



EMMAUS OF THE MIDLANDS NEWS

JUNE 2026

FROM OUR COMMUNITY LAY DIRECTOR:

Dear Fellow Emmaus of the Midlands Community Members,

God once again made Himself evident on Women's Walk #57! Hearts were touched and lives were changed. Praise God for His love and amazing grace!

As I write this, I just returned from our Gathering at Macedonia Lutheran Church in Prosperity. What a glorious setting to worship with the Community and enjoy a concert by Matt and Becky Goudelock. Those of you who were not there missed a great time of fellowship!

In the spirit of transparency, I feel it is important to share our current financial state with all of you. After our most recent walk I asked Levy Rogers, EOM Treasurer, to prepare a report for the Board of Directors that would show a breakdown of expenses for a walk. I suspected that we were losing money on walks because of the low number of pilgrims we had registered for the recent walks. At our recent Board meeting on May 11th, Levy presented the report which indicated we had used about \$5,000 **per walk** from the operating budget to support the recent walks. Currently, we have about \$4,750 in scholarship funds, and a little over \$4,000 in the operating budget. We have bills due to Camp Agape for approximately \$3,000 and to the Upper Room for approximately \$1,800. We are looking at the possibility of having to borrow from the Scholarship Fund to pay these bills. This is very troublesome for those of us on the Board, and now, probably all of you. I can't stress enough how important sponsorship is!! We need more than 11 or 12 pilgrims per walk! At our May 11th meeting, the Board voted to set a minimum number of registrations at 20 (with applications given to the registrar and fees paid) by 6 weeks before the walks begin. The Upper Room guidelines suggest a minimum of registrations to consider a walk is 20. Camp Agape requires us to cancel our reservation 6 weeks ahead of the walks or we are required to pay their fees. In addition, we are asking the teams to delay training until after we have enough pilgrims registered. Hopefully, that eliminates the feeling of "training for nothing". While it hurts me very much to say it, if we don't have more pilgrims attend the walks, we may not be able to hold walks! **PLEASE** be in prayer for our Community and for people you may want to sponsor.

De Colores!

Jodie Harper

THE MEN'S WALK IS SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 24-27, 2026.
THE WOMEN'S WALK IS SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 1-4, 2026.
COMPLETED REGISTRATION FORMS, SPONSOR'S FORMS, AND FEES
FOR BOTH WALKS ARE DUE NO LATER THAN AUGUST 13, 2026!!!!
THE TIME TO TALK WITH POTENTIAL PILGRIMS IS **NOW!!!**



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Attention All Members of the Clergy

As Community Spiritual Director, one of my tasks is to maintain a record of the clergy members in our community (active or retired). I can glean some information from past Walk rosters, but some of you became clergy after your Walk. I can find some information from the United Methodist website, but not all are of our clergy are United Methodists. Please, if you are clergy and consider yourself part of the Emmaus of the Midlands community, send me your contact information. If you are not interested in serving on a team at this time, tell me. If you are willing to serve on a team, tell me. If you don't want to be contacted by the Emmaus community for any reason, tell me. Right now, I just want to know who you are, what denomination you serve, and how to contact you for our records.

One other request, if you no longer endorse or support the Emmaus of the Midlands community or Emmaus in general, please tell me why. I will keep all names confidential.

Rev. Mary Frances Thompson
mfthompson@embarqmail.com

FROM OUR SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR:

What Does Salvation Mean?

Does the salvation Jesus offers save us from something or for something or both? As with much of life, salvation does not have to have an "either or" result. Many people who grew up in evangelical traditions heard warnings of the danger of spending eternity in hell if we did not "ask Jesus to come into our hearts." My experience was that the primary emphasis was avoiding hell. Drawing close to God and serving God and others were mentioned, but seemed to be secondary, maybe even optional. God was often portrayed as a strict, demanding parent who was to be obeyed less one incurred God's wrath. Being loved by God meant being under constant scrutiny, accompanied by fear of punishment. Any reward would be given in "the sweet by and by," which was also when eternal life began.

Fortunately, God saved me from the emptiness of such teachings and showed me that God desires relationship, God desires all humanity to experience the abundant life such a relationship brings. Being loved by God means being lovingly corrected and disciplined. The Greek word most often translated as "save" is *sōzō*. *Sōzō* is used to convey at least four related but slightly different concepts "to heal," "to rescue," "to preserve," and "to make whole." I believe that salvation as presented in the Bible involves all four of these concepts. Faith in Jesus can bring spiritual, emotional and occasionally physical healing. It can rescue us from immediate physical danger. Faith helps us preserve through challenging situations. Faith brings benefit and wholeness from a turbulent past.



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As we are healed and become whole, we can use the gifts God gives us to help and encourage others. We can share our faith boldly. Each of us has a calling, a purpose that God has created and saved us to do. When we are saved, we begin to claim our residence in the kingdom of God in the here and now. We claim our eternal home in the kingdom of God. Your eternal has already begun. We have a responsibility to use our gifts and blessings to build the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven. What do you think you will be doing in heaven?
Is it something you can and should be doing now?

De Colores!

Rev. Mary Frances Thompson

LET'S FORGIVE!

The recent "split" within the United Methodist Church has had a negative impact on our Emmaus of the Midlands Community, and I daresay other communities as well. We have pastors and laity who do not want to be a part of Emmaus because they feel Emmaus is part of the United Methodist Church. We have pastors and laity who don't want to be with those who have left the UMC. We have pastors and laity who don't want to be with those who have remained in the UMC. LISTEN TO ME!!! God would not be pleased with any of this! He wants us to be **ONE** people united in our love for Him! Emmaus serves as a beautiful example of unity - usually. Please leave your denominational differences at the door and be a part of helping people grow in their relationship with Christ. After all, Jesus told us to "go and make disciples."

Lovingly!

Jodie

Your Board Needs You

During his temptations, Jesus reminded Satan that "man does not live by bread alone." I want to remind members of the Emmaus of the Midlands community that Walks and gatherings do not happen by the work of the Board alone. Board members work to make sure our community is in compliance with Upper Room criteria. Board members help the community to be good stewards of our financial resources. Board members also help the community to be good stewards of our human resources and the gifts each of us bring to the community. Board members organize and facilitate committees. The various committees make sure Walks and gatherings happen. If you are not already serving on a committee, let a Board member know your area of interest. Everyone's help is needed.



GATHERING

The next Gathering will be Friday evening, June 26, 2026 at Northeast UMC (4000 Hard Scrabble Road, Columbia, SC 29223).

We will have our meal together at 7:00pm with Community announcements following. We will then worship together and celebrate Communion.

SPONSORSHIP TRAINING will be available to you at 6:00pm.

Let's work on dispelling the rumors that Emmaus is a "cult". If people want to know everything about a walk, please tell them. We don't want to be known as a Community that keeps secrets! There are ways to talk about the surprises without "spoiling" the surprise.

Agape - "There are some things that happen on an Emmaus Walk that are meant to be surprises. If you don't like surprises, I will be happy to tell you what the surprises are. Please don't share these things with others going on the walk because they might like the surprises. We wouldn't want to spoil it for them."

Candlelight - "There will be a worship service on Saturday night that is really special. There may be other people there."

Dying Moments - "There is a worship service on Saturday morning where you will be asked to talk with God about your sins. You can do this aloud or to yourself - whatever what is comfortable for you."

Closing - "There is a service at the end where you can share what the walk has meant to you. This is completely voluntary."

DE COLORES!!!