



Heart of Florida

A ministry of the First Presbyterian Church of Bartow

June/July 2007 – Volume 9, Issue 3

www.hof-emmaus.org

Gathering

Saturday, July 14th, 2007

at

**Trinity United Methodist Church
33425 State Rd 54, Wesley Chapel**

813-788-2898

5 - 7 PM

Bring a covered dish

Child Care Provided

Trinity UMC, Wesley Chapel is located

Six Miles East of I-75 on Hwy. 54

(The exit is Wesley Chapel / Zephyrhills)

or

Take SR-39 from Rte. 60 thru Plant City,
before reaching ZHills, 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 1 mile to the church

. . .from Our Community Lay Director

Hi Emmaus Family.

So you are thinking of asking someone to experience Jesus by taking a walk to Emmaus? I would like to share with you a few pointers and watch outs for this process we call "SPONSORSHIP".

1. First and foremost, the person(s) should be Christian ---- a true believer
2. They should be active in your local church family, dependable, attending regularly, and seeking a deeper relationship with Christ.
3. It would be helpful if they are in leadership roles in your fellowship.
4. Remember that the program is for couples first.

Now, a few watch outs:

1. No non-Christians. This is not a weekend for conversion.
2. No persons in an emotional crisis, such as a recent death, divorce, or addiction problem.
3. People that repeatedly say "NO". Emmaus is not for everyone.
4. Persons outside the main stream theology of our Christian faith.

The purpose of Emmaus is to build up the Body of Christ in the local church. That is the only reason we have for being.

DeColores,
Joe Hart

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.**

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.

Planning To Serve?

Get those applications to work the Fall walks in as quickly as possible. Teams are being formed. Please pray for the upcoming team members and for the Pilgrims whose hearts are being prepared.

Reflections from Ron and Stevie

We would like to thank the Heart of Florida Emmaus Community for the prayers, love and support shown to us during Walk #16. We felt your prayers from team selection through closing of the women's weekend. God put together two awesome teams for us. We are truly blessed to be part of the Heart of Florida Emmaus Community and being Lay Directors on walks at the same time was an added blessing.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Jeff Allen and Laura Oak as they prepare for Walk #17.

God is good, all the time!
Ron & Stevie Hosler
HOF Walk to Emmaus #6
Table of John, Table of Martha

Snack Agape – A request from Molly Dupree

Would you like to be a part of the weekends but you are unable to serve on the team?

I am on the HOF Board and I serve as your Snack Chair. Basically what I do is round up snacks for the weekends. As we all know we need lots of Kleenex, chocolate, water and sodas to keep our pilgrims and team happy.

I need a volunteer from each of the following communities:

Bartow
Lakeland, Highland City,
Fort Meade, Avon Park
Lake Placid, Sebring
Orlando
Lake Wales, Frostproof
Winter Haven, Dundee, Haines City
Wesley Chapel, Zephyrhills

I will call one contact person from each of the different communities. I will either e-mail or mail a list of snack agape for that community to provide for the weekends. The job of my contact person is to get their friends in their reunion group or those people in their church that have been on a walk to provide the items on the list for both the men and women's walk.

I have been so blessed to have wonderful people helping me out with this over the last year or so. I would love to have a list of people that I can rely on, instead of just one or two from each area. Please call me at (863) 533-0651 or e-mail me at molly33830@aol.com to let me know that you would be willing to help.

Snack agape is an important part of the weekends success. More than that, it is just another way of showing God's love to the pilgrims. May God bless each of you.

Upcoming Events
Emmaus Beach Retreat Weekend
July 27 – 29, 2007

The much anticipated weekend is fast approaching. We are changing hotels this year.
The rate is \$109 plus tax per night – call 1-800-224-5065 to make your reservation
Use the group code HOFE when calling.

This rate is only guaranteed until June 1. May be slightly more after that date.

Fall Walks

Men's – October 25 – 28th, 2007 **Women's** – November 1 – 4th, 2007
Masterpiece Gardens, Lake Wales, FL

Post Walk Gathering

November 10, 2007
Location to be announced

www.hof-emmaus.org

Here are a few things that are on the website:

Directions 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

Heart of Florida is a bi-monthly publication of:
First Presbyterian Church of Bartow
P.O Box 1412
Bartow, FL 33831-1 412
Return Service Requested

NON PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
LAKELAND, FL
PERMIT #2012