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THE MIDLANDS MESSENGER

Emmaus of The Midlands

December 2005

We Don't Live in an Aquarium

By Rev. Michael Bingham

“Come, be my disciples, and I will show you how to fish for people!” This statement by our Lord Jesus Christ is recorded in Matthew 4:19 and Mark 1:17 (I'm using the NLT).

Do you fish for people, or are you a keeper of the aquarium?

It's easy to lose our focus. Emmaus is not evangelistic in the sense that it is designed, primarily, for active church members. But its focus is the equipping of saints for ministry. And the ministry of the saints is the making of disciples: fishing for people. We don't live in an aquarium; we live in a fallen world. And many of the people that we encounter everyday do not know the Lord. Many of the people around us are unchurched, de-churched, or almost-Christian.

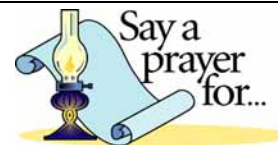
[Get your steel toes on.]

So, when was the last time someone came to conversion or reaffirmation of faith through your ministry? When was the last time you witnessed this in your local church? Been too long? Then get busy.

Right now: List two things that you can do to fish for people.

Right now: List one thing that will get in your way.

Right now: Get prayed up and get busy, because we don't live in an aquarium.



Prayers

Kay Scott; Phyllis Plemons; Margaret Boyne; McLeod UMC; Dennis Hydrick; Jerius Stork; Charles Adams; Bobby Shealy; Laxton Hinson; Spring Walks' teams and pilgrims; Christopher Cox; Scott and Joyce Sims; Otis Snow; Arthur Elkins; Bucky; Annette; Alyse; Daughter trying to have another baby; Mrs. McGinff; Mr. Weir; Mr. Balsiger; Betty Booth; Lisa Wilson and family; Ryan Conyers; Frank Conte; Christian Turner; Soccer scholarships; Chantel Derrick; Sue Valder; Dot Allee; Tommy; guidance for 2 grandchildren; Sharon; Sherri; Priscilla Stolze; James Ray's family; Ria Fowles; Salvation for Vanessa and Ollie Sylvester; toddler Abby Rouke; Dorothy Barwick; Ray Booth; money for college; Jerry McLemore; Betty Wilson; Vera Proctor; Sylvia Hickman; Wesley UMC; Laverne Irving; Mary Anna Davis; Gary Bell; Todd Horn; Tornado victims; Troops oversea

Praises

Ginger and Rusty Painter expecting a baby - Al and Kay Nooft proud grandparents; for finding this Emmaus community; God prepares our hearts to receive the news He shares with us; Dalzell United Youth group; Chrysalis; Crestwood 1st priority; Joining Dalzell youth group; Parents 50th wedding anniversary



Emmaus Education Corner

EMMAUS BOARD ELECTIONS March, 2006

By: Nelda Canada

Recommendations are now being accepted for new board members whose service would begin May 1, 2006, and serve through April, 2009. Our Board of Directors is comprised of fifteen persons, each serving three year terms. Annual elections for five persons allow for the rotation of one third of the members each year. Our Nominations Committees consist of the five outgoing Board members. (This year: John Hopkins, Laurel Irving, Sheila Elliott, Laurel Irving and Nelda Canada.) The Nominations Committee considers all recommendations and presents a slate of at least ten (10) persons to the Community.

Please give prayerful consideration to those you recommend for board positions. Our board is a working board and each board member is responsible for an important function in our community as assigned by the Board Chairperson. These areas include: Housing, Transportation, Table or Snack Agape, Newsletter, Registration, Prayer Vigil/Seed Agape, Kitchen. Board members meet for business of the Community on the second Monday of each month, in Columbia, and are expected to attend and /or facilitate training and other programs as necessary for the Community's growth and development

Efforts are made so that nominees reflect the diversity of our community – balanced by gender and vocation, with a commitment to represent our wide geographic area. Anyone who has previously served on the Board may be nominated, provided that it has been at least one (1) year since their prior service.

Please feel free to talk with any board member about specific questions about board service. If you are willing to serve, or desire to nominate someone, we're anxious to hear from you!

DeColores!

Visitors Welcome

By: Author Unknown

He had not always been like this. He once had a good job, a wife and two kids, but that was all taken away by a drunk driver. It was like he died that night, too, for he lost his will to live. He quit his job and lost his home, and now he just wanders from place to place eating where he can find food, and sleeping wherever he ends up.

He saw a notice on a storefront - **WORSHIP SERVICE EVERY NIGHT THIS WEEK - DINNER SERVED - VISITORS WELCOME.**

The church was nearby, this was the first night, and he was hungry. He walked into the brisk wind as he headed for the church. He went inside and waited until all the others had gone through the food line. When he got to the serving table, a tear fell from his eye, because it had been some time since he had seen so much food. He hurriedly filled his plate and went to a corner to eat.

Afterwards, he followed the others to the worship service where he found a seat on the back pew. Some people turned around, probably wondering who was this person in the ragged coat, holes in his shoes, and stubble on his face.

The first night's sermon was about love, and he felt all warm inside when he heard the congregation sing "Oh, How I Love Jesus." When the service ended, he bowed his head for a minute, and then got up to go back out into the cold.

The next night he came back, only this time he brought a friend much like himself. This time he took more joy in seeing his friend eat than he did himself, for he knew that his friend had had nothing to eat for two days.

As the two of them seated themselves for the service, many of the congregation turned and looked at them, and then turned and whispered something to their neighbor. This time the pastor preached about The Good Samaritan. The service closed with the singing of "Just As I Am", and as he started singing he noticed a lump in his throat and tears streaming down his cheeks. His friend noticed too, and reached over and clasped his hand. When the service ended, he again bowed his head, only longer this time, and his friend did, as well.

When he arrived at the church the following night, someone met him at the

door. A man informed him that several people of the church had been talking about him. They did not want any freeloaders, so he could not come in, but if he would promise never to come back again the man would make a sandwich for him to take with him. He felt like leaving, but he was hungry, so he waited. When the man returned and gave him the sandwich, he took it and turned to leave.

As he looked up, he saw his friend starting to climb the church steps. He informed his friend that they were no longer allowed inside, and then took his sandwich and broke it in two and gave half to his friend. They chatted briefly and then his friend left. He took a bite of his half of the sandwich, and then started off in the other direction.

He had gone only a few steps when he almost stumbled over something. It was an old man with no legs, huddled against the church to keep out of the wind. The old man asked him if he could have a bite of his sandwich. He bent over and gave him all of it and turned and walked away, and as he did, the old man broke into a wide grin and hollered out to him, "Thank you, Jesus."

The next night he found himself walking by another church with a sign that read - **SERVICE TONIGHT - DINNER PROVIDED - VISITORS WELCOME**, but he just walked on by into the night, even though he was once again cold and hungry.

DOLLARS & CENTS

Financial Record

October 2005

Beginning Balance: 10/1/05	\$10,239
Income: Candlelight	716
Community Store	374
Walk/Team Fees	2,013
Total Income	\$3,103
Expenses: Walk Supplies	252
Walk Food	442
Community Store	243
Walk Books	426
Postage	1,000
Bank Fees	3
Total Expenses	\$2,366
Ending Balance: 10/31/05	\$10,976

My First Christmas in Heaven

By: Ben

I see the countless Christmas trees
around the world below
With tiny lights, like Heaven's stars,
reflecting on the snow.

The sight is so spectacular,
please wipe away the tear
For I am spending Christmas
with Jesus Christ this year.

I hear the many Christmas songs
that people hold so dear
But the sounds of music can't compare
with the Christmas choir up here.

I have no words to tell you,
the joy their voices bring,
For it is beyond description,
to hear the angels sing.

I know how much you miss me,
I see the pain inside your heart.
But I am not so far away,
We really aren't apart.

So be happy for me, dear ones,
You know I hold you dear.
And be glad I'm spending Christmas
with Jesus Christ this year.

I sent you each a special gift,
from my heavenly home above.
I sent you each a memory
of my undying love.

After all, love is a gift
more precious than pure gold.
It was always most important
in the stories Jesus told.

Please love and keep each other,
as my Father said to do.
For I can't count the blessing or love
he has for each of you.

So have a Merry Christmas and
wipe away that tear.
Remember, I am spending Christmas
with Jesus Christ this year.

This poem was written by a 13 year old boy who died of a brain tumor that he had battled for four years. He died on December 14, 1997. He gave this to his mom before he died.

His name was Ben.

Celebration: A Woman to Woman Ministry

A new Ministry for Women is coming to Columbia! Celebration is a woman-to-woman ministry sponsored by the United Methodist Church. Cele-

bration is evangelistic and ecumenical, with an emphasis on spiritual growth. "The purpose of Celebration is to strengthen and enrich the spiritual lives of women by helping them discover and grow in the fullness of life that God intended for all women to experience as citizens of His Kingdom on earth and as a foretaste of His Kingdom in Heaven."

Celebration is coming to Wesley Memorial UMC because our women feel God's call to start a chapter. This will be the second Chapter in the State of South Carolina. We are very excited about this opportunity to bring women into fellowship with our Lord. We want to share this exciting opportunity with you.

Celebration is designed to complement existing women's ministry within local churches. We invite women from all denominations, no denomination, un-churched, and de-churched to participate. We feel this ministry has come forth for "such a time as this." We will meet once a month on Saturday and childcare will always be provided. The first Celebration meeting is **January 28** at Wesley Memorial UMC at 2501 Heyward St. in Columbia. We will have refreshments at 9:30 and the praise and worship begins at 10:00. Plan to stay until 12 and to be uplifted and renewed.

The Celebration Ministries President, Judy Graham, will travel from Houston, Texas to conduct this meeting. There will be a leadership training following the meeting from 1-4pm. If you are interested in founding this ministry at your church or want to participate in our chapter, plan to stay for this wonderful event. If you have any questions you can contact Lucie Bingham [Lucieinsc@aol.com] or Joan Gathers [Jgathers@aol.com]. You can also check out these two websites: WorshipWesley-Memorial.com and CelebrationMinistries.org. Mark Jan. 28 on your calendar and come Experience Celebration

Dalzell Gathering

by: Doris Crocker

We had a great crowd for the gathering at Dalzell UMC on November 18th and if you missed it you missed something different and special.

Joan Gathers is to be commended for trying some new formats for the gatherings. It takes a lot of courage to change things which have been the practice for a long time. Sometimes they work, sometimes they don't. This did!

Our community Spiritual Director, Mike Bingham welcomed us in his name and the name of the Holy Spirit. Three pilgrims who had not attended a gathering were present, as were five visitors and a Chrysalis butterfly. The visitors will become a part of our community because they have moved into the area from the Seaside Community.

Joan Gathers got us moving with prayer which was followed by Rhett Motley reading Psalm 100.

We then sang "Praise the Name of Jesus", "I keep falling in love with Him" and "Enter His gates with thanksgiving", the last song being accompanied by beautiful slides shown on a screen.

After this Erin Chandler, Alyssa Jones and Hailey Hodge, beautiful teenage girls danced to the music "I need You" by the Swift. They were so graceful and the emotion they expressed in their dance had many in the congregation in tears. Thank you girls for such a wonderful expressive dance.

Joan Gathers read us more Scripture and this led to more singing. This time we sang, "Come let us worship and bow down", "Amazing grace" and "I can only imagine", the last song again being accompanied by slides showing some of the things it is hard to imagine yet make us worship and bow down.

After this, a group of three boys and five girls from Dalzell Youth Group posed at the front of the church while a small child, Claire Holland, sang "Jesus loves me this I know". When she had finished, the music "Jesus, He loves me" by Edwin McCain burst forth and the group at the front danced to the words and music. It was very inspiring. Thank you Lauren Solomon, Victoria McClendon, Shawn Crews, Dustin McGriff, Michelle Wilson, Britney Hornsby, Haley Reynolds and Austin Booth for taking the time to learn and perform such a meaningful interpretation of the word and music.

After this performance, the congregation sang "King of Kings" and "Shout to the Lord" with gusto. Sherri McClendon sang a beautiful rendition of "This is the air I breathe" as the offering was taken and Mike Bingham led us into Holy Communion. We ended the evening by singing "Here I am Lord", a fitting close to an inspirational evening of praise and worship. Thanks to those who led the music, to all of you who attended and to those who took part, and thank You Holy Spirit for leading us.

Emmaus of the Midlands
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If you received this newsletter and have an e-mail address, please consider using the Emmaus Web Site to read the monthly newsletter and help reduce the cost of printing and mailing. If you are willing to help in this way, e-mail me at: furset@bellsouth.net.

Future Events

January 27, 2006	Gathering—Green Hill Baptist
February 23-26, 2006	Men's Walk # 28
February 25, 2006	Men's Walk # 28 Candlelight
March 9-12, 2006	Women's Walk # 28
March 11, 2006	Women's Walk # 28 Candlelight
March 24, 2006	Gathering—TBA
April , 2006	Gathering—TBA

Next Gathering

December 10, 2005

Pot Luck Supper at 5:30 pm

Program at 6:30 pm

at

Camp Agape

Batesburg-Leesville

Directions: From Columbia: Take I-20 towards Augusta. Exit at mile marker 39 (US178) towards Leesville. Go 5 miles and Camp Agape will be on your right. If you come to the fork with highway 245 you have gone too far. Camp agape is approximately 300 yard prior to the road fork.

From Aiken: Take I-20 towards Columbia. Exit at mile marker 39, cross over the bridge and proceed as above.

Visit our web site at
www.midlandsemmaus.com