

Grace For Today

April, 2008
Volume 8, Issue 3

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

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NEXT GATHERING

**SATURDAY
APRIL 12, 2008
FIRST UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH
ORE CITY, TX
BABE CHICK, 5PM
POTLUCK, 6PM
GATHERING, 7PM
YA'LL COME!!**

**PLEASE NOTE THE
CHANGES TO COMMUNITY
CALENDAR IN APRIL & JUNE**

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

DEAR G.R.A.C.E.



Are you willing to Stretch?

This Sunday we had the pleasure of hearing our District Superintendent for the United Methodist Church, Rev. Nick Sholars preach. He had an interesting topic that I think relates to us... the GRACE Community. I have heard many people say that we are struggling, that we are having difficulty, that we need to fix things (without understanding what the things are) etc... and it leads me to prayer and questioning.

Those of you that know me personally know that I am not a person of athletic ability. I am putting that lightly, but even I know that if you are going to exercise, run a race, dance, or take on a marathon you need to stretch first. It is stated that when you stretch before a race you will go further AND when you stretch after that race, you will not be sore. So here is the question - Are you willing to stretch your spiritual lives so that you can become all God wants you to be?

That is the question of the day. What does God wants us to be? What does God want and expect from each of us as part of the GRACE Community. In order for us to become all that God wants us to be, we must be willing to move out of our comfort zones. Are you willing to become

vulnerable so that you are doing what God is calling you to do for this community?

As board members we all have individual roles to help keep us organized and running smoothly. We volunteer our time and skills to try and make the best decisions for our community but we can do nothing without you. Let me repeat that - we can do nothing without you. We [the board] want to do what is best for the GRACE Community to go forward and flourish.

One of the things that we stress to new pilgrims is that Emmaus is designed not to replace the church but to enhance the church with our leadership skills, gifts, and/or talents. In order for EMMAUS to flourish we need people who are willing to serve and work within the community, as well, so that we continue to grow stronger and better to build that support for our local churches. Our servanthood must be twofold, our community and our individual church home.

Another priority is sponsorship of pilgrims. Are you willing and able to sponsor? GRACE has had openings in each of its walks during the past two years. When decisions about making or cancelling a walk due to participation come before the board, we search soulfully and prayerfully the Lord's purpose. What does decreasing participation say about our status as a community? Does it say anything to you? What are you doing about this?

We now face discussion regarding sponsorship of a new community. I will be honest in saying that I am concerned. If we are struggling and not filling up our

walks will the division of our community cause a further decline? We must keep an open mind on this topic because some leaders say that in order to grow we must divide. We must ask our Father whether now is the time and seek His wisdom in answer. This would not be a split of discontent but a proposal by several people from the Trinity Valley area that the need has grown geographically. Let's face it, we are a large community and it is hard to get from Longview to Athens, from Palestine to Ore City, from Marshall to Quitman, etc...

Other suggestions are to not divide the community but to revamp the way in which we hold gatherings. One idea was to hold the gatherings in more than one area and less often so that people do not feel they need to drive so far to attend. In some communities gatherings are not held monthly and do not rotate locations as we do. They are held in locations that are more strategically situated in the district. Some have gatherings in multiple locations after each set of walks are finished.

Please join us in prayer for our community as we face decisions that will honor what God has in store for us. Are you ready for the journey??? One thing I have noted is that the people who are willing to stretch and go the distance no matter if it is in a race, work or the work of God - these are the people who inspire others. As I leave you with all this to think about ask yourself if you are willing to be an inspiration to others. Please step up and serve in your GRACE Community in some fashion. Use your talents,

skills, and/or gifts to help us to be all that God wants us to be.

**DeColores and Fly with Christ
Teresa Elliott,**

Community Lay Director
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A TIME OF EXAMINATION

Lent, Holy Week, and Easter are wonderful times of examination. Several of the board members are seriously evaluating our personal and community effectiveness. Maybe you will want to as well. Perhaps this reading will inspire and convict.

Then Jesus took his disciples up the mountain and gathering them around him, he taught them:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,

Blessed are the meek,

Blessed are they that mourn,

Blessed are the merciful,

Blessed are they that thirst for justice,

Blessed are you when persecuted,

Blessed are you when you suffer,

Be glad and rejoice for your reward is great in Heaven.

The Simon Peter said,

"Are we supposed to know this?"

And Andrew said,

"Do we have to write this down?"

And James said,

"Will we have a test on this?"

And Philip said,

"I don't have any paper."

And Bartholomew said,

"Do we have to turn this in?"

And John said,

"The other disciples didn't have to learn this."

And Matthew said,

"May I go to the boys' room?"

And Judas said,

"What does this have to do with real life?"

Then one of the Pharisees who was present asked to ask Jesus' lesson plan and inquired of Jesus, "Where is your anticipatory set, and your objectives in the cognitive domain?"

And Jesus wept.

Perhaps there is a blessing in mourning that we all tend to avoid. Why not some weeping as we seek to follow our Lord more closely?

LOVE ALWAYS WINS.

TOM HAYGOOD

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WALK #44

Two weeks before Walk #44 we had 9 pilgrims signed up and a plea was sent out to the community. The weekend before the walk, we had 11 pilgrims and 2 days before we kept getting responses that pilgrims were coming. Jesus was not going to void this walk of His and thanks to some fast sponsoring, there were 24 pilgrims. WOW! From this walk I have truly been blessed with the presence of Christ. The team worked very hard and each one of the pilgrims was treated to the true power of prayer. I also want to thank each one who prayed for us. As many know, we even had the need to call an ambulance before the Agape Dinner to escort one of the pilgrims to the hospital. After I returned to the conference room, the team and pilgrims were in prayer for this pilgrim. Although Satan made many attacks on this walk, each one was thrown back with laying on of hands and group prayers in a deep response. Two other things to note, one of the churches met their pilgrims back after the closing to a mini gathering of their own. This is powerful, a church definitely on fire. The other is for our pilgrim who had to leave the walk. On Sunday night March 30th his table and I went to the church to lead him through the events he missed. An Agape Dinner was served, a candlelight ceremony, presenting the cross and a closing. This is also a church on fire for God through Emmaus and should be commended for their dedication in showing support for a pilgrim they sent. We all should take this flame which is burning and spread it through our churches. This is evidence that everything the walk is about in this G.R.A.C.E. Community is working. Now it is time for the sponsors to

complete the task by making sure their pilgrims attend the babe chick meeting. I would also like to thank those who brought Agape, served the dinner, attended candlelight and closing. I want to thank the Walk 44 team for carrying out the theme, Steppin' Out Beyond the Cross. Jesus spoke to his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. It is time for us now to pick up our cross.

Harold Starkey, Walk #44

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Walk #45

Women's Walk #45 was a wonderful weekend for the pilgrims and team alike. God was at work in the lives of all the women attending the walk. We had several first time conference room team members and speakers, and it was a true blessing to see how God has grown these servants since they went on their Walks to Emmaus. Once again, God showed His faithfulness in bringing about His purposes when a group of humans gets together to serve Him and bring glory to Him.

One of the most awesome aspects of the weekend was how God allowed us to experience all the "seasons of our lives" during the three days. From the torrential rains that brought the pilgrims to Disciples Crossing on Thursday evening, the beautiful snow that we experienced as silence was broken on Friday morning, to the warm spring afternoons on Saturday and Sunday. What a wonderful way to witness the majesty of God's handiwork. The pilgrims were blown away by the community's presence at candlelight, and we even experienced two first time commitments to Christ. Thank you, GRACE Community, for your ever-present support and participation. Thank you, sponsors, for providing Walk #45 with pilgrims who were open and ready to experience God's Grace. Don't forget to bring your pilgrims to the Babe-Chick meeting and potluck at Ore City on April 12th.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as Lay Director, and for the opportunity to work with and get to know the wonderful team members of Walk #45, I will be forever blessed by their participation.

God Bless You,

Susan Stallings

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Exploratory Meeting for Possible New Emmaus Community Tuesday, April 22, 7 pm, at FUMC, Athens

Is it time for us to reproduce? Is it time for our community to sponsor the forming of another group? If so, it would include the Trinity Valley area (Palestine, Athens, Canton and Payne Springs) If you are interested, please join our conversation

It will not be a gathering type meeting (worship and food) although we'll have a bit of both maybe.

Questions? please call Dan Matthews 903. 948.9039 or Tom Haygood 903.570.4123.

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SCHEDULING

Serving on your GRACE Emmaus Board has been a real privilege for me. I never realized what all went on in running the activities of the Community. You would be pleased to attend one of our meetings and just get to see how many dedicated members of your Community give of their time and talents to further the Community and God's Kingdom.

My assigned job is that of Gathering Coordinator. I schedule, make arrangements for, and attend all Gatherings of our Community. I also provide the communion elements for all Gatherings other than those at Gilmont/Disciple Crossing. The host Church provides childcare so arrangements are made for that as well.

This year we attempted to give all outlying Churches an opportunity to

host a Gathering. Consequently we have Gatherings this year in Longview, Ore City, Marshall (2), Mineola, Hallsville, and Jacksonville with only one in Tyler.

Let me know at the Fall Candlelight ceremony (or before) if your Church wants to sponsor a Gathering in 2009. We will have a list for sign up at both Candlelights in October.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve our community.

Ray Carden

Asst Community Lay Director

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2008 Gatherings

*****April 12** (Saturday) First United Methodist Church, Ore City 5pm Babe Chick Meeting, 6pm Potluck Dinner, 7pm Gathering

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

*****June 12** (Thursday) First United Methodist Church, Jacksonville 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
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"Anyone who wants to be the first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else." Mark 9:35
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Chrysalis Corner



Commitment vs. Experience

At a youth rally recently I heard the speaker talking about parachuting. He tried it once and loved the thrill but really didn't have much of a desire to jump again. His wife loves parachuting and goes every chance she can get. That is the difference in commitment and experience. Having an experience gives you a high that will last a while but will eventually wear off. Commitment means a continued love and having experiences after experiences to continue the "highs."

Chrysalis and Emmaus events are the same. To go and enjoy the three day weekend is an experience you probably won't forget but after time, the high will wear off and back to reality you go. The commitment is what we do with that experience after we leave.

The high I experienced when I attended Chrysalis (many moons ago) was that no matter what I put Him through, He still wanted a relationship with me. To know that Christ is committed to me means the world. What I chose to do with that experience after my flight is my commitment to Christ. I love to see the young people really understand just how much God loves them. I want them to realize there is someone there for them and always will be.

That type of commitment is what Emmaus and Chrysalis needs. We need people who don't just want to feel the high that they experienced but people who are committed to help others find what they experienced on their walk.

If you are ready to make that commitment, we need you. Chrysalis is looking for people who love to work with youth and want to help spread God's love. We have a link off the Emmaus website that you can go to for applications to help work or sponsor a youth to attend this summer. We are sad to say that at this time, we are opting not to have a Boy's flight. We have prayed about this but it just isn't the time for the flight to happen. God will tell us when the time is right. The girl's flight is still continuing and we have almost finalized the date and place. We do know it will be late summer (either late July or early August). As soon as the

date and place is set, we will send out an email and update everyone.

If you are willing to work or know people who would like to, please fill out the application for team service and send it to the PO Box included at the bottom.

If there are boys who want to attend this summer, we will be more than happy to help you find a place where a flight is happening close by.

If you have any questions, PLEASE contact me. It is a pleasure to serve you as the Chrysalis steering committee chair.

Leah Huffstetter

gracechrysalis@yahoo.com

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Walk Agape

NOW is not too early to begin planning and creating walk agape! A recent walk ran a bit short on agape. Let's make sure it doesn't happen again! Bed agape = 36 items; Conference Room tables = 48 items; entire inside team & pilgrims = 65 items.

Laquita Showen, Walk Agape Coordinator

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GRACE Board for 2008

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Laquita Showen, Walk Agape Coordinator

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HELP US GET THE WORD OUT!!!!
Send this information to you local church

WE'RE HAVING A YOUTH GATHERING
Sponsored by GRACE Emmaus & Chrysalis Community

High School Freshman Through College Seniors Are Welcome!

SNACKS.... FELLOWSHIP... WORSHIP

SATURDAY APRIL 26, 2 - 5 pm

At the Wesley Foundation

On the TJC Campus, behind College Books

Youth Groups WELCOME!!!

Please RSVP to gracechrysalis@yahoo.com

GRACE EMMAUS

The G.R.A.C.E. Emmaus Community wishes to continue to spread the life changing experience that an Emmaus weekend can deliver. Won't you help us by donating funds for scholarships for both pilgrims and team members or the general fund of our community?

We are asking you to consider donate \$5, \$10, \$25 monthly or whatever amount you would like to set the donation to. This monthly donation will be debited automatically from your bank account on or about the 15th of the month.

Thank you for your continued support of our Emmaus community.

DeColores

PLEASE COMPLETE THE INFORMATION BELOW:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Email Address: _____

BANK INFORMATION

I (We) hereby authorize GRACE Emmaus to initiate debit entries to my (our) checking account indicated below. The amount will be charged monthly. This authority is to remain in full force and effect until GRACE Emmaus receives written notification of its termination.

Monthly gift amount \$ _____

Date _____

Signature _____

Fill out information below or attach voided check

Depository Name _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Account # _____

Transit/ABA # _____