

The Messenger



A monthly newsletter of the Emmaus of the Midlands Community

Emmaus of the Midlands

PO Box 85

Lexington, SC 29071

July 15, 2027

Upcoming Events:

Board Meeting

Monday, August 10, 2026
6:30 pm Lexington UMC

July Gathering

Friday, July 24, 2026
7:00 PM
Beulah Methodist Church of
Gilbert
161 Beulah Church Road
Gilbert, SC

Team Training **Cancelled**

Fall Walks

Men's Walk, Sept. 24-27
Women's Walk, Oct. 1-4
CANCELLED!!!

JODIE'S JABBER ☺

I apologize for starting off this edition of the newsletter with negative news. It saddens me greatly to tell you that the Board voted Monday night to **cancel the Fall Walks**. The reason for this is that we don't have the money in our bank account to support even one walk, much less two. I am including the Treasurer's Report for all of you to see. You will notice that we have money in our Scholarship Account and in a CD designated for scholarships. By law, we can't move that money to our Operating Budget because it is "designated". We have some bills due that will bring our Operating Budget amount to less than \$200.00. If any of you are able, donations would be greatly appreciated.

The Board has decided to have a Garage Sale to raise money for our Operating Budget on October 3rd. Carolyn McLean will be chairing this event. We are in the process of acquiring a location and making plans. We ask that you bring items from your home that you don't want or need any longer, craft items to sell, and food items for a bake sale. We will be sending out more information about this as plans solidify. We need all of you to volunteer to help with this fundraiser!! The Board can't do this alone!! There will be sign-up sheets at the next Gathering. If you get a phone call asking you to help, please say YES!

We have had less than 15 pilgrims attend each one. The Board realizes the need to stop, analyze, and re-think the way we do things. We are not the only Emmaus Community struggling. There are many more. The leaders in the Upper Room in Nashville have realized the need to analyze the Emmaus experience and are doing so. There are options for us. We need to open our minds and hearts for what God has for us to do.

So, I ask you to join the Board members in prayer for our Community. We need to discern God's will for Emmaus of the Midlands. His way is far better than anything we can imagine!!

Lord, we ask for your Guidance in what we need to do in the Emmaus of the Midlands Community. We are confused, sad, frustrated, frightened...we feel a deep need for You to show us your Will. Help us to see and hear You clearly. Help us to trust You. We thank You for what you are doing and what you will be doing in our Community. Amen.

TREASURER'S REPORT JUNE 2026		
Operating Budget Beginning Balance	June 1, 2026	\$5,336.45
Disbursements	Asset Storage-Rental for Connex Walk Supplies-Upper Room Insurance	(\$225.00) (\$1,406.60) (\$272.43)
Total Disbursements		(\$1,904.03)
Deposits	Gatherings Seed Agape General Donations	\$333.00 \$10.00 \$125.00
Total Deposits		\$468.00
Operating Account Ending Balance	June 30, 2026	\$3,900.42
Scholarship Account Beginning Balance	June 1, 2026	\$1,225.00
Disbursements	None	\$0.00
Total Disbursements		\$0.00
Deposits	None	\$0.00
Total Deposits		\$0.00
Scholarship Account Ending Balance	June 30, 2026	\$1,225.00
Certificate of Deposit (Matures 7/18/26)	June 1, 2026	\$4,174.35
Disbursements	None	\$0.00
Total Disbursements		\$0.00
Deposits	None	\$0.00
Total Deposits		\$0.00
Interest Accrued		\$0.00
Ending Balance	June 30, 2026	\$4,174.35

We owe Camp Agape \$3,500.00 for the Women's Walk held in March 2026.

We owe our monthly insurance premium of \$272.43.

TOTAL OWED: \$3,772.43 out of the Operating Budget
That will leave \$127.57 in our Operating Budget

FROM MARY FRANCES:
Times They Are A-Changin'
(Title from a 1965 Bob Dylan song.)

In the mid to late twentieth century, many churches held services (that were well- attended) on Sunday mornings (usually at 11:00 am), Sunday nights, and Wednesday nights. In many places, recreational and entertainment opportunities were limited and “blue laws” restricted shopping on Sundays. In some towns, businesses closed on Wednesday afternoons. Times changed. Recreational and entertainment opportunities increased. Participation in community service activities, travel sports teams, and other extracurricular activities became more and more important to colleges and scholarship committees. “Blue laws” were repealed. People became more mobile, young people had cars to drive to school and to afternoon and weekend activities. The home computers, the internet, and mobile phones were developed and made affordable. The well-attended Sunday night church service became gatherings where those present bemoaned the fact that attendance had dwindled and wondered what to do to bring people back to the services. Some church members were adamant that the church had to have the lights on and the doors opened on Sunday night to provide a witness to the community, even though they were not in attendance. Many churches today do not have regular Sunday night services and some do not have regular Wednesday night services or programing, though they may hold special services or studies on Sunday or Wednesday nights during the year. Some churches even discovered that worship can occur at times other than 11:00 am on Sunday mornings.

Have these churches given in to secular influence or become less committed to their faith? Not necessarily. Jesus attended synagogue and temple services, but Jesus spent most of his time among people, meeting them where they lived and worked. Jesus did not wait for the people to come to him. He went to them. When people did come to Jesus, he welcomed them, accepted them as they were, and encouraged and enabled them to become the people God created them to be. Jesus was flexible and adaptive. Jesus not just look for people in synagogues and temples, he looked for them in trees and at wells in the middle of the day.

What does all of the above have to do with the Walk to Emmaus, especially Emmaus of the Midlands? The Midlands community held its first set of Walks in the fall of 1992. In the early days of the community, thirty-six pilgrims attended both the men’s and the women’s Walks. Waiting lists were common. At least once, the community held two women’s Walks within weeks of each other. Many churches had several members who had made the Walk and served on teams. Churches throughout the midlands hosted gathering. Gatherings were well attended. Reunion groups were plentiful as were the banners and other agape that those groups made. Community members were excited and eager to share Emmaus with their churches, their friends, and their families.

Meanwhile, life happened. Those who started the Emmaus of the Midlands community became involved in other ministries (one of the goals of Emmaus); some moved; some died; all grew older and less able to serve as they once could. The challenges churches faced and are facing affect Emmaus as well, not just our community, but Emmaus as a whole. Has the Walk to Emmaus become outdated and irrelevant to today’s society? Is the Walk to Emmaus no longer needed? Have planning and holding Walks and gatherings become our attempts to “keep the lights on and the doors opened”? How can we be flexible and adaptive? How can we think outside the box, outside the manual?

Your Board is wrestling with these questions. The Community cannot financially support the fall Walks. The money is not there. Money is not the only problem or even the main problem. We have lost our enthusiasm, our vision, our dreams. For several years, I felt that the church I was attending was conducting Vacation Bible School each summer, not with excitement, enthusiasm, and anticipation of what God was going to do, but with

resignation that the church expected VBS to occur and with relief when the last child walked out the door. Have we reached that point with our Walks?

Please join your Board in earnestly praying for discernment of how God wants to use the Emmaus of the Midlands community? An important part of each Walk is the Means of Grace talk and Dying Moments. Part of the talk reminds us that God has to prune the branches of the vine, that part of us must die in order to make room for new life and new growth. What do we as a community need to die to?

As I was writing this articles, Psalm 51, especially verses 10-13, kept coming to mind. I think that Psalm is a good one to pray, both individually and as a community, as we seek renewal and guidance.

Psalm 51--The Message

51 ¹⁻³ Generous in love—God, give grace!
Huge in mercy—wipe out my bad record.
Scrub away my guilt,
soak out my sins in your laundry.
I know how bad I've been;
my sins are staring me down.
⁴⁻⁶ You're the One I've violated, and you've seen
it all, seen the full extent of my evil.
You have all the facts before you;
whatever you decide about me is fair.
I've been out of step with you for a long time,
in the wrong since before I was born.
What you're after is truth from the inside out.
Enter me, then; conceive a new, true life.
⁷⁻¹⁵ Soak me in your laundry and I'll come out clean,
scrub me and I'll have a snow-white life.
Tune me in to foot-tapping songs,
set these once-broken bones to dancing.
Don't look too close for blemishes,
give me a clean bill of health.
God, make a fresh start in me,
shape a Genesis week from the chaos of my life.
Don't throw me out with the trash,
or fail to breathe holiness in me.
Bring me back from gray exile,
put a fresh wind in my sails!
Give me a job teaching rebels your ways
so the lost can find their way home.
Commute my death sentence, God, my salvation God,
and I'll sing anthems to your life-giving ways.
Unbutton my lips, dear God;
I'll let loose with your praise.
¹⁶⁻¹⁷ Going through the motions doesn't please you,
a flawless performance is nothing to you.

I learned God-worship
when my pride was shattered.
Heart-shattered lives ready for love
don't for a moment escape God's notice.
¹⁸⁻¹⁹ Make Zion the place you delight in,
repair Jerusalem's broken-down walls.
Then you'll get real worship from us,
acts of worship small and large,
Including all the bulls
they can heave onto your altar!

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Psalm 51--New Living Translation

Psalm 51

For the choir director: A psalm of David, regarding the time Nathan the prophet came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.

- ¹ Have mercy on me, O God,
because of your unfailing love.
Because of your great compassion,
blot out the stain of my sins.
- ² Wash me clean from my guilt.
Purify me from my sin.
- ³ For I recognize my rebellion;
it haunts me day and night.
- ⁴ Against you, and you alone, have I sinned;
I have done what is evil in your sight.
You will be proved right in what you say,
and your judgment against me is just.^[a]
- ⁵ For I was born a sinner—
yes, from the moment my mother conceived me.
- ⁶ But you desire honesty from the womb,^[b]
teaching me wisdom even there.
- ⁷ Purify me from my sins,^[c] and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
- ⁸ Oh, give me back my joy again;
you have broken me—
now let me rejoice.
- ⁹ Don't keep looking at my sins.
Remove the stain of my guilt.
- ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God.
Renew a loyal spirit within me.
- ¹¹ Do not banish me from your presence,
and don't take your Holy Spirit^[d] from me.

- ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and make me willing to obey you.
- ¹³ Then I will teach your ways to rebels,
and they will return to you.
- ¹⁴ Forgive me for shedding blood, O God who saves;
then I will joyfully sing of your forgiveness.
- ¹⁵ Unseal my lips, O Lord,
that my mouth may praise you.
- ¹⁶ You do not desire a sacrifice, or I would offer one.
You do not want a burnt offering.
- ¹⁷ The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit.
You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God.
- ¹⁸ Look with favor on Zion and help her;
rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.
- ¹⁹ Then you will be pleased with sacrifices offered in the right spirit—
with burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings.
Then bulls will again be sacrificed on your altar.

Footnotes

- a. [51:4](#) Greek version reads *and you will win your case in court*. Compare [Rom 3:4](#).
- b. [51:6](#) Or *from the heart*; Hebrew reads *in the inward parts*.
- c. [51:7](#) Hebrew *Purify me with the hyssop branch*.
- d. [51:11](#) Or *your spirit of holiness*.

New Living Translation (NLT)

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****IMPORTANT DATES – MARK YOUR CALENDAR****

Fall Walks
CANCELLED

Team Training for Men's and Women's Fall Walks
CANCELLED

Spring Walks
Men's Walk #59 – March 4-7, 2027
Camp Agape
Lay Director – ????

Women's Walk #58 – March 11-14, 2027
Camp Agape
Lay Director – Tina Lipscomb

If your church can host Team Training by providing sleeping arrangements, kitchen, meeting room for both teams together, and separate rooms for training for men and women, please contact Jodie Harper, Board Chair, at 225-205-4534

2026 Board of Directors

Board Chair/Newsletter	Jodie Harper	Jodieharper55@gmail.com
Previous Community Lay Director	Carolyn McLean	chmclean55@yahoo.com
Board Chair/Ex-Officio		
Vice-Chair/Team Selection	Tina Lipscomb	snugglesmama@gmail.com
Secretary	Matt Goudelock	goudelocksc@gmail.com
Send-Off/Sponsor's Hour/Closing		
Treasurer/Literature/Materials	Levy Rogers	levyrogers@hotmail.com
Community Spiritual Director	Mary Frances Thompson	mfthompson625@gmail.com
Assistant Spiritual Director	TBD	
Gatherings/Reunion Groups	TBD	
Housing/Camp Manager	Greg Bowers	bowersmaintenance@gmail.com
Kitchen Chair	Christen McConnaughay	christenmcconnaughay@gmail.com
Mail Room/Table Agape	Delores Fish	deafish@yahoo.com
Music/Entertainment	Paul McKeever	pmckeever2944@gmail.com
Prayer Vigil/Seed Agape	Wendy McLean	wendyjojo12@gmail.com
Publicity/Community Trainer	Ed Burch	Ed.burch@gmail.com
Registrar	Kim Corrigan	<u>kacorrigan1@gmail.com</u>
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