

**SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:**

- Men's Walk
Apr. 21 to
24, 2016
- Women's
Walk Apr.
28 to May 1,
2016
- Board meet-
ing Dec. 12,
9 a.m. Rich-
field UMC

**INSIDE
THIS
ISSUE:**

Welcome New Members	2
Fourth Day Oppor- tunities	3
Clergy; Lead- ership and Development	4
Emmaus Experience	5
Strategic initiatives; Gifts/talents	6
Sponsorship and Prayer	7
Walk Dates/ Board Members	8

Minnesota Walk to Emmaus

WWW.MNEMMAUS.ORG

DECEMBER 2015

Thoughts on the Fall Walks

From Linda Nelson, Community Lay Director

**"See I am doing a new thing! Now it
springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making
a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland."** Isaiah 43:19

What a beautiful and wonderful privilege it is for me to be able to attend closing – and hear about what the weekend meant to our newest community members. Lives that were changed throughout the weekend by the acts of agape from the community, the interaction and trust building that occurred through the conference team – those 15 talks that help understand our faith even more – especially grace – and what it means to be a disciple of our Lord – and the extravagant acts of agape love all designed to bring us closer to God. To observe the work of the Holy Spirit is truly amazing – and hearing their stories is one of the most beautiful forms of worship I have ever experienced.

Here are just a few of the comments/observations shared at closing ...

I never experienced true healing before. I was able to let go of old stuff I had carried for so long.

I understand grace now.

People showed me so much love – I want to pass it on.

I truly felt God's love and grace.

I experienced healing – acceptance – forgiveness. All were holding me back.

So much love given to me from those I don't know – how much more must God love me?

I have so much more confidence and love for myself – and now have a support system to keep it going.

I grew in my relationship with Christ and others – excited to use to strengthen my church.

I learned how to listen to God.

I have experienced Agape Love – WOW!

Affirmation – God has a plan for me if I just listen and connect with others to talk about it.

This has awakened me – and my faith!

I am realizing that God's community is all around. I have to let them in! I had hardened myself.

I have a renewed commitment to study more – to serve more.

I want to be a better example to those in my life.

This time I felt it in my heart.

It helped so much to share my struggles with others – now I know I'm not alone.

God IS doing a new thing – can you feel it? The spring walks will be here before you know it – and there are many ways to give back to others what you were given on these walks. I am confident that in whatever ways you gave this past set of walks – time, talents, food, agape gifts, prayer, service, sponsorship – God blessed you for doing so. Consider serving in a new way – or for the first time – and say "yes" to God's call. Remember – he doesn't call the equipped – He equips the called! We NEED you - Contact Linda Nelson at cld@mnemmaus.org. God's abundant blessings to you in your Fourth Days!

Welcome New Community Members!

The Minnesota Walk to Emmaus Community would like to welcome 19 men and 20 women to the Community. The Walks were held at beautiful Lake Koronis Ministries near Paynesville, MN from October 15 to 18 and October 29 to November 1, 2015. We pray that your Fourth Day may be filled with wonderful opportunities to grow in Christ and further God's kingdom!



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

-Luke 12:32

Walk #109

Neil Barber
Bobby Blaser
Ron Bozich
Travis Bozich
John Cole
Bobby Emison
Dave Freemore
Chris Fuhrman
Rob Garry
Leon Herrick
David Johnston
Donald Kelly
Jim Kurtzbein
Nick LaFonte
Paul Lanhart
TJ Lewis
Justin Schaefer
Gene Sunderman
Paul Woolverton

Walk #110

Rosalie Albers
Katherine Austinson
Alma Barber
Judith Clark
Dianne Daby
Nancy Flemke
Mignon Fraizer
Bryna Griser
Selina Keemah
Katherine King
Debra Lackey
Tammy Milbrandt
Bonnie Miller
Michele Monson
Wendy Nickel
Rebecca Schilling
Cari Stenzel
Cheryl Walter
Rebecca Woolverton
Sandy Youngblom

Fourth Day Opportunities

Many opportunities are available!

Is it time for you to “give back” as a thank you to those who gave you your Walk to Emmaus experience? The gift of yourself, using your talents through service is what our Fourth Days are all about in Emmaus.

So do you need a few reminders of how you could serve? Here goes:

- make agape for Walks
- sign up on the Prayer Chart
- serve on an agape team for a Walk
- sponsor a Pilgrim
- serve on the Emmaus board
- attend candlelight and closing at the Walks
- attend Follow up Gatherings to welcome our newest Pilgrims
- start or be a part of a Reunion Group

A couple of ways you may not have considered before but are possibilities that would be especially helpful:

- being a committee member for one of the Board chairs of Walk to Emmaus
- being a part of a team for a weekend Walk
- serving the Saturday evening dinner
- hosting after closing refreshments, and seeing any remaining food is taken care of

I will be glad to put you in touch with the appropriate contact person. Consider “giving back” because of those who first gave to you!

Audrey Benjamin
Fourth Day Chair



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



*Be joyful always,
pray continually. .*

-1 Thes 5:16-17

Clergy Corner

There is lots to celebrate as the **Holy Spirit MOVES** through the Minnesota Conference of the United Methodist Church! Among the latest exciting happenings ...

Linda Nelson, Community Lay Director; Darlene Vandermyde, Leadership Development Chair and Jim Crecelius, Community Spiritual Director were invited to meet with the Bishop and his cabinet, to brainstorm for ideas on how to promote and recruit for Minnesota Walk Emmaus and find ways to identify congregations ready for utilizing the Emmaus experience for leadership/discipleship development.

A networking clergy group is being formed of experienced Emmaus alumni promoting and recruiting clergy to get involved with Emmaus – either as a new member – or serving on a team – thanks to Russ Jacobson and Jim Crecelius. Russ is also taking a leadership role in marketing/communication efforts to all 360 congregations in the state of Minnesota.

A new clergy-led Fourth Day Community is being established for Fairmont, Wells and Blue Earth to celebrate new pilgrim participation after the spring 2016 walks.

Spring Walk spiritual director and assistant spiritual director teams are being formed and include a balance of experienced clergy as well as recent clergy pilgrims who will be serving on team for the first time.

There is increasing attendance of new clergy experiencing walks for the first time, as evidenced from our last two sets of walks.

We have a lot to celebrate as we work together to develop leaders for the church. If you are interested in hearing more or becoming involved in any of these happenings, please contact Jim Crecelius at csd@mne Emmaus.org.

Leadership and Development Training

We have begun a new program of mentoring lay directors by former lay directors. Lay directors on the past 2 walks took advantage of this and found it extremely beneficial.

It is helpful to have someone with experience walk alongside to encourage, assist, and pray for you as you go through the work of recruiting team members, planning team training, and persevering in the process of team development. There are currently 13 former lay directors committed to being mentors....with additional responses to come.

The need is great to expand our outreach initiative. There are 10 former lay directors willing to do visitation in churches to spread the Emmaus message. We welcome any of our Emmaus Community members to join in this effort. There is also a need to have someone step forward to coordinate the outreach mission. If this is your passion, please let us know. We will provide direction and training.

Your ideas and input are always welcome. I would love to answer questions. Call me at 763 218 0719 or email at d_vandermyde@yahoo.com.

Darlene Vandermyde

MWTE board of directors

The Emmaus Experience

Here are some of the essential elements that make Emmaus so successful ...

Prayer – Emmaus is not just under girded 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.



... it is by grace
you have been
saved.
-Ephesians 2:5

Save the date!

Mark your calendars!

**Second Annual Gathering
of the Emmaus Community**

Saturday, August 20, 2016

Watch for more details



Dear friends, let us
love one another,
for love come from
God.
-1 John 4:7a

Update on 2015 Strategic Initiatives

Back in January, the board discussed and debated on the top two things we could focus on this year that would have the greatest impact on our future. The following is an update as of our November meeting - submitted by Linda Nelson

Enhancing communication with community – After going through a process of re-connecting with former Lay Directors, Darlene Vandermyde has been putting together a talented, qualified pool of assistants with all aspects of putting on consistent, quality walks – from mentoring brand new lay directors, to helping individuals with talk previews, to overseeing the weekend, to outreach teams to promote Emmaus in congregations across Minnesota. She has also put together numerous training materials to better prepare future team members – conference and behind the scene – as well as committee structure and members. We are continuing in our efforts to make personal connections with people and find ways for them to get involved.

Intentional Outreach/Sponsorship – Jim Rottinger has made personal contacts to sponsors and has been working with Jeff Adams and Pete Schenck to reach out more strategically to clergy. Our numbers are increasing for both men and women – 40 new pilgrims took part in walks this fall- (19 men, 21 women) and are now a part of our community – which will help in our progressive servant hood efforts – helping people take on increasingly responsible leadership roles in serving on future walks. He has been planting many seeds – and harvest will follow. He's learned that this is a process – that it takes persistence and follow through but it has resulted in quality – AND quantity. Linda Nelson, Community Lay Director; Darlene Vandermyde, Leadership Training Chair and Jim Crecelius, Community Spiritual Director attended lunch and brainstorming session with the bishop and the cabinet to discuss how we can best help each other promote and recruit for MN Walk to Emmaus. Pastor Russ Jacobsen is working on securing clergy for the Spring Walks and is heading up a networking group of clergy to identify congregations and pastors who will be involved in future walks.

Don't bury your gifts and talents

A friend now lives in a home that has an apple tree in yard. They decided they did not want the apples, so he gave them to me. I am cheap so I took them. My belief is that free is good. We have some woods near our home and every once in a while we see several deer in the woods. A fellow I work with let me know that the State Department of Natural Resources no longer allowed people to put out anything that would attract the deer in as Chronic Wasting Disease can be spread between the deer. This is called "baiting" and the deer will tend to come to an area that has some free food that they like. When the hunting season come along, a number of hunters believe this increases the chance of seeing more deer—game. So wanting to avoid getting into trouble, I dug a hole and buried the apples. So how often do I bury some gift that could help some other person? It is a waste really, isn't it?

Serving on a recent Emmaus team has encouraged me to try and better use time and abilities that were gifts to me to try and reach out to help others more often. May I also encourage you to stop burying your gifts of time and talent like I have done for years? We will soon need people to serve on the spring walks by giving talks and just serving. This Minnesota Emmaus community now needs several people on several committees like agape and others and there is a need for several people to work on the board. Think about giving back to this community would you? Many of us have received some special gifts, so please give back. Everyone has something. Try it, you will like it.

Bill Tice, Lay Director, Walk #109



The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into the harvest.
—Matt. 9:37-38

Sponsorship and Prayer

"A true sense of momentum," God's Spirit is finding much fruit in this season of the Minnesota Walk to Emmaus movement. I'd like to thank *all* the hands and hearts of the MN Emmaus community that made these past walks happen. As you all well know, it takes a lot of humble service and hard work to make a successful set of walk come together. However, before a walk happens there is a thing called sponsorship that sets a good walk in motion! Remember, Emmaus exists to form leaders for the local church. As you pray about who in your congregation should be going on a walk, think about who is earnest in their activity within the life of the congregation. Emmaus is not intended to "bring people to Christ" although many pilgrims come to see or understand Christ in a new light for the first time.

Amongst the congregation you worship with, do you see certain individuals who gifts and graces show great promise in serving the mission and ministry of your church? Or, talk amongst the members of your reunion group to see who seems ready to take an intentional step in following Christ. Could you invite the pilgrim's family over for a meal during the weekend? Families with younger children can feel extra pressure about their ability to attend an Emmaus Walk due to a number of commitments and activities their family is involved with.

I actually heard once a "newly minted" Emmaus person, fresh from their Walk say to another member of their congregation, "I had a great experience at the walk this past weekend! I want to send you on a walk so you can have my experience too!" While very well intended, they don't need to go to have your experience on a weekend...they need to have their own experience on a weekend. :-) Also, you don't "send" someone to or on a weekend. Remember, you *sponsor* (not send) a friend to a walk. Often in Emmaus prayers and literature we hear the words, "Lord be working in the heart of (your friend's name here)". Allow God's Spirit and call to be the foundation for a person's openness to attending the walk. This, of course, doesn't mean you shouldn't ever inquire about someone's interest in going or be there to answer any questions they may have about the weekend

The sponsor role begins with and continues in prayer. Not just about asking who should go but maybe even more importantly, listening to the nudging of the Holy Spirit and asking Christ for eyes open to the stirring of the spirit in others so you may know who God is awakening to the next step of discipleship! If we wait upon the Lord to see who God is leading toward an interest in the Walks or going on one, we'll then be sending those most ready to be intentional in their lives as followers of Jesus, the Christ. This will work to build the Emmaus community in number, commitment, and enthusiasm. And this will continue to feed and augment this blossoming sense of God growing and building the Minnesota Emmaus community for the cause of Christ and the work of His Commonwealth!

Again, to the entire engaged Minnesota Emmaus Community, THANK YOU!

Be God's, Rev. James H. Crecelius, Community Spiritual Director

Minnesota Walk to Emmaus
Richfield United Methodist Church
5835 Lyndale Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55419

Upcoming Walks! **Walk #111 (Men) April 21-24, 2016** **Camp Koronis, Paynesville**
Walk #112 (Women) April 28-May 1, 2016
Walk #113 (Men) Oct. 27-30, 2016
Walk #114 (Women) Nov. 3-6, 2016

2015 Minnesota Walk to Emmaus Board of Directors

Linda Nelson	Community Lay Director	612-655-1899	cld@mnummaus.org
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