hesitate to contact me. God bless you richly this season of Lent.

In Christ,  
Rev. Rob Pesola  
Community Spiritual Director  
Walk to Emmaus

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## Special Emmaus Gathering/Gala Event!

**You are invited to a  
special evening**

**Saturday, August 15, 2015**

**6 to 9 p.m.**

**Spirit River Community Church**

**Isanti, MN**

**Jim Crecelius, Pastor**

**More details to come!**

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

<b>P</b>	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.
<b>I</b>	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.
<b>L</b>	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.
<b>G</b>	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.
<b>R</b>	Reunion Groups	As a sponsor, you should definitely help your pilgrim find a Reunion Group. Work with the Pilgrim, and the Community 4 <sup>th</sup> Day Chair to find the pilgrim an existing Reunion Group, or help your pilgrim start their own Reunion Group.
<b>I</b>	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.
<b>M</b>	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.
<b>S</b>	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**  
**Richfield United Methodist Church**  
**5835 Lyndale Ave. S.**  
**Minneapolis, MN 55419**

**We want to connect with you!** We now have the capability on our recently [improved website](#) to receive updated contact information, express your interest in serving on a team, and letting us know of your questions or suggestions. Go the website: <http://mnemmaus.org/> and check it out! We have also resurrected our [facebook page](#) - <https://www.facebook.com/pages/MN-Walk-to-Emmaus> and will be utilizing this means of communicating with you as well. Please visit our page - and "like" it - and invite your Emmaus friends. It is our prayer that this will be a tool that will increase our connecting with each other - not only for information, but for support and encouragement as well.

### 2015 Minnesota Walk to Emmaus Board of Directors

Linda Nelson	Community Lay Director	612-655-1899	cld@mnemmaus.org
Robert Pesola	Community Spiritual Director	320-364-3764	csd@mnemmaus.org
Pete Schenck	Secretary	612-791-3356	secretary@mnemmaus.org
Jeff Adams	Treasurer/Facilities	507-340-2432	treas@mnemmaus.org
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