

Messenger

Volume 16
Issue 3
March



Coming Events

Board Meeting
March 14 @ 7pm
Windsor UMC

March 18 Gathering
Dalzell UMC
Dalzell
Meal @7 Worship @ 8

Board Meeting
April 11 @ 7pm
Windsor UMC

April No Gathering Walks
Men's 7-10
Women's 14-17

Board Meeting
May 9 @ 7pm
Windsor UMC

May 27 Gathering
Boiling Springs UMC
Lexington
Meal @ 7 Worship @ 8

Board Meeting
June 13 @ 7pm
Windsor UMC

LISTENING TO GOD

A note from your Community Lay Director

The season of Lent is a forty-day period of self-examination in preparation for Easter — in imitation of the forty days that Jesus spent in prayer and fasting in the desert, as recorded in Matthew's Gospel. As part of Lenten discipline, "The Sacrament of Silence" has been added to the order of worship in many of our churches as a time to reflect prayerfully. A practice of contemplative silence in which we are invited to turn our gaze inward and to open ourselves to God's Presence without even music to divide our attention. Most worship services offer this practice of silent prayer and will last approximately one full minute. In contrast, we too often hear, "Let's have a moment of silence" — then two seconds later...."Let us pray together The Lord's Prayer" or some other prayer to break the silence.

Many will feel the impulse to make use of the emergency exit just to escape this awkward silence, so let me offer you some words of hope. One of the scariest parts about silence is that many of us have never been equipped with tools to help us feel comfortable experiencing silence. But there are many different Christian communities and traditions that regularly include periods of silent prayer in their weekly worship services that last anywhere from five minutes to twenty minutes, up to forty-five minutes. So, I know silence is humanly possible; I've seen it! These communities are committed to the practice of silent prayer in response to some form of the conviction that **if God is living and active, then it is important to create time and space to pay attention to what God is doing, to listen to what God is saying, and to discern God's call.** In short, we need to experience God

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directly, first-hand for ourselves. This Lent, I do not merely want to express the importance of God, silence, and prayer; instead, I want invite you to taste the fruit of contemplative prayer for yourself. Moreover, in addition to the importance of following Jesus' practice of regular prayer, scientific studies are increasingly demonstrating that various practices of contemplative prayer or mindfulness meditation significantly decrease stress, increase emotional stability, and can even provide pain management.

I should also add that when I talk about listening to God, I am not suggesting that you should prepare yourself to hear God speak to you in the voice of either James Earl Jones or Charlton Heston. If anything, scripture and tradition tell us that God much more frequently comes— as God did to the prophet Elijah — as “a still small voice,” or, as other translations say, as “a sound of sheer silence” (1 Kings 19:12). Mostly I invite you to **let go of any anxiety or expectations you have about what a few minutes of prayerful silence might be like and allow yourself to gently experience what it really is like.** Make yourself comfortable in your seat. Close your eyes. With your feet flat on the floor and your hands resting in your lap, allow yourself to be relaxed but alert. If you need to cough during the silence, cough. If you need to sneeze, sneeze. And if you hear someone cough or sneeze, let it go. During the time of silence, distractions will naturally arise in your mind. That's okay, too. Just acknowledge them, and gently return your focus to how God might be speaking to you. If you are interested later in learning more about silent prayer — or the many other forms of prayer — I would be glad to talk to you further. Within the Emmaus Community, Lexington UMC opens their doors each Friday at 7:00 a.m. for Lectio Divinia and Contemplative Prayer. I invite you to listen silently and prayerfully to how God might be calling you to respond during Lent.

Recommended Reading on the Practice of Contemplative Prayer

Cynthia Bourgeault, Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening (Cowley Publications 2004)

Thomas Merton, Contemplative Prayer (Random House, Inc.)

Thomas Keating, Intimacy With God (Crossroad Publishing)

Thomas Keating, Open Mind, Open Heart (Continuum International Publishing)

Author Unknown, The Cloud of Unknowing (Paraclete Press)

It's that time again...Agape! Agape! Agape! We love Agape! Please bring your Agape to the registration desk, the dining hall, or the Lake House for each walk! Sponsors, you may drop off letters at these locations as well. Letters may also be delivered @ Candelight. Thanks in advance for your support!

DeColores! Dorothy Longshore

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Spring Walk Season is Upon Us!

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 Walk #47 are in place and team training began on March 4, 2016 at Platt Springs United Methodist Church in West Columbia under the guidance of Lay Directors [Bill Rose](#) and [Cheryl Mendiola](#). The teams 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.
- 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.

Gathering March 18
Dalzell UMC
Dalzell, SC
3330 Black River Rd
Meal @ 7 Worship @ 8

[map](#)

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The names listed below are the pilgrims and team members for the men and women's walks to be held the first and second week in April. Please keep all of them in your prayers through the seventeenth of April.

Bonny McCarty
Sandy Burton
Christina Galvin
Helen Edens
Mary Brown
Debbie Cavazos
Ginger Cartin
Betsy Meade
Cynthia Rowson
Rebecca Eleazor
Alston Lippert
Shirley Atwood
Terri Goodman
Dorothy Longshore
Christy Bouknight
Betty Baird
Betty Shofner
Amanda Altman
Kathy Fish
Kellye Rembert
Cheryl Mendiola
Kathy Haupfear
Mary Frances Thompson
Daniel Eppley
Joyce Coleman
Betsy Crick
Samantha Davis
Tammy Grey
Katie Haug
Daisy Hicks

Kay James
Amanda Long
Sally Martin
Linda McLeod
Chris Shephard
Janice Sox
Cathy Weathers
Cynthia Atkins
Louise Riley
Kirsten Palmer
Angela Marshall

Jay Harmon
Gary Hartman
Thad Hinnant
Steve Keck
Gene Key
Leonard May
Ken Medlin
Joey Mendiola
Pat Longshore
Alex McIntosh
Terry Peterson
Dave Petty
Walt Proctor
Bill Rose
Thomas Rowe
Bobby Sandifer
Robert Scarborough
Wayne Smith
Chuck Weatherly

Tom Burner
Ernie Cronin
Walt Crozier, Jr.
Kevin Davis
Kevin Douglas
George Eberhardt
Jim Gero
Peter Martin
Willie McLeod
Tim Morris
Jeff Murray
Steven Palmer
Gordon Pennebaker
Ken Prill
James Sharp
Mike Sox
Randy Stewart
Bob Strachan
John Weathers
Chris Goodman
Jason Barrs
Michael Bingham
Bobby Bowers
Joe Brown
Larry Brown
Sam Caskey
Hank Edens
Steve Gaither

[We have room and can still receive pilgrim applications for the next two weeks.](#)

,PO Box 25165

Columbia, SC 29224-5165



www.midlandsemmaus.com

Child Care/Nursery Attendant

Needed for First Christian Church

2062 N. Bellline Blvd.

Columbia, SC 29204

Sundays 9:45 AM - 12:15 PM

and other times as needed.

Salary is negotiable

Please contact: Kathy Guyon

803-776-1677 or kkquyon@aol.com