

Grace For Today

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G.R.A.C.E. Website
www.gracemmaus.org



G.R.A.C.E.

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NEXT GATHERING

THURSDAY
JANUARY 10, 2008
FIRST UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH
MARSHALL, TX
Gathering at 7pm

G.R.A.C.E. REGISTRAR
P.O. Box 132212
Tyler TX.
75713-2212

**2008 SPRING
WALKS ONLY 2
MONTHS OUT!!**

ARE YOU CONTAGIOUS?

I was asked this question a couple of months ago when I walked into my bosses office and told her I had a temperature of 100*. I was sneezing and my nose was running faster than I could wipe it. I thought, "I guess she can't see the germs flying around in the air." She didn't want to send me home, so I stayed and worked, and carried a bottle of hand sanitizer around with me all day. A couple of days later, a coworker called in sick with very similar symptoms. Did she catch it from me?

Whether we realize it or not, whether we can see the germs or not, we are ALL contagious, all the time. Did you ever notice how during a conversation among friends, if one or two start talking negatively, pretty soon the whole conversation turns into a big gripe session? In the same manner, if someone is talking positively about someone or something, the conversation takes on a constructive tone. I've noticed that I can walk into a room and if everyone is gloomy, I am likely to become down in the dumps myself. UNLESS, I make a conscious effort to change the situation. I've also noticed that it's often easier to talk about, or focus on, what's wrong with a situation or person, than it is to point out the good things. Maybe for me, it's because I've had so much practice. I've spent years noticing what's wrong with me, my kids, etc, and probably not near as much time focusing on what's right.

This past year as community Lay Director has changed that in me. In fact I realize that the change really started about 8 years ago when I went

on my walk to Emmaus. I was shown the positive side of living a life that honors Christ. I was shown the joy that comes from loving God with your whole being, from the inside out. I have continued to be drawn to the Emmaus Community, like a magnet. I absorb so much strength from my brothers and sisters in Christ that I have been able to get through some very trying times. It's like being plugged into a battery charger, my experiences within this Body of Christ that we call Emmaus. I can't begin to tell you all how much I appreciate that. EACH ONE OF YOU, whether I know your name or not, has affected me in a POSITIVE way. I really hope that most of you can say the same about me.

Within any group or endeavor, there will always be room for improvement. The GRACE Emmaus Community is no different. After all, we will not reach perfection in this life--can't be done. And the GRACE Board is ALWAYS seeking the input of the community regarding ways we can improve. I challenge you to voice your concerns to any board member at any time. Our e-mail addresses and phone numbers are posted on the website and are available in any newsletter. I also want to challenge you to do so in a positive manner. Realize that your GRACE Board of Directors is made up of human volunteers, who give freely of their time and talents to serve God and the GRACE Emmaus Community.

One of the main concerns we hear about over and over is COMMUNICATION. Please know that the board is constantly exploring ways and trying to implement procedures to improve communications. YOU can help improve the communication within the community by remembering to speak positively with one another regarding your experiences and concerns. Remember, whether you realize it or not, your attitude is contagious, ALL THE TIME.

DeColores,
Susan Stallings
2007 Community Lay Director

Seasons Greetings

GRACE.... Can you believe that 2007 is almost over? As we have just had

Thanksgiving and are busy getting ready to celebrate the birth of our savior I would like to take a few minutes to say Thank You to Susan Stallings. Susan has served the last 3 years on the Board for GRACE and this year as our Community Lay Director. What an AWESOME job she had done. As I look back over the last 12 months one of Susan's strength is her LOVE for Christ and for GRACE. Susan has a true "Servant's Heart". When I worked my first walk ever, I remember that the lay director sent us a listing of things to bring with us when we packed. At the bottom of this long list was to bring our servant's heart. I was checking off all the items and told my friend that I didn't have a servant's heart – (I was looking for something tangible to pack). We all got a big laugh from this when I realized it was not an item to place in the bag but something you carry in your heart at all times. Well Susan is an example of the true meaning of a Servant's Heart. Thank You Susan for your time, your talents and your presence to this community. Another thing I love about Susan is she tells it like it is. Just tonight I was telling her that I was not sure of Robert's Rules of Order for running the Board Meetings... her response was "Who is Robert and why does he give us the Rules?" We laughed and it took some of my fears away about becoming your new Community Lay Director.

There are others that we all need to take some time to thank for their years of service and commitment to the GRACE Community. This year we have 5 members leaving the board. When you see these people please please please take a moment to say THANK YOU as we appreciate their time and added value to our community. It is a large commitment to agree to serve as a board member. One of those commitments is time to serve. We have monthly meetings, we have monthly Gatherings AND we each have special jobs that we over see to ensure the Walks run efficiently.

- ♥ Leah Huffstetter – stepping down from the board to be our Chrysalis Steering Committee Chairman for 2008 – Leah was responsible for our books at the book table (served 1 year)
- ♥ David Barnes – has been our Registrar (served 3 years)
- ♥ Betty Devine – Team Selection Coordinator (served 3 years)

- ♥ Pat Eubanks – Sponsors Coordinator AND Babe Chick Training (served 3 years)
- ♥ Mike Minor – Managed the Community Trailer for Supplies, Name Tags, Walk Doves / and GRACE Crosses (served 3 years)

Remember that our walks this year fall earlier than normal. The men's will be February 28th – March 2nd AND the women's walk will be March 6th – 9th. So start praying now for the pilgrim(s) God is leading you to ask to sponsor. Remember that pilgrims don't need to go on a Walk to Emmaus...we want to offer them to chance to attend because they deserve an opportunity to experience 72 hours of uninterrupted time with our Savior. Merry Christmas, Teresa Elliott

Community Calendar of 2007
December NO GATHERING;
December 13 Board Meeting at
Lanes Chapel UMC – 7pm

2008 Gatherings

January 10 (Thursday) First United Methodist Church, Marshall 7pm

February 14 (Thursday) First Christian Church, Mineola 7pm

March 1 and March 8 (Saturday) CANDLELIGHT at Disciples Crossing, Athens 8pm

April 10 (Thursday) First United Methodist Church, Ore City 5pm
 Babe Chick Mtg, 6pm Potluck Dinner, 7pm Gathering

May 8 (Thursday) First United Methodist Church, Hallsville 7pm

June 12 (Thursday) First United Methodist Church, Lindale 7pm

JULY – NO GATHERING

August 9 (Saturday) St. Marks United Methodist Church, Marshall 12pm Covered Dish & Gathering

September 11 (Thursday) Crossroads Community Church, Longview 7pm

October 11 & 18 (Saturday) CANDLELIGHT at Camp Gilmont Gilmer 8pm

November 8 (Saturday) GRAND ULTREYA at Lanes Chapel United Methodist Church 5pm Babe Chick Meeting, 6pm Potluck Dinner, 7pm Gathering

DECEMBER – NO GATHERING

Chrysalis Corner

WOW! What an awesome opportunity we have here in the G.R.A.C.E. Emmaus Community with the start of the Chrysalis this coming year. There are a few things that the Chrysalis community needs. The first is PRAYER. Pray for the: Steering committee (especially since I am in charge ; upcoming flights (to be held summer of 2008); future butterflies and team members.



I am truly honored and blessed to be the Steering Committee chair since Chrysalis is so dear to my heart. I attended my flight over 15 years ago and still remember what a difference it made in my life. I can truly say I don't know where I would be if I wouldn't of attended Chrysalis. Much prayer went into the decision by my sponsors and me. If I would have been forced to attend, I probably wouldn't have gone. We must remember, this isn't for every youth – just like Emmaus isn't for everyone. We can't force anyone into attending. Be prayerful in your decision as to who you might sponsor. Make sure they know what is going to happen that weekend and they are ready to go. If you are interested at all in helping or working a flight, please contact a member of the Committee. There are many areas in which you can help. If you know a church that would be willing to host a flight, please let us know. It must have a big room for the conference room, sleeping quarters for the youth and team, and SHOWERS! We are looking at holding flights either Thursday thru Saturday or Friday thru Sunday – whichever is best for the host church.

Saturday, December 8 is a HOOT. This is the gatherings for Chrysalis. All high school and college age youth are invited to attend whether they have attended or not. We will meet at 5p.m. for super at FUMC Lindale and eat. Then we will have worship about 6. After worship is over, we will head out to Santa Land and see the lights on a hayride. The cost is at

the most \$10 which is the cost for Santa Land. Don't let the cost be a reason not to come. Please email Teresa Elliott at elliott.teresa@gmail.com with RSVP for the Hoot ASAP.

We will also be raffling of an afghan that was made by an EMMAUS member. Raffle ticket will be sold for \$2 or 3 for \$5 starting in January at gatherings and local churches.

Leah Huffstetter
Leah_belle@hotmail.com
903-509-1218

Leadership and Self-Deception

That's the name of perhaps the best book I've ever come across on leadership. I define a leader as someone who has influence. That you a leader, Right?

So, if that is true, we don't have a choice about whether or not we influence others. We are ALWAYS influencing others. So, what kind of influence do you offer? When people walk away from a conversation with you, do they feel grateful, empowered, encouraged? How do others experience you? Especially those in your life who are the closest to you? How do others experience you when your heart is not at peace? Think.

It is Christmas, Advent, Epiphany! The time to celebrate His appearing. Could it be that we could be on a road (to Dallas or Emmaus) and Jesus wants to show up and we don't recognize Him? Perhaps we get to examine our hearts this Christmas to make ready for His appearing....again in our hearts. Are we caring for our hearts?

How about a short self-examination? How about taking 5 minutes right now to evaluate my spiritual life, for He said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments."

How am I doing on keeping His commandments? Especially the whole law being found in the two greatest Jesus taught us? Love and God and others?

Maybe this check list will help.

1. Do I have a daily quiet time with the Lord?
2. Does the Lord discipline me?
3. Do I read/study my Bible regularly?
4. Do I keep a prayer list and pray for others?

5. When was the last time I experienced answered prayer?
6. Do I seek reconciliation with those I have problems with?
7. Or those who have problems with me?
8. Do I share the story of Jesus' forgiveness with those who are ready to heart it?

Careful, it is not about "doing" but "being" His disciple. Doing comes after being.

How did I do? What is the Lord telling me? As He reminds me of His love. Perhaps confession and repentance could lead to a transformation and make this the very best Christmas "pageant" ever.

You're Not Rid of Me Yet!

I can't believe that 2007 is almost over!! When I began my year as CLD, my most fervent prayer was "Lord, let me get through this year with the community intact, and not too much damage done!" As I began to settle into the year, I realized what a wonderful group of people made up the Board of Directors, and that they were a representation of this beautiful community that we call GRACE. I could sense the prayers of the saints lifting us up and supporting our work. **My prayer changed to "Lord, help me to use the talents you have given me to do your will and grow your kingdom within this community."**

As the year nears its end, my prayers are now "Thank you and praise you Lord, that you are faithful to hear and to answer." The community is indeed intact, I don't think there was too much damage done, and I've had to use talents I didn't know I had!! The attendance at the gatherings is up 20 to 30%, our budget is stronger than ever, and we had more than 110 pilgrims attend walks this year. There were over 40 first time

team members, and we have seen increased participation by former walk LD's. (YEA!) God is Good. It is with much relief and confidence that I pass the torch to Teresa Elliott and the 2008 GRACE Emmaus Board.

I have to warn you, though; you aren't going to get rid of me that easily. I will be working with the team for Walk #45 on the Spring Women's walk, and we need pilgrims. So, continue to do your part and pray that God will bring to mind those men and women who could benefit from the Emmaus experience. Then GET THOSE APPLICATIONS IN! I look forward to seeing you all at future gatherings, beginning in January in Marshall! Thank you so much for your support and participation this past year. I pray that God blesses each of you with the knowledge of His presence throughout the holidays and during the upcoming year. I love you all.

De Colores,
Susan Stallings
OUTGOING 2007 CLD

REMINDER FOR 2008

Work has **already** begun for the Spring Walks 2008!!! Please remember that this spring's walks will be held the LAST WEEKEND OF FEBRUARY and the FIRST WEEKEND OF MARCH, respectively. This means that all the paperwork and sponsorship duties must begin **NOW!!!**