



Heart of Florida

Walk to Emmaus

Heart of Florida Walk to Emmaus is a Ministry of First Presbyterian Church of Bartow

The Newsletter of the Heart of Florida Emmaus Community

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www.hof-emmaus.org

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Gathering

Saturday, July 8th, 2006

at

**Trinity United Methodist Church
33425 St. Rd. 54 W., Wesley Chapel
813-788-2898**

5 - 7 PM

Bring a covered dish

Trinity UMC, Wesley Chapel is located

Six Miles East of I-75 on Highway 54

The exit is Wesley Chapel and Zephyrhills

Or

Take SR-39 from Rt. 60 through Plant City,
before reaching Zephyrhills, turn left onto

CR-535/Chancey Rd., travel 4.3 miles, turn right onto
CR-579/Morris Bridge Rd., travel 0.7 miles, turn left onto SR-54,
travel one mile to church

Childcare will be provided.

The Purpose of Emmaus and Sponsorship

The purpose of Emmaus is to develop leaders for the church. The corollary is that active Christians and church members are the ones invited to participate in Emmaus so they can go back to their churches and be effective, or more effective, leaders.

There are two important points about this. First, Emmaus is predicated on the participants having, or acknowledging having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Thus, **Emmaus is NOT an evangelism instrument, and Emmaus IS a discipleship-building instrument.**

The second point is that if people are not active Christians or members of a church, how can they go back to be leaders in the church? The proper response is they can't. **Therefore, people who are not active Christians or church members should not be invited to participate in Emmaus.**

The aim of sponsorship is to build up the body of Christ. Whom do we sponsor? Emmaus is for active Christians and members of churches whose own renewal will mean new energy, commitment, and vision in the church and everyday environments for Christ's sake. Those sponsored could include the following:

- Church leaders (pastors and laypersons) who will bring the experience back to their church
- Dependable church members who are the quiet backbone of the church
- Less active members who need their awareness of grace rekindled
- Christians who are hungry for "something more" and who want to grow spiritually

Emmaus is right for many people – but not for everyone. The religious background or emotional condition of some people may make Emmaus an improper discipleship tool for them. Other persons' may be unsuitable choices for sponsorship to Emmaus because of the negative effect they might have on an Emmaus Weekend or the divisive influence they might bring to the church. Sponsorship requires sensitivity to these factors. Some examples of questionable sponsorship are as follows:

- Non-Christians
- Persons undergoing an emotional crisis (for example, family breakup, job loss, severe grief) or who are psychologically unstable
- Persons who decide not to make a Walk after being presented the opportunity
- Persons that do not attend church

Sponsorship: The Most Important Job of All

Sponsorship is the most important job in Emmaus. It is more than "signing up people."

Sponsorship is an act of love for God, for the pilgrims, for the Emmaus community, and for the church. First, good sponsorship is the first act of agape before a Walk ever begins; the experience of the Walk for a pilgrim really begins with how we handle sponsorship.

Second, good sponsorship under girds the whole weekend with sacrificial love on behalf of each pilgrim. Sponsors use discernment in recruiting pilgrims, embody the personal commitment of the community to each pilgrim, and provide personal acts of agape during the three days for the pilgrims. These acts of agape include prayer, agape letters, bringing the pilgrim to send-off (or making arrangements for that to be done), being present at Sponsor's hour, taking care of the pilgrims' family during the weekend, being present at Candlelight and Closing, getting the pilgrim into a reunion group, just to name a few of the duties. Sponsors also should not serve as team members on Walks with persons they are sponsoring.

The Equal Commitment Guideline

The Heart of Florida Walk to Emmaus is part of the International Emmaus Community which has a guideline that states: "husbands and wives are encouraged to make an equal commitment to participate" in The Walk to Emmaus. It is always best to schedule spouses' participation in the same set of Emmaus weekends so they can share their experience and support each other. The International Emmaus Community has also concluded that husbands should attend the weekend before the wife.

The Board of Directors can make exceptions when there is no possibility of the participation of both spouses and reasonable assurance that the participation of only one spouse will not adversely affect the marriage. **If you are sponsoring someone and his or her spouse chooses not to attend, this application must be presented to the Board of Directors for consideration. The HOF Board has made a commitment to pray for these applications and make a decision as to whether or not they should attend the next weekend.**

-Continued on the next page-

How Many to Sponsor

The Heart of Florida Board of Directors has established a policy for the number of pilgrims a person can sponsor. Due to the enormous responsibility of sponsoring a pilgrim for a weekend, and the responsibility to the pilgrim's family, the Board of Directors has determined that **a sponsor will not sponsor more than 2 persons per weekend.** This allows a sponsor to devote the necessary time needed to make each individual pilgrim feel comfortable and to eliminate the fear of the "unknown" and assure the pilgrims that the needs of their family will be taken care of.

. . .from Our Community Lay Director

It is all about Love; The best four days of my life; I am going to start at home; I have been reborn; and I felt closeness to God; a rain of the Holy Spirit on my drought; He reached down and touched my face; Wow, I think I lost it last night; It meant the beginning of life again; God is alive and well! These are all just some of the comments from the Heart of Florida #14 closing, and part of the reason why we sponsor pilgrims and love to work teams. But that is not all that Emmaus is about.

Emmaus is also about building leaders in the Church, The Body of Christ. How active and involved are you in your church? Have you stepped into a leadership role in your church since your Emmaus weekend? If not, why not? That is an integral part of your Fourth Day. If we assume only an average Emmaus weekend of 25 Pilgrims then we have had over 700 pilgrims in this community alone. That should mean 700 people stepping into leadership roles! If you haven't, ask your pastor how you can help.

De Colores!
In His service,

Brian D Hinton
Community Lay Director

Needed...Musicians for Weekends and Gatherings

If you play the guitar or keyboard or sing, and would like to lead worship during a gathering or be the music angels on a weekend, please contact Anthony DuPree. Many churches need musicians for gatherings and don't know whom to contact; Anthony is the board contact person for anyone needing musicians, so please let him know that you are available to lead worship. Anthony may be contacted by email – AWD308@aol.com or by phone at 863-533-0651.

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Here are a few things that are on the website:

Mapquest links to Masterpiece Gardens and churches where gatherings are held

Forms - Reservation for Pilgrims, Sponsor's form, Team Application

There is also a **Heart of Florida email group** - sign up for this group and receive email communications about upcoming events.

The newsletters are also posted there. We are hoping some of you might prefer to read your newsletter online instead of receiving it by mail. If you would like to receive it via the website instead of snail mail - please email Sharon Harris at info@fpcbartow.org.

Upcoming Events

July 28-30th, 2006

Beach Weekend

El Caribe Hotel

Daytona Beach

Contact Lisa Valeriay

September 9th, 2006

Open Gathering

Bring your prospective pilgrims

First United Methodist Church

Bartow

Fall Walks

Men's - October 26-29th, 2006

Women's - November 2-5th, 2006

Masterpiece Gardens, Lake Wales

November 11, 2006
Post Walk Gathering
TBA