

# Messenger

A monthly newsletter of the Emmaus of the Midlands Community



Volume 24, Issue 5, May 14, 2024

## Upcoming Events:

**May Gathering**  
May 24, 2024, 7:00 pm  
Trinity UMC, Aiken, SC

**June Board Meeting**  
June 3, 2024, 7:00 pm  
Red Bank UMC

### **No June Gathering**

**Emmaus of the Midlands**  
**Fall Walks**  
Men's Walk – Oct. 10-13  
Women's Walk – Oct. 17-20

**Team Training Dates**  
August 30-31, 2024  
September 13-14, 2024  
Locations to be Announced

## GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS

Lamentations 3:23

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

As a pastor in Congregational Care one of the sweetest experiences I have is when I encounter a person who proves his or her love for another. This shows up in a variety of ways. I see a husband who remains at the side of his bedridden wife, a friend who comes and mows a lawn or brings a meal for a neighbor who is recovering from significant surgery, a person who sends cards of encouragement to someone who is going through a difficult time and the list goes on. I can't remember when I came to a realization that God was present in and through those acts of kindness I just mentioned.

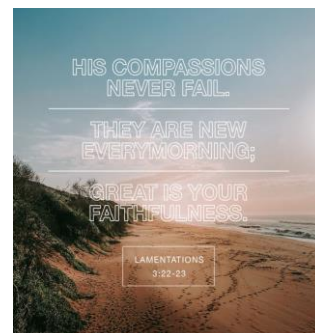
To "be there" for someone is, at times, being a non-anxious presence with someone who just needs to share their heart, and know that they are cared about. It can also mean that we go above and beyond, even inconvenience ourself to stand by someone, care for someone, acknowledge someone, reach out to someone in a special way at a time

they need to feel loved and cared for. It means doing all this without any expectation of receiving anything in return. **This is truly Agape love.**

I am sure there have been times when each of us have felt alone, maybe even saying to ourselves "where are you God in all of this?" That can be a lonely place. The scripture I listed above reminds us that the love of our Lord never ceases. I challenge each of us to remember we are God's representatives in small and not so small ways. We can show God's faithfulness by being faithful to one another. We can be God's hands and feet. Let's stay on the lookout and ask God to show us who we should reach out to in some way.

One of my favorite hymns is "Great Is Thy Faithfulness." I will leave you with the first verse and refrain:

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father; there is no shadow of turning with thee; thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not; as thou hast been, thou forever wilt be.  
Refrain: Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!  
Morning by morning new mercies I see; all I have needed thy hand hath provided;  
great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!



De Colores, Faye Stephens, Community Spiritual Director

## CAROLYN'S CORNER

Like Faye, one of my favorite hymns is "Great Is Thy Faithfulness." But there is one line in the third verse that my son and I love. When one of us is down, we text "SFTABHFT" to each other. We know that means "Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow." And, really, that is all we need--just enough strength for today, this day. One day at a time is our mantra.

Recently our oldest special needs son, David, was in the hospital twice within a two-week period. He was running high fevers and was in severe pain. There was an indication of infection, but after running every test imaginable, the doctors were unable to discover the root of the problem. After he was discharged the first time, we were told to monitor his temperature and if it went over 100.4 to come back to the hospital. Three days later it did, and back we go only to sit 6 hours in the ER. He was readmitted and an infectious disease doctor was called in. He could not find the problem either. So six days later we brought David home and again we are monitoring him. He is still having low-grade fevers, has no strength, and has no appetite. We are all frustrated and sad to see him so sick, but all he wanted was his mom to stay with him. So spending nights at the hospital, sometimes only with a chair to sleep on, I was and still am exhausted.



One night in the hospital, I found that I could not pray. I tried, but there were no words and I was crying. But suddenly I had a vision of Jesus holding me in his arms and saying such sweet words to me. "Shhh, it's ok. I've got you. And I've got David. Just rest, my child." And then I remembered, "SFTABHFT," and I was comforted.

Tomorrow, May 16, I am having shoulder replacement surgery, my husband Charlie has been diagnosed with a malignant melanoma on the top of his head, and another cancer on his foot. He is being scheduled for surgery soon.

It all seems like too much to carry, but I am not alone. So many of you in my Emmaus community, my friends, my church family, and my own children have stepped up to help. I am blessed beyond measure! I covet your prayers for the days ahead. I have learned to pray this simple prayer many times throughout the day. "Oh, Jesus, I surrender myself to you. Please take care of everything." To God be the glory!!!!

Carolyn McLean, Board Chair

*I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

**Romans 8:38-39**

## A GREAT BIG THANKS!

Thank you to Lexington UMC for a wonderful April Gathering! We had over 90 in attendance, a very inspiring Fourth Day Talk by Matt Goudelock and beautiful music and singing by Brian Austin and Adam Kiraly. The Clergy Response by Rev. Meegian Gossard was phenomenal, and we all felt very welcomed and loved by our hosts. Thanks also to Thad Hinnant for a Sponsor's Training Session.

## MAY GATHERING

Please mark your calendar for our May Gathering on Friday, May 24, at 7 pm which will be held at Trinity UMC in Aiken. The address is 2724 Whiskey Rd., Aiken, SC 29803.

Bring your favorite dish to share and feel free to invite a prospective pilgrim with you. After the meal and announcements, we will have a 15-minute floating Reunion Group using one of the questions on our Group Reunion Cards. Worship will follow in the sanctuary with music, prayer, Fourth Day Speaker, and Communion. Everyone is invited!!



## NEWS FROM THE BOARD

Team Selection for Men's and Women's Walks was held Saturday, May 11, at Brookland UMC. Lay Directors for the upcoming Walks, David Trask and Melanie Prewitt, have their lists of names to call for serving in the conference room. Please be in prayer as they work to put together God's team for Walks #56.

## TEAM FORMATION THROUGH TEAM MEETINGS

From the Upper Room Handbook on Emmaus:

The Team-formation process will require twenty-three – to twenty-six hours of team meetings. An intentional team-formation process is essential to fulfilling the goals of the Emmaus movement for five reasons:

1. **To prepare the team functionally.** Team meetings are the time for speakers, Table Leaders, Musicians, Assistant Lay and Spiritual Directors, Assistant Table Leaders, the Board Representative, and the Lay and Spiritual Directors to prepare themselves and one another for their responsibilities on the Walk.
2. **To prepare team members spiritually.** The Lay and Spiritual Directors attempt to make each person's team experience a spiritual exercise and an opportunity for spiritual growth. Each talk's preparation offers an opportunity for growth in understanding and practicing the message of that talk. The discipline of "walking your talk" for the several weeks prior to The Walk to Emmaus brings reality to the outlines, authenticates the message within the speaker, and deepens the speaker's ability to communicate the message in a personal and practical manner.
3. **To build the team as a Christian Community.** The Walk is not conducted by individuals doing their assigned tasks but by a team of persons who are becoming a Christian community. This community provides the caring environment in which the pilgrims come to live for three days. The preparation that takes place during team meetings builds the team as a Christian community as well as readies the team functionally for the Emmaus Walk. The most important jobs of the Lay and Spiritual Directors are the preparation and building of the team in preparation for the Walk.
4. **To assist in the training of future leaders for Emmaus.** Team formation is one of the primary ways in which people learn what The Walk to Emmaus movement really is and how it is led. Through team meetings, the common wisdom of the movement can be passed on effectively to newer members of the community. Without this cultivation, an Emmaus community will never develop new leaders who are well grounded in the purpose and procedures of the movement.

5. **To develop Christian leaders for the church.** Team formation is crucial because the purpose of the Emmaus movement is not simply to “do” weekends but to develop Christian leaders. Team participation nurtures the practical and spiritual skills for Christian leadership in church and community. Persons exercise their gifts and focus their energies for service to God. Team members learn to articulate their faith in talks, to pray together for others, to lead a group gently in discussions of deep and sensitive subjects, to maintain the humble attitude of a servant, to live in a cloistered environment, to work as a team, to listen actively to people, and to attend to God’s presence in the midst of human interaction. When we cut short the team-formation process, we shortchange team members and forfeit some of Emmaus’s potential for fulfilling its purpose as a renewing presence within the church.

### **MEET OUR BOARD MEMBER**



My name is Levy Rogers . I live in Lexington, SC, and attended Walk #53 and sat at the Table of Matthew. I am the son of a Methodist minister and was baptized as an infant in Williston, SC. I attended 6 public schools in 4 towns in SC. I was very involved with MYF in my youth. I worship at Lexington UMC and have served in the Sunday morning nursery, as a children’s Sunday school teacher. I am also on the Building Committee, the Technology Team, I teach Adult Sunday school, am a member of LUMC choir, and a Church Council member. There was a terribly long period of my life during which I did not attend church or give God my attention that I was supposed to be giving. I am so thankful for forgiveness. I am enthused to be involved with the Walk to Emmaus Committee. Most of all, I am full of joy to be saved by grace and to be a disciple of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

### **NOW IS THE TIME!!!**

Sponsors, you are needed! It is not too early to begin praying for God to lay on your heart a friend, a relative, a neighbor, a co-worker who needs the love and grace that a weekend at Emmaus provides. We are fortunate to have had three walks since the pandemic, and even though the numbers have not been what we wanted or hoped for, we know that the presence of the Holy Spirit was alive and well. So many pilgrims, and team members as well, have felt God’s agape love, and have become involved in the community already. You can pick up Pilgrim’s Applications and Sponsor’s Covenants at any of the Gatherings on go online to [midlandsemmaus.com](http://midlandsemmaus.com) and download the forms. God bless you all as we seek to grow the Community!!

*While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and walked with them. —Luke*

*24:15*



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