

As the Rooster Crows December 2023 Vol. 52

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Updates from the Community Lay Director

New Year's Greetings to All

My prayer for each of you is that the blessings of the Advent Season, Hope, Peace, Joy and Love will be yours' throughout 2024.

We stand fast in our belief that Christmas is all about God's gift of His Son, Jesus to us.

As the years have passed, I realize that we have, and need, a yearly reminder every Christmas that focusing on Christ has to be our first priority. We need to be deliberate about this because the dark side continually tries to shift our focus to worldly issues. Simple things, like my hands cramping up as I try to type this article, or larger things, like family and friends who have significant health issues, or the loss of someone close to you.

My prayer is that God will provide us all the strength we need to stand firm and resist the evil forces that surround us and try to stop us from doing God's work.

God equips each of us with those gifts that we need to do His work in His Kingdom here on earth.

For the Emmaus Community, this is the Walks. Thank you to all who have been praying for the Walks.

Thank you to those who have said yes to working on the Walks in whatever capacity God has called you.

We thank God for the opportunity to transform lives by sponsoring a Pilgrim on one of the April Walks.

God, give us the strength to say yes to the opportunity that you have provided.

God, help us make you our priority in the New Year. Give us the assurance that you will equip us and walk with us in all that you put before us.

"The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face shine on you, and be gracious to you, the Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace". Numbers 6:24-26.

De Colores.

Donald Genrich, Community Lay Director

Fox Valley Walk to Emmaus # 7, Table of Peter

Email: donald.genrich@gmail.com or call at 608-393-3622

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Greetings from Fox Valley Walk to Emmaus

The Walk to Emmaus develops Christian disciples and leaders by inspiring, challenging, and equipping active adult church members for Christian action in their homes, churches, workplaces, and communities. It also

benefits less-active members who are seeking to renew a relationship with God, grow spiritually, or discover firmer foundations for their lives. The Walk to Emmaus is an ecumenical program that invites and involves Christians of many different denominations. Have you heard about the Walk? Your church has been blessed to have past participants in the walk. They may be your active committee leaders, your bible study facilitators, your pastor, or your coffee hosts. People who have experienced the Walk tend to want to bring the Love and Grace of Jesus back to their friends and church families. What happens on the Walk? You will enjoy three days of singing, learning, laughing, worshiping, reflecting, praying and participating in small groups. Discussions center around fifteen talks given by laity and clergy. These talks present the theme of God's grace, how that grace comes alive in the Christian community and how it is expressed in the world. You'll also discover how grace is real in your life, how you live a life of grace, and how you bring that grace to others. You will have the opportunity to participate in the daily celebration of Holy Communion and to understand more fully the body of Christ. The walk experience is unique for everyone who attends.

When is the next Walk to Emmaus? Our Spring Walks are at Camp Fairwood in Westfield, WI. The 2024 Men's Walk is April 18 – 21 and the 2024 Women's Walk is April 25 – 28. If you're being led by the Holy Spirit to participate in a Walk or if you're interested in more information, please check out our website:

<https://www.foxvalleyemmaus.com> or contact Stephanie Dutkowski (920) 676-0514 or Laurie Graber (661) 406-1721

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Message from the Community Communication/Website/Database/Email Chair

Thank You all for a great year and for the upcoming 2024. I would love some more team members to help in webpage, Ministry Manager and Communications.

We have so far met all the needs but always could use more help especially as the Walks will be coming.

Facebook: Is working and Pastor Anita is monitoring the page for any new Prayer requests. She forwards as needed for mailing.

Web: Walk To Emmaus FVWTE page [Fox Valley Walk to Emmaus \(foxvalleyemmaus.com\)](https://www.foxvalleyemmaus.com) is working well. Updates and Newsletter links are updated to provide fast access.

Database: Ministry Manager (MM) I have been using MailChimp reporting data to track down hard (bad email addresses), soft (other email issues) of bounced emails. There are NO hard bounces of 592 recipients.

Communications: Some Ministry Manager (MM) profiles have no unique email or phone information so I cannot send email or text via MailChimp to those members. That restricts you to only seeing our Facebook page or FVWTE website, making it much harder to send communications to you of FVWTE items, Prayer notices, and gatherings.

Every Profile in MM works better when each member has a unique email address, for example, a husband and wife sharing the same email address. If desired consider supplying separate email addresses if you wish to have dual email notifications or text.

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Prayer Corner for December 2023

January 25 – 28, 2024

Heart of Carolina, Men's Walk	NC
High Plains Emmaus, Men's Walk	TX
Blue Lake Emmaus, Men's Walk	AL

February 8 – 11, 2024

Cross Bayou Emmaus, Men's Walk	LA
Great Smoky Mtn Emmaus, Men's Walk	TN
New Horizon Emmaus, Men's Walk	TX

February 15 – 18, 2024

Blue Ridge Emmaus, Women's Walk	NC
Great Plains Emmaus, Men's Walk	OK
Arizona Walk to Emmaus, Men's Walk	AZ
Golden Spread Emmaus, Women's Walk, TX	

De Colores

Dave Rimple
Agape Chair
FVWTE #19

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Gatherings News:

Gatherings are going to look a little different over the next year. Don Genrich, Fox Valley Walk to Emmaus Community Lay Director, has proposed the idea of having multiple gatherings around the state. Currently Black River Falls is going to be the monthly meeting place for those on the western side of the state. We are working with a couple of churches on the eastern side of the state to see if we can put together a few churches willing to host each month. Our next step will be to look for churches in the southern part of the state willing to host. The plan is to host monthly gatherings around the state with two months held in the center of the state for everyone to attend.

A Note: The Mauston Church is now "Global" and should read GMC instead of UMC.

Upcoming Gathering:

Please join us for an afternoon of fellowship and worship and welcoming new pilgrims. Be a Friend, we would love to see you!

Please bring a dish to pass around and share. We furnish tableware, coffee, & water.



2024 Emmaus Gathering Schedule



January 2024

Whole State Gathering

Mauston UMC- 420 Suszycki Dr., Mauston, WI 53948

February 2024

East- Bethany Church- 1110 Echo Lane, Green Bay, WI 54304

West- Sparrows Nest- 17304 Havenwood Rd, Sparta, WI 54656

March 2024

East- Salem UMC- 120 Sheboygan Street. Fond Du Lac, WI 54935

West- TBD

April 2024

We invite you to join us on Saturday Night & Sunday afternoon for Men's Walk- April 18th- 21st & Women's Walk- April 25th- 28th.

Camp Fairwood- W7905 S. Pleasant Road, Westfield, WI 53964

May 2024

Post Walk Gathering

St. Paul's- The Springs UMC- 600 Wilshire Blvd., Stevens Point, WI 54481

If you or your reunion group would like to host a Gathering at your Church. Please contact me at lahumphrey06@gmail.com or call me at 608-343-7015 and leave a message.

De Colores

Lynn Humphrey
Gathering Chair
FVWTE #20

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MUSIC NOTES

The music committee is going to start updating and renewing our Emmaus Songbooks! If you have a favorite song you 'd like to sing at gatherings, have suggestions for some current songs we could add to the songbook, or songs we could delete send me an email with the song title, and who wrote the song! Some titles have multiple versions or totally different music, so please be specific. **Subject line: Emmaus songbook** to cryk22@gmail.com.

On another note - We are always looking for more musicians to help with gatherings, walks, and all community events. If you are part of a praise band or church choir, if you play a guitar, keyboard, piano, or any other instrument please prayerfully consider volunteering your talents and gifts! Music is a big part of every worship service we do, and not having live musicians to lead the music is difficult.

Even One person to lead the music is difficult, because we support, encourage, and energize each other. If you think you would like to be part of the music team on a walk, join the musicians at a gathering so we can get to know you, and what you like to do. Send me your questions or responses – **Cheryl Rykken** cryk22@gmail.com call or text – 920-379-094

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A Christmas message -- Devine Imagination

In Psalm 8, David looks up at the night sky with wonder.

*When I consider your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place,
what is mankind that you are mindful of them,
human beings that you care for them? (v3-4)*

My college professor – a former Jesuit, we called him Father Fischer -- showed us 2 sets of ontological proofs for the existence and non-existence of God, all perfect and told us: "There are the limits to our reasoning abilities. If there is a God, what better way to show us that he is God... and we are not."

Both of these men, thousands of years apart had pondered God inspiring similar wonder. In my professor's case, his question was not simply a way to show us our place, but like David, God inspired us to engage our divine imagination -- the spark He placed in us at creation. God wants us to be curious, to look on His work with wonder and He keeps our sense of wonder, our imagination engaged often by upsetting our expectations. But, again, He warns us: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts,

neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. -- Isaiah 55:8

Earlier in Psalm 8, David wrote:

*Through the praise of children and infants,
you have established a stronghold against your enemies,
to silence the foe and the avenger. (v2)*

*What? Infants and Children? Against big, strong enemies? Really?
Exactly. Isaiah predicted it.*

*For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.*

And he will be called

*Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

*Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end. -- Isaiah 9:6-7*

In Isaiah's day, sons of kings became kings and hopefully great ones begat even greater kings and that's what Isaiah's prophesy sounds like -- David and Solomon -- rolled into one. And you have to think that's what the Jews of the day expected.

But no. Surprise. A poor kid, born to teenage parents in a barn -- the last and the least -- the kingdom of Heaven, not the kingdoms of Earth. God in human form, destined to ransom Himself to restore our opportunity of real relationship with Him.

*Imagine. "what is mankind that you are mindful of them,
human beings that you care for them? (Psalm 8:4)
We are blessed. Merry Christmas!*

Chris Nelson
dnprop9@gmail.com
715.497-9939

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Emmaus Upper Room E-News for December 2023

eNews from Emmaus Ministries



Renewing Christian Disciples • Strengthening Local Churches

DECEMBER 2023

[View this email in your browser](#)

Renewing Christian Disciples • Strengthening Local Churches

DECEMBER 2023

WORDS FOR REFLECTION

I was recently reading a book for [the Academy for Spiritual Formation](#) I am attending. I began reading about how agape love has been seen through the centuries through different theologians' eyes. I was reminded of a friend involved in Emmaus Ministries for many years who said to me, "Unfortunately, in Emmaus, agape has come to mean a trinket, snack, or letter, and not the true love of God it is intended to be."

Martin Luther King Jr., in his address delivered at the General Assembly of the National Council of Churches in December 1957, spoke of the three kinds of love in the Greek New Testament: *eros* – physical love; *philia* – brotherly love; and *agape* – the sacrificial, unconditional love of God. King said: “When we speak of loving those who would oppose us, we refer neither to *eros* or *philia*. We speak of a love which is expressed in the Greek word *agape*. *Agape* means nothing sentimental or basically affectionate. It means understanding, creative, redeeming goodwill for all [people]. It is an overflowing love which seeks nothing in return. It is not set in motion by any quality or function of its object. It is purely spontaneous, unmotivated, groundless, and creative. It is the love of God operating in the human heart. When we rise to love on the *agape* level, we love [people] not because we like them, not because their attitudes and ways appeal to us, but we love them because God loves them. Here we rise to the position of loving the person who does the evil deed while hating the deed that the person does” (MLK Papers vol. 6, p. 325).

With the rising tide of criticism and disagreement in our world where the common belief is *If you don't think just like me, you must be my enemy*, the oasis of Emmaus Ministries stands as a bulwark of *agape* love. Living a Fourth Day lifestyle reminds us that we love others not because they are just like us, but because God loves them, and *that* is what matters. Let us all continue to shower the world with *agape* love, not just during our Emmaus events and not just in the “trinkets, snacks, and letters,” but every day and with every person with whom we come into contact.

As MLK, Jr. said on another occasion, “I have a dream!” We too can dream of a day when the world is filled with *agape* love. This dream can come true when we approach the world in a “spirit of high idealism, cooperation. and charity” and with *agape* love.

Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas, and Happy New Year from all of us at The Upper Room and Emmaus Ministries!

Hess “Doc” Hall
on behalf of The Upper Room Emmaus Ministries staff



MY FOURTH DAY STORY

by Kobus Marais

I attended Protea Emmaus Walk #125 in Gauteng, South Africa in March 2018.

Though I started my journey five years ago, today it still feels like an absolutely new beginning. My life had been tremendously impacted, especially through the Grace talks when I came to understand the bigger picture of what God, Abba Father, has in mind for humankind. I realized that long before I came into being, God was thinking about me. At that point during my Walk, I thought that my only response could be to serve and share the truth of the gospel with the church on my journey with Christ.



After my Walk, I had a rough time. Because of episodes of low blood sugar, I was unable to serve as I had intended.

Then, as I was praying for healing from Type 1 diabetes, I came across Dr. Henry Wright's teachings on spiritual root causes of diseases, as well as a biblical and medical program, Under Eagles' Wings by Dr. Michelle Strydom. These provided insights on the importance of establishing God's identity in me and declaring to myself what God says about me. That was when my healing started, and I was able to continue my growth in grace, especially through piety and by sharing my journey to better health with others. This experience gave me a passion for lay servants and newly ordained ministers. I tell them that they have lots of choices, but that The Walk to Emmaus is an excellent ministry for persons who want to be equipped and empowered for the work of God.

Continue reading Kobus Marais's Fourth Day Story [here](#).

We want to hear from you. [Click here](#) to share your Fourth Day story.

2024 COVENANT AGREEMENT

The 2024 Covenant Agreement signing is now in the Ministry Manager application. The Covenant is now being signed electronically through this application. Before you can complete the signing, you will be given the entire Covenant Agreement to read and then verify that you have read it. The electronic means of completing these steps should make it much easier to sign the Covenant Agreement each year.

There are a couple of video tutorials that will be of help to you. These are located under the FAQ button at the bottom of any Ministry Manager page once you have logged in. You can access a [video tutorial from last year](#) that explains the process to fill out a Digital Covenant. Since the process hasn't changed, you can use it as a guidance to complete your 2024 Covenant Agreement without being in Ministry Manager.

- If your community is under a National Board (Australia, South Africa, and the United Kingdom), *please do not complete the Covenant Agreement in Ministry Manager*. Contact your National Board for more information.

- If your Covenant Agreement needs to be in a language other than English, please contact your Regional Leader.

If you have any difficulties or questions or would like to know more about the Ministry Manager application and how it can assist your community's record-keeping, team selection, and communications, please email Ministry Manager Support at mmsupport@upperroom.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS HOSTED BY THE UPPER ROOM EMMAUS MINISTRIES OFFICE



Renew your commitment with Day Four Restore

FEBRUARY 3, 2024

Join us for the first offering of Day Four Restore Year Three

February 3, 2024

9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (Central Time)

Day Four Restore Year Three (*of the three-year cycle*) is the first hosting of the new materials in the one-day retreat model designed to refresh the spirit and renew the commitment of those who have attended any Fourth Day event. As we worship, pray, listen to speakers, and share together, participants will experience God's grace in new and refreshing ways.

Together, we will be renewed in our faith and inspired for ongoing leadership and service. This event also promises to be an excellent opportunity for communities interested in hosting Day Four Restore in the future.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Year Three Agenda (all times listed are U.S. Central Time)

- 9:00 a.m. Spiritual and Lay Directors openings and devotional table introductions
- 9:30 Spiritual Directors' meditation
- 10:00 Talk #1 given by the Spiritual Director
- 11:15 Talk #2 given by the Lay Director
- Noon Break for lunch
- 1:00 p.m. Spiritual Practice Exercise - *Loving the World with God in a Fourth Day Lifestyle*
- 3:15 Closing with a Love Feast

Register for the inaugural Day Four Restore Year Three virtual event [here](#).

UPCOMING TRAINING SESSION

International Emmaus Ministries Office will host an ***Orientation and Training for all NEW Community Lay Directors, Community Spiritual Directors, and Community Trainers on Monday, January 22, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. (US Central time)***. This time together will probably last about 1 ½ hours.

PLUS, we'd like to invite anyone who is a continuing CLD, CSD, or CT to join us if they haven't received this training previously.

In this training, we will share important information concerning how the Community Board and leadership serves to fulfill our shared mission of **Renewing Christian Disciples and Strengthening Local Churches**.

Click on the link below to register for this event. Registration will close 24 hours prior to the event.

We look forward to sharing with you all.

NOTE: Please share this invitation with other possible attendees.

The Upper Room Emmaus Ministries Office invites you to participate as an attendee in the following online training session:

Topic: **2024 Emmaus Ministries New CLD/CSD/CT Orientation**

Host: Stéphane Brooks and “Doc” Hall

Date: Monday, January 22, 2024

Time: 6:30 p.m. US Central Standard Time (Chicago, GMT-06:00)

REGISTER NOW

Once you are approved by the host, you will receive a confirmation email with instructions for joining the session.

For assistance, contact us at emmausmin@upperroom.org.

SAVE THE DATES

As we enter the new year, The Upper Room Emmaus Ministries Office invites you to save the following dates.

International Virtual Gathering: April 19 at 7:00 p.m. CST

This yearly event will bring together Emmaus Ministries community leaders and members from across the globe. Together, we will praise God in song, hear from lay and clergy speakers as they share their Fourth Day experience. We will meet in small groups to share and encourage each other on the journey. The session will end with a love feast that will provide us with an opportunity to continue to open ourselves to God’s grace.

[REGISTER FOR THE VIRTUAL GATHERING HERE](#)

Village Encounter: May 2–18, 2024

Emmaus Ministries offers a virtual program, Village Encounter, that provides space for adult participants to experience God's grace in new and transformative ways. It seeks to renew Christians in their faith and further inspire, challenge, and equip them for Christian leadership in the various spheres of their lives.

The experience begins with an invitation to a deeper journey with the risen Lord and continues, throughout its seven sessions, to move participants to new levels of openness and commitment as disciples of Christ. This event also promises to be a wonderful opportunity for leaders of Emmaus Ministries communities and local churches interested in hosting this online experience to come and learn.

The May 2024 Village Encounter will follow this schedule:

All times are U.S. Central Time (CT)

Orientation: Thursday, May 2, 7:00–9:10 p.m. Central Time (CT)

Session 1 – Friday evening, May 3, 7:00–10:00 p.m.

Session 2 – Saturday morning, May 4, 8:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Session 3 – Friday evening, May 10, 7:00–10:00 p.m.

Session 4 – Saturday morning, May 11, 8:00 a.m.–12:45 p.m.

Session 5 – Friday evening, May 17, 7:00–9:30 p.m.

Session 6 – Saturday morning, May 18, 8:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

[REGISTER FOR VILLAGE ENCOUNTER HERE](#)

Regional Gathering and Celebration: August 30–31, 2024

This year's Regional Gathering and Celebration will be held in the Buffalo, NY area. The event will offer Emmaus Ministries community leaders and members an opportunity to meet The Upper Room Emmaus Ministries staff, deepen their understanding of our overall mission and the

implications for their ministry, network and share best practices, and further train on specific aspects of the work.

More information will be coming your way, but reserve the dates and plan to join us in Clarence, NY.

Holy Land pilgrimage: December 1–10, 2024

This pilgrimage is open to leaders and members of Emmaus Ministries communities around the world, their family members, and friends. During the ten-day event, participants will:

- join in daily reading and reflection on carefully selected passages of scripture
- hear speakers from the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim religions who will bring their various faiths and cultures together for interaction and understanding of present-day realities
- be invited to sit with a grassroots movement of understanding, nonviolence, and transformation among Palestinians and Israelis
- continue to experience God's grace in new ways
- become increasingly sensitive to situations of injustice in their respective communities
- reflect on ways in which, as followers of Christ, they can contribute to the building of a more just society

Further information and a registration link are forthcoming. Save the date and don't miss this opportunity to retrace the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus, taken by the two discouraged followers of Christ, as recorded in the Gospel of Luke. Come with us to explore how, as a result of their encounter with the risen Lord, these two persons rushed back to Jerusalem to be fully part of what would become a transformative community.

THE EMMAUS GIFT FUND

Help Us Close the Year Strong!

Our giving campaign, in which we seek to raise \$45,000 by the end of the year, ends on December 31. All proceeds go toward the Emmaus Ministries **Fourth Day Fund**, the operations fund that supports the ongoing work of the ministry. We are grateful for your generosity.

Give to the GIFT now

PRAY FOR OUR GLOBAL EMMAUS COMMUNITY

As we give thanks for the recovery we witnessed throughout 2023, we highlight the successful second set of walks in West Malaysia and the uplifting conversations at the Emmaus Ministries South Africa National Board meeting. Both were held in November. As we go forward, we invite prayers for the development of the work in Malawi and for new conversations with Uganda. To God be the glory.

Emmaus Ministries

The Upper Room
P.O. Box 340004
Nashville, TN 37203-0004

[Emmaus.UpperRoom.org](https://www.Emmaus.UpperRoom.org)

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THE UPPER ROOM

[UpperRoom.org](https://www.UpperRoom.org)

Our mailing address is:

The Upper Room
1908 Grand Avenue
Nashville, Tennessee 37212

[Add us to your address book](#)

Pray with us.

[Submit a prayer request](#) or [visit The Upper Room Prayer Wall](#).

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We do hope you have found this Newsletter both helpful and informative. If it's important to you, then it's important to us. Please let us know how you are doing with your Fourth Day, in your local congregation, or in your reunion group by clicking the link below. We will be glad to include your announcement or article in the next edition.

[As The Rooster Crows](#)

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Use this link for our Website <https://www.foxvalleyemmaus.com/>