



Heart of Florida

A ministry of the First Presbyterian Church of Bartow
June/July 2008 – Volume 10, Issue 3

www.hof-emmaus.org

Gathering

Saturday, July 12th, 2008

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

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.

. . .from Our Community Lay Director

Heart of Florida: Pray for your Community! The board has heard and responded to what we believe are the wishes of our Community. A decision was made to change the TRAINING SCHEDULE of the next Walk. We will do our Team Building and Training Meetings on THREE SATURDAYS rather than 10 Thursday nights as has been our custom since Heart of Florida's inception. We believe this will allow a wider range of age groups to serve on teams. It will certainly reduce the overall fuel cost and perhaps even enable more car-pooling as well. A committee has been appointed to develop a training schedule to fit the 3 Saturday venue. The new training schedule will be approved by the Board prior to being implemented. As with any change, there will be a learning curve we will all go through. There will be adjustments and most likely some corrections as we move through this different approach. There is one major *"watch out"* to keep in mind: Should you be lead to work a team and God puts you on a team, it will mean *perfect attendance* for the three Saturday schedule. We will know what Saturdays are involved before the Lay Director begins to contact you. If you have signed up to work a Team, please be aware of this new direction we have committed to. As I began this note, I will also close with: Pray that what we have done and the manner that we undertake to accomplish this new direction will glorify the Father.

DeColores,
Joe Hart

****Please Note: Team Training Schedule for Fall Walks: (Saturdays) August 9, September 13, October 11. Team Dedication will be on Thursday, October 16, 2008.****

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. Jesus is counting on you!

Snack Agape

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

Faye Sarvis will act as the designated HOF Board member serving as Snack Chair, charged with rounding 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.

A volunteer from each of the following communities is needed:

Bartow

Lakeland, Highland City,

Fort Meade, Avon Park

Lake Placid, Sebring

Orlando

Lake Wales, Frostproof

Winter Haven, Dundee, Haines City

Wesley Chapel, Zephyrhills

There should be one contact person from each of the different communities. Faye will either e-mail or mail a list of snack agape for that community to provide for the weekends. The job of the 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.

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

Newsletter and Email Update

As postage rates and other newsletter-related costs continue to rise, it is important that we remind each member of our ever-growing community that the newsletters are available on our HOF website: www.hof-emmaus.org. If you want to print the newsletter from the site, you can.

If you have signed up for the HOF-Emmaus Message Group in the past and need to update the email address that you currently are using, all you need to do is log on to the message group (using the old address) at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HeartofFloridaEmmaus/>, and then go to "edit membership" where you can update your profile and add your new email address and delete the old one. If, after trying this, you are not successful, send a note with your old email address and the new one to our webmaster for help (webmaster@hof-emmaus.org).

If you are not already a member of our message group, you can join by going to our website and selecting the "message group" menu item and then click on the link in the paragraph "How do I join?". When completing this email, be sure to include the information on your walk, e.g. Your name, walk location, walk number and table. After you have joined the group, you will get notices from the webmaster whenever a new newsletter has been posted on the website.

For those who prefer to continue receiving the "snail mail" paper version of the newsletter, please let Sharon Harris know this by sending a little note to her (at: **First Presbyterian Church of Bartow ; P.O Box 1412; Bartow, FL 33831-1 412**) with the name and correct address you wish the newsletter mailed to. It would also be nice if you included a small donation to cover paper, postage, and even the gas for her to

drive to the closest post office that accepts bulk mail.

Inspirational Thoughts

Dancing With God (author unknown)

When I meditated on the word Guidance, I kept seeing "dance" at the end of the word. I remember reading that doing God's will is a lot like dancing. When two people try to lead, nothing feels right. The movement doesn't flow with the music, and everything is quite uncomfortable and jerky. When one person realizes that, and lets the other lead, both bodies begin to flow with the music. One gives gentle cues, perhaps with a nudge to the back or by pressing lightly in one direction or another. It's as if two become one body, moving beautifully. The dance takes surrender, willingness, and attentiveness from one person and gentle guidance and skill from the other. My eyes drew back to the word:

Guidance

When I saw "G": I thought of God,
Followed by "u" and "I".
"God", "u" and "I" dance."
God, you, and I dance.

As I lowered my head, I became willing to trust that I would get guidance about my life. Once again, I became willing to let God lead. My prayer for you today is that God's blessings and mercies be upon you on this day and every day. May you abide in God as God abides in you. Dance together with God, trusting God to lead and to guide you through each season of your life. **And I Hope You Dance!**

Susan Garrett, HOF Walk to Emmaus #9, Table of Sarah

Upcoming Events Emmaus Beach Retreat Weekend July 27 – 29, 2008

The rooms are \$119 per night plus 12% tax / so the weekend is \$266.56 per room. Call the hotel directly - 800-457-0077 and guarantee the room with a credit card. **Tell them it is for the block for Heart of Florida Emmaus.**

Reservations must be made by June 24th, 2008 to guarantee this rate.

Fall Walks (#19)

Men's – Oct. 23rd – Oct. 26th, 2008

Women's – Oct. 30th – Nov. 2nd, 2008

Masterpiece Gardens, Lake Wales, FL

Post Walk Gathering

November 17, 2008

St. John's UMC, Winter Haven

Spring Walks (#20)

Men's – April 16th – 19th

Women's – April 23rd – 26th

Masterpiece Gardens, Lake Wales, FL

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

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