

# The Messenger



*A monthly newsletter of the Emmaus of the Midlands Community*

**Emmaus of the Midlands**

**PO Box 85**

**Lexington, SC 29071**

**Renewing Christian Disciples**

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**Strengthening Local Churches**

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## A SACRED DUTY?

Two hundred fifty years ago, the American colonists declared their independence from Great Britain and fought to secure that independence. A constitution was written to guide the governance of the new nation. That constitution begins.

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, ensure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

We live in a country in which “we, the people” have a voice in how we are governed. Having that voice creates a responsibility, some would say a sacred duty, to use that voice to let our elected officials know how we want our country to treat all its citizens and to communicate the morals and values we want used to guide all decisions that are made. Someone has said that voting is a kind of spiritual discipline and perhaps even a form of prayer. Certainly, as Christians, we want to spend time in prayer and in becoming as informed as possible before we vote. Ask for spiritual discernment to guide your decisions.

To be clear, I am a firm believer in the separation of church and state. I do not want my government to tell me whom to worship or how, when, and where to worship. If I want the freedom to determine my own spiritual beliefs and worship practices, I believe I should give others that same freedom. I also do not want the church or any faith group to dictate how the government operates. Church and state can work together without either controlling what the other one does. I do believe that elected officials, as well as citizens who are voting, should allow their individual faith to guide how they act, how they treat, other people, and how they make decisions. That is not the same as one faith dictating what everyone has to believe or act. Most, if not, all major religions expect their followers to live by some form of what we call the “Golden Rule.” What a different world we would live in if everyone truly tried to treat others as we want to be treated.

Midterm elections will be held November 3. In SC, the deadline to register to vote in those elections is October 4. Early voting begins October 19 and continues through October 31. Visit [scvotes.gov](https://scvotes.gov) to check if you are registered to vote and to learn how to register if you are not. Help your friends, families, and neighbors register. Help them get to locations where they can cast their votes. Every voice, every vote is important. The surest way to make sure your vote does not count is to not vote.

Voting in national and state elections is vitally important. We choose leaders in other areas of our lives as well, such as in our churches and in the Emmaus community. Spiritual discernment, not politics or the desire for power and control, should guide us as we choose church leaders and Emmaus Board members. The Emmaus of the

Midlands community is renewal and revitalization. If God has given you leadership skills and the ability to discern how the Holy Spirit is leading not only you, but our community, allow yourself to be among those the community choose from for Board members. (If you are not chosen to serve on the Board, God may have another place of service for you.) If you know of a community member who has talents and gifts the Board needs, get that person's permission to nominate them as a Board member. The Emmaus Board is a working Board of servant leaders.

Every member of the Emmaus of the Midlands is important. Every member needs to be heard. Help select Board members. Contact Board members with suggestions and concerns. Attend gathers, read the newsletter, ask questions, and stay informed. Above all, pray!

As you pray, pray especially for the Board. A lot of hard work needs to be done and a lot of important decisions must be made. Jodie Harper resigned from the Board at the end of the September meeting. Jodie worked hard and prayed hard during her time on the Board, especially this year as she served as Community Lay Director and Board Chair. When you see Jodie thank her for her dedication and service, even better write her a note of encouragement and well wishes.

**Mary Frances Thompson, Spiritual Director**

**EOM Board meeting: Mon, Oct 12, 2026 6:30pm at Lexington UMC.  
Elections are during October for a class of new members beginning in January.**

### **Board of Directors Responsibilities**

- Serve a term of three (3) years unless otherwise specified.
- Attend Board Meetings on the second Monday of each month, and Board training. Time and location will be announced.
- Attend monthly Gatherings if at all possible.
- Emmaus Ministries Community Manual
- Fulfill all duties of my area of service for all Walk to Emmaus weekends. Also, I will attend Send-Off, Candlelight, and Closing if at all possible.
- May need to serve as a Board Representative on a Walk to Emmaus weekend.
- Pray for the Emmaus of the Midlands community and the Emmaus of the Midlands Board of Directors.
- Participate in a Fourth Day Reunion Group, or in a similar accountability group.
- Complete the appropriate portion of Emmaus University in the first year of service.

## **A FRESH SEASON FOR OUR EMMAUS COMMUNITY:**

### **BRAINSTORMING IDEAS FOR OUR JOURNEY AHEAD**

Change is in the air, and God is moving in our Emmaus Community! At our recent Board gathering, we took time to reflect, review feedback from our retreat, and brainstorm key questions about our future: *How can we make Gatherings more effective and fun? How has our Community changed since it first started? Where do we go from here? How should we re-define or re-do our Board positions? How can we increase our revenue?*

# Emmaus Community Brainstorming Notes

## What Are We Going To Do?

### How can we make Gatherings more effective and fun?

- Make agape for walks
- Concert in the park (central location) with a praise band from a church
- Winter Gatherings on Saturdays from 11 AM to 2 PM
- Emmaus skits at Gatherings
- Clean jokes during meal; turn in ahead of time
- Themed Gatherings
- Auction (silent/phony money)
- Phone Tree
- Special quarterly activities
- Community input
- Game show on Gathering night
- Concert at Gathering

### How has the Community changed from when it first started?

- Split in Methodist Church; Methodist denomination is broken
- We've gotten old
- Lower participation in distant areas like Aiken, Dalzell, Saluda, Jackson, Blythewood, Oswego, Sumter, and others
- Apathy and self-protectiveness
- People leaving organized religion
- Cliquish
- Upper Room stale
- Outdated
- Need younger crowd
- Lack of communication
- Consistent scheduling
- Not getting our message out
- Retention – 4th Day
- Board is not enthusiastic; need to work on how we present ourselves
- Community left the Board

## Ideas About What's Next

### Where do we go from here?

- Maybe separate from the Upper Room?
- Could dissolve into other Communities
- Revamp our program; Saturday only, modified Face to Face
- Pray for guidance
- Work together and be enthusiastic

- Never, never, never give up
- Everyone needs to step up
- Talk it up through brochures, public displays, and sponsorship
- Babysitters/pet sitter for weekend or Gathering
- Emmaus Rep at churches
- More Jesus; loosen ties to Upper Room
- Bonding time for team members
- Community input
- Pilgrim surveys and retention feedback
- Community Rep to Board
- Phone Tree; update rolls
- Survey the Community on how they can help
- Shorten and add relationship building
- Team follow-up with pilgrims

### Board Position Ideas

- Kitchen/Gatherings
- Mail Room/Table Agape
- Camp Set-Up/Luggage; committee assigned
- Prayer Vigil/Reunion Group
- Take entertainment off Music
- Community Lay Director; no assignment
- Reunion/Life Groups/Small Faith Accountability

## Revenue And Community Engagement

### Community Structure

- Board Representative to oversee surveys of the Community (old and new)
- All agape in one position
- PR: churches, newsletter, online community, thrift sale
- Committees of 2 to 4 board members working with the Community

### Revenue Opportunities

- Renewal Walk for Community (1 day)
- Revisit pricing
- Day of Giving
- Online giving
- Emmaus Giving Sunday
- Annual Community Event: Sock Hop
- Estate Planning Endowment
- Annual Christmas Concert
- Maximize pilgrim count
- Thrift Sale

- Donation mailing campaign

- Grant funding

**De Colores!** Our community is hosting a Thrift / Bake / Craft Sale, and we need everyone's help!

### EVENT SCHEDULE & LOCATION

- **Location:** Lexington UMC (Gym/Fellowship Hall), 309 E. Main St, Lexington, SC
- **Set-up:** Friday, Oct 2, 2026 | 12:00 PM – 7:00 PM
- **Sale:** Saturday, Oct 3, 2026 | 7:00 AM – 2:00 PM (*Rain or Shine*)
- **Clean-up:** Saturday, Oct 3, 2026 | 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

- **Thrift Sale:** Collect gently-used clothes (on hangers), furniture, household items, electronics, books, toys, and decor. Store at home until Oct 2.
- **Craft Sale:** Contribute handmade crafts (crocheted items, artwork, pottery, keychains).
- **Contacts:** Tina Lipscomb (803-917-2165) & Terry Mulholland (803-422-6614)
- **Bake Sale:** Bake cakes, pies, cookies, or breads. Items must be wrapped and labeled with ingredients. (*No cream-filled, custards, cheesecakes, or meat pies per 501(c)(3) rules.*) (*No refrigeration required*)
- **Emmaus Table:** Help share information or offer prayer. Managed by Jodie Harper & Kim Corrigan.
- **Volunteer:** Sign up for set-up, cashiers, table staff, or clean-up.

### KEY CONTACTS & SIGN-UP

**Chairperson:** Carolyn McLean |  803-414-6216 |  chmclean55@yahoo.com

*Call/text Carolyn directly to volunteer!*

Hey there, Emmaus Family,

As we look forward to getting back together and seeing how the Lord is working in our community, we wanted to pull up a chair and have a heartfelt chat about where things stand with our Emmaus of the Midlands finances. This ministry is built on faith and fellowship, but it also takes some practical tending to keep the lights on and the water running.

To be completely upfront with y'all, putting on a single Emmaus Walk takes a good bit of resources—about \$13,000 per walk weekend to cover camp lodging, good meals, and all those essential books and materials. On top of that, it takes about \$7,800 every single year just to keep our basic wheels turning—things like insurance, our storage unit, and keeping our website up and running.

Now, we had some really blessed, strong years. But lately, having fewer folks register—especially for our last few Walks has put a real squeeze on our operating funds. It looks like we are staring down a deficit for 2026. To make sure this ministry stays strong and ready for the next crop of pilgrims, our board is working hard to tighten our belts and build up a reserve fund. If the Lord is putting it on your heart to support this ministry directly, we would be mighty grateful for any unrestricted donations you see fit to make. No matter if it's a little or a lot, every single dollar goes right into keeping our foundations steady so the Emmaus experience is wide open for future pilgrims. Thank y'all so much for your continuous prayers, your smiling faces, and your open hearts as we walk this road together.

De Colores!

## October Gathering

Please note that **there will be no gathering held in September. The Thrift sale will replace the gathering.**

We look forward to seeing everyone when we resume for our **October Gathering!**

Mark your calendars and join us for fellowship and community as we reconnect this fall.

- **Date:** Friday, October 23, 2026 (Fourth Friday)
- **Time:** 7:00 PM
- **Location:** Edgefield Methodist Church
- **Address:** 309 Norris Street, Edgefield, SC 29824
- **Contact Phone:** (803) 637-6163

## December Gathering

Mark your calendars! We invite everyone to join us for our **December Gathering** in Prosperity for fellowship and community.

- **Date:** Saturday, December 5, 2026 (First Saturday)
- **Time:** 6:00 PM
- **Location:** Wightman Methodist Church
- **Address:** 302 N Church Street, Prosperity, SC 29127

October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month so Just be aware of Emails like this fake one:

Jodie Harper <[mink.van@aol.com](mailto:mink.van@aol.com)>

Tue, Sep 1, 1:21 PM

Hello Shuler,

Are you available? Emmaus of the Midlands needs to make a donation today, but I'm out of town right now, can you please handle this for me? We need to send out \$450 through Zelle or PayPal, I'll handle this personally and make sure you get fully reimbursed. Hope to hear back from you soon.

Thanks,

Jodie Harper

Y'all Stay Safe, Shuler

Newsletter submitted by  
Shuler Burton  
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803-480-1561

