

# Emmaus of the Midlands Messenger

P. O. Box 25165 Columbia, SC 29224-5165

www.midlandsemmaus.com

## January 2009

### New Year—New Look

We are experimenting with a slightly different look for the first newsletter of the new year. The newsletter is printed on one 11" x 17" sheet (both sides) and we are planning to have color on one side, which translates to either pages one and four or two and three. Since we can make better use of color on pages 3 and 4, we are moving the listing of the Board of Directors to the first page .

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## Why Pray

By The Rev. Wade Everett

Luke 18:1 *Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. 2 He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. 3 And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' 4 "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, 5 yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!'" 6 And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. 7 And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? 8 I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"*

For those who do not feel comfortable praying in front of others, who do not pray much at all, or perhaps have not thought much about it, let me lift the practice of prayer up to you. The late Sam Shoemaker was an Episcopal minister in New York City during the first half of this century. When he encountered someone who did not believe in God he would suggest they enter a Thirty-Day Prayer Experiment. He would instruct them, "Don't pay any attention to whether you believe or not. Just pray every day for thirty days that God will meet you at the point of your greatest need, and see what happens to you." From Reverend Shoemaker's little experiment, literally hundreds of people were transformed from staunch skeptics to committed Christians. Give God a chance, and he will turn a sinner in to a saint!

Why should I pray? We are commanded to pray at all times and not to loose heart in Luke 18:1 by the Lord, Jesus Christ. Prayer should define our lives, because it is the communication part of the most important love relationship we should have, the one with God. Through prayer we meet with God and experience a love relationship with Him.

What an unspeakable honor, joy, privilege, and delight it is to come boldly into the presence of the creator of all things, and find out that because of the blood of Jesus Christ shed upon the cross in our behalf, we can call God, Abba, Father! One thing we should do here is to praise God, for it is by our praise we enter into his presence. Psalm 22:3 But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. As you praise God, you are ushered into the presence of God by faith, and by the presence of God with you. There you will experience ecstatic joy in his loving presence! Psalm 16:11 Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. In prayer we have the opportunity to confess and repent of our sins to God and have a clean conscience. In 1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. God has chosen the means of prayer to supply our needs. Prayer will lighten your load. We read in Philippians 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Matthew 11:28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

### New Year's Suggestion 1

#### *Renew Your Commitment to Prayer*

Why not pray Rev. Shoemaker's prayer that God will meet you at your point of greatest need during the next 30 days.

Perhaps some of you will share your experiences during the year.

## New Year's Suggestion 2

### *Read God's Word*

For the past year the Messenger has contained daily Bible readings that are designed to take you through the entire Bible in one year. If you are not currently following a plan of daily Bible reading, please consider beginning now. Here are some suggestions.

1. We ought to read the Bible **regularly** *starting now*. C. S. Lewis tells the story of three demons being tested for an assignment. The first one said that he would tell the believers that there was no God. The second said that he would tell them that there was no evil. The third said that he would tell them that there was no hurry. He got the assignment!

2. We need to read the Bible **analytically**. If we read a small part each day, then over the course of the year we will come to understand the entire Bible better. And our understanding will increase each year that we do this. A good Bible dictionary will facilitate this rule. For instance, if we plan to read the book of Genesis, we ought to consult a Bible dictionary article on "Genesis."

3. We read the Bible **systematically**. The daily Bible readings given were designed specifically for reading the entire Bible in a year. We should complement them by creating our own personal plan for where and when we will read the Bible.

4. We must read the Bible **persistently**. Do not allow your lack of understanding to interrupt your reading. If you do not understand a particularly difficult verse or passage, keep a journal and write it down. Periodically devote some time to deeper study of these passages, perhaps consulting your friends or pastor, and write down your conclusions in your journal. As you read through the Bible again, your journal will become a valuable resource which will be updated constantly and will speak to your particular, personal needs.

5. Read the Bible **completely**. In this way we develop the context to better understand individual parts.

6. We must read the Bible **reverently**. Bible reading and prayer are inseparable.

7. We should read the Bible **expectantly**. Remember the words of 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "*All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.*"

### February Bible Readings

- 1 Ex.: 30-32; Acts 8
- 2 Ex. 33-34; Ps. 16; Acts 9
- 3 Ex. 35-36; Acts 10
- 4 Ex. 37-38; Ps. 19; Acts 11
- 5 Ex. 39-40; Ps. 15; Acts 12
- 6 Lev. 1-3; Acts 13
- 7 Lev. 4-6; Acts 14
- 8 Lev. 7-9; Acts 15
- 9 Lev. 10-12; Acts 16
- 10 Lev. 13-14; Acts 17
- 11 Lev. 15-17; Acts 18
- 12 Lev. 18-19; Ps. 13; Acts 19
- 13 Lev. 20-22; Acts 20
- 14 Lev. 23-24; Ps. 24; Acts 21
- 15 Lev. 25; Ps. 25-26; Acts 22
- 16 Lev. 26-27; Acts 23
- 17 Num. 1-2; Acts 24
- 18 Num. 3-4; Acts 25
- 19 Num. 5-6; Ps. 22; Acts 26
- 20 Num. 7; Ps. 23; Acts 27
- 21 Num. 8-9; Acts 28
- 22 Num. 10-11; Ps. 27; Mark 1
- 23 Num. 12-13; Ps. 90; Mark 2
- 24 Num. 14-16; Mark 3
- 25 Num. 17-18; Ps. 29; Mark 4
- 26 Num. 19-20; Ps. 28; Mark 5
- 27 Num. 21-23; Mark 6-7
- 28 Num. 24-27; 1 Cor. 13

Remember that your daily Bible readings are intended to **complement**, not replace Bible studies at your church!

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**P.O. Box 25165**  
**Columbia, SC 29224-5165**

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If you receive this newsletter and have an e-mail address, please consider using the Emmaus Web site to read the monthly newsletter. This will reduce the cost of printing and mailing. If you are willing to help in this way, e-mail [tomfurse@sc.rr.com](mailto:tomfurse@sc.rr.com)

### **Upcoming Events**

- January 23, 2009** - Gathering Lexington UMC  
**Jan 17-19, 2009** - Girl's Chrysalis Flight 4  
(Candlelight Sunday, 7 pm Jan 18)  
**February 5-8, 2009** - Boy's Epiphany  
**Feb 14-16, 2009** - Boy's Chrysalis Flight 4  
(Candlelight Sunday, 7 pm Feb 15)  
**February 19-22** - Men's Walk 33  
(Candlelight Saturday, 8 pm Feb 21)  
**March 12 - 15, 2009** - Girls Epiphany  
**March 12 - 15, 2009** - Women's Walk 33  
(Candlelight Sunday, 8 pm Mar 14)  
**March 27, 2009** - Gathering at Wightman UMC

### **Next Gathering**

January 23, 2009  
Fellowship 7:00 pm, Worship 8:00 pm.  
Lexington UMC  
309 East Main Street  
Lexington, SC 29072  
(803) 791-1450

**Directions from Columbia/Sumter:** Take I-20 to exit 58, exit to the right on US #1 toward Lexington. This road becomes Main Street. The church is located down town next to the Lexington County Court House.

**Directions from Aiken:** Take I-20 to exit 55, cross over bridge back toward Lexington. This is Highway #6. Turn right on US #1 when you reach the down town area. The church is located down town next to the Lexington County Court House.