

Grace for Today

G.R.A.C.E. Emmaus Monthly Newsletter December, 2022

Coming Events

January Gathering, Sat Jan 21

Grace Methodist Church, Palestine
Noon Potluck, 1:00 Worship

Spring Men's Walk #100

Thurs Feb 23 thru Sun Feb 26

Disciples Crossing Camp, Athens
Sat, 6:30, Gathering & Candlelight

Spring Women's Walk 101

Thurs Mar 2 thru Sun Mar 5

Disciples Crossing Camp, Athens
Sat, 6:30, Gathering & Candlelight



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Community Lay Director's Corner



Joy to the world, the Lord is come, let Earth receive her King!

It's Christmas and we are all preparing for gatherings with family and friends. Shopping and cooking and sending Christmas cards. Attending cantatas and parties and live nativity scenes. There are Christmas lights lighting up houses and buildings and trees. It's a beautiful time of year. All to celebrate the greatest gift ever given. A child born to the world to bring hope, love, joy, and peace.

He is God's gift to us, not that we deserve a gift, but that God loves us. That He loves every one of us. "For God so loved the world that He gave us His Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life," John 3:16. That "God demonstrates His own love for us in this, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us," Romans 5:8.

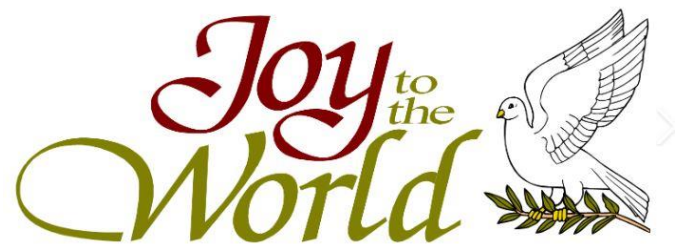
Jesus was our gift given by God, but He is also our gift to give to others. For we are the hands and feet of Christ. We are the messengers of His good news to the world. The angels appeared to proclaim the Messiah's coming to the shepherds, and the shepherds immediately went to see. And in seeing, they became messengers of what they saw.

As fourth dayers, we are messengers to the world. We have also seen the child and we have also received His gift of hope, love, joy, and peace. And as recipients of His gift are also called to share this gift with those we love.

Share God's gift with your family and friends and celebrate the Lord's coming to the world.

De Colores! Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

John Epps
Community Lay Director



MERRY CHRISTMAS

So often the rush of the holiday season means buying gifts for friends, co-workers, children and relatives. WE are so busy buying just the right gift. Some people stand on lines on Black Friday hoping to get that special gift or waiting to get on their computers for Cyber Monday. The Christmas tree must be up and decorated. Food and sweets have to be bought. We have parties and many social obligations. Are we forgetting something in this rush to the holiday?

Christmas candy especially the candy cane is something we see all over. The candy cane is a wonderful reminder, if we take the time to stop and look, of the true meaning of Christmas. It can be seen in the candy cane.

Many years ago a candy maker wanted to make a candy that would symbolize the true meaning of Christmas - Jesus.

The hard candy was shaped like a J to represent that Jesus is our rock of all ages. The candy was made white to stand for the pureness of Jesus. The red represents the blood that Jesus shed to save us from our sins.



So the next time you see a candy cane. Take a moment to remember the true meaning of Christmas.

Much love from our house to yours and many Christmas Blessings!

Laura Resler, Babe Chick Training



CONNECT WITH GOD



Christmas Greetings to all. God wants to connect with us this Christmas. Read Luke 2:1-14. ***An angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds and the glory of the Lord shone around them. Luke 2:9 (NIV)***

As the Lord's angel descended in the midst of the shepherds, God's presence brought brightness to that place. The angel told the good news to all people: the birth of the Savior. While the angel was still delivering the message, a whole group of angels suddenly appeared—praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest Heaven and on earth peace to those on whom His favor rests".

The angel's descent into the midst of the shepherds reflects the bond we see embodied in the Christ child: the connections between heaven and earth, God and humans. God wants to connect with each of us. Just as God's presence brought brightness to the shepherds; God wants to brighten the lives of all of us. In the midst of the challenges of life, God sends a message of joy through God's son, Jesus Christ. God loves us; and on this and every Christmas, God offers us lives full of peace.

I pray that God will fill your lives with brightness the Christmas. Remember: Jesus is the Reason for the Season.

Carolyn McCain, Secretary

Wise Men Still Seek Him

Mens Walk #100

Hello my name is John Crow. I attended Grace Emmaus Walk 66 at Camp Gilmont in the Fall of 2013. I sat at the table of Luke and attend Crossroads in Canton.

First I want to wish all of you a Merry Christmas! Second I want to share with you just how excited and privileged I am to be your Lay Director for Walk 100 starting February 23rd. Thank you for your confidence and support.

Walk #1 took place in May, 1998, and now 25 years later on February 23rd, GRACE Emmaus will celebrate our Lords blessings with Walk 100 at Disciples Crossing!

Take just a moment and think back to your walk weekend. Think about how the team showered you with love and grace. Think about when you did your first skit, what went thru your heart and mind at dying moments and candle light. Don't forget how it sounded when all those men sang out loud in the conference room. (Why don't we sing that way at Church?) And don't forget Sunday when they passed out letters and closing time when we heard some incredible stories of what the weekend meant to us. Most of all, how much closer did our walk with our Lord get?

Emmaus has changed my life, and I don't think I'm the only person that can say that! I want to challenge you to share these experiences with someone by sponsoring them as a pilgrim. When you sponsor a pilgrim and attend candle light and closing you will remember how special this Walk weekend is, and you will again be the hands and feet of Christ!

God Bless our Community and Walks 100 & 101.

De Colores,

John Crow, Lay Director Walk 100





STEADFASTNESS

PSALM 1:6

“For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish.” NKJV

Showing Up: Psalm 1:1, “Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers...” NIV

Psalm 1 has been one of my favorite psalms going back at least to the 1980s. Why? First off, it is short and easy to remember. Second, it starts with a blessing which is always encouraging to my spirit. I need blessings, and you need blessings.

How do we obtain this blessing? We show up where we should be, and we do not go to places that tempts us to dishonor God. Emmaus Walks, Emmaus Gatherings, and Emmaus Reunion groups are good places to be to receive blessings, and more importantly they are good places to be a blessing to others.

Trusting the Word: Psalm 1:1-2, “Blessed is the one...whose delight is in the law of the LORD and who meditates on his law, day and night.” NIV

As followers of Christ, when all else fails, we have the Word of God. The Word is true, and trustworthy, and uplifting. The temptation is to believe that we know better than the Word. We are more educated than many of our ancestors. We have knowledge at our fingertips via our mobile devices, and our computers. Our social mores have “evolved” and we are more in touch with our feelings and the feelings of others. Knowledge, without humility and the fear of God, is

like a mental quicksand that can also consume and alienate the soul. To be blessed, or to be happy, is to be sure that the Word of God is a trustworthy anchor for our soul. Our Emmaus community encourages each of us to study the Word.

Steadfastness: Psalm 1:3, “That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither – whatever they do prospers.” NIV

Standing strong in the face of temptation, during times of great trials, and when life does not make sense is a powerful witness to those without God. They can look and wonder, but they cannot know this strength, or this peace, until they trust God too. When we follow God, when we follow Jesus, and when we follow the Holy Spirit – we **cannot** fail. Why? Because God cannot fail; Jesus cannot fail; the Holy Spirit cannot fail. When we stand strong with God the only thing we can do is prosper! Being faithful to Emmaus helps to build our steadfastness!

Encouragement: Psalm 1:6, “For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to destruction”. God helps to watch over our way when we place ourselves among a community of believers. Sometimes the hardest thing to do with Emmaus is to show up – to a reunion group, to a gathering, or to a walk.

Show up. Trust the Word. Be strong. Then get ready to be fruitful and prosperous.

De Colores!

Dan Vickers, Community Spiritual Director

**Good measure, pressed down,
shaken together, running over, will
be put into your lap—Luke 6:38**

Have you been blessed? Pause for a moment to consider this question.

What's your reaction to that question? Is it easy to see how and how much you've been blessed? Or is it difficult, especially with so many people around that you may feel have been blessed more?

Well, make no mistake; all of us have been blessed. Do you have a job, some money, enough to eat, a place to live, family, some friends, a church, or an education? It may be in unique ways and in varying degrees, but we've all been blessed . . . abundantly.

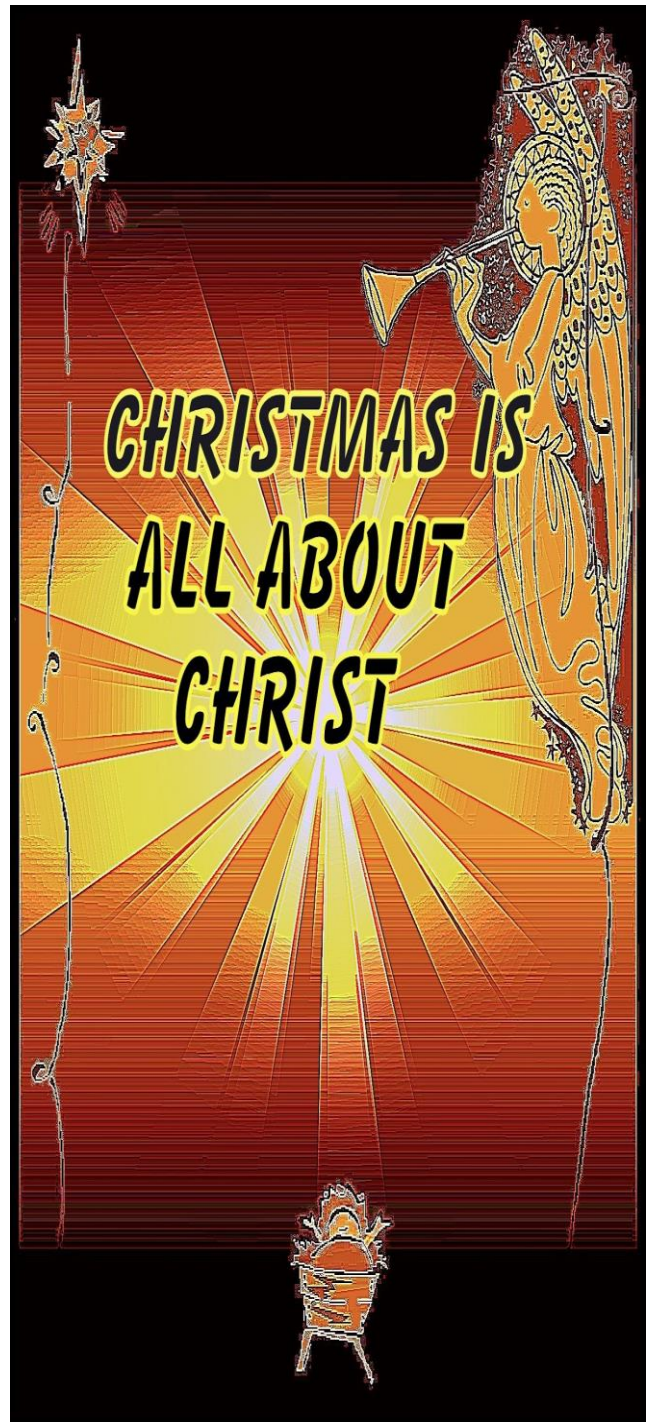
So how then should we think about these blessings? How can we reconcile the fact that we've been blessed with so much—so much more than millions of men and women around the world?

The only way to think about our blessings, brothers and sisters, is to view them as means to bless others. And the only way to view ourselves, then, is blessed to bless others. You see, knowing what we do about God and about His intentions for us (Matthew 22:36-39), how could we ever conclude otherwise? How could we ever conclude that we've been blessed simply so that we may live in comfort and security and isolation?

What kind of story would that be, anyway? We must view these blessings as personal invitations into God's much greater story of **blessing** other people.

If you've been **blessed** be a **blessing**.

John Webb



Womens Walk #101

My name is Deborah Armstrong, and I went on Walk 59 at Camp Gilmont. My family and I serve and worship at Winona Methodist Church. I will be the lay director for the upcoming women's walk #101 at Disciples Crossing in Athens from March 2nd to March 5th. First off, thank you to all that have volunteered to be a part of this walk! Without you, the walks are not possible! Even though we have filled our inside team, we can always use many more on the outside team. If you are interested in volunteering, please fill out an application at <https://graceemmaus.com/pages/applications/team-application>. If you are unable to volunteer, maybe you can sponsor someone or encourage them to attend. We always hope for the problem of having too many pilgrims! Finally, if you are unable to do either of those, maybe you could sign up for the prayer vigil (available in February at <https://graceemmaus.com/pages/prayer-vigil>) or make some agape for the walks. Each item on the tables and on the pilgrims' beds are made by you, the community. I enjoy "trying" to make things by looking on Pinterest. However, most of the time, what I make turns out to be a Pinterest fail!



Even with my crafts coming out not so perfect, these beauties will be loved and appreciated by many (ok maybe 1 or 2) pilgrims! Give it try! If crafts aren't your thing, then how about donating books for the book table? My husband and I LOVE garage sales, thrift stores, and flea markets where we find many wonderful leather Christian journals, Christian coloring books, and beautiful Bibles for great prices. If you come across bargains, the pilgrims always appreciate the donations available on the book table!

Walk #100 and #101 are just around the corner, so jump in, volunteer, make agape, join the prayer vigil, and/or donate books! You will be blessed.

Deborah Armstrong, Lay Director Walk #101

Birth Announcement

Jesus Christ is born!

***Where:
In a Manger
Bethlehem***

***Proud Parents:
Mary and Joseph***

He was born from a woman on a specific day in a specific year, walked among us, died for our sins, was raised from the dead, and ascended into heaven.

GOD IS WITH US!



The Gift

I learned most of my earliest life lessons while fishing with my Daddy. When I became a teenager, nearly every weekend we would head out to the lake for a weekend of fishing, talking, and just getting away from it all. And we did catch a lot of fish! However, regardless of how much fun we were having, we always headed back to town on Saturday evening so that we could be in church the next morning.

As I got older, I still enjoyed fishing, but the times with Daddy got fewer and fewer. I can still remember our last fishing trip like it was yesterday. It was a perfect spring day in 1985, and as nearly always, we caught plenty of fish.

After Daddy died, for some reason I ended up with his old "beat up" tackle box that I remembered from the earliest fishing trips with him. I kept it for a long time, but never used it, just kept it stuck away for safe keeping.

Years later when I had a stepson, I learned that fishing was one way that I could connect with him. We got out when we could, and I tried to teach him some of the life lessons my Daddy had taught me. I got him all the newest and best tackle and he enjoyed every trip, and I might add, he caught a lot of fish, too!

Then one Christmas season I thought that it might be neat to pass Daddy's old tackle box along to him, so I found it, cleaned it out, polished it, and put it under the tree. The look on my son's face as he unwrapped it and heard about its story made that Christmas the best I've ever had.

That old, beat up tackle box was by far the second best gift I've ever given anyone, and likewise, giving it was the second best gift I've ever received....

The best gift I've ever received, of course, is the one we can all receive again this year as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ through God's amazing Grace. How could there be a better gift?

However, just like I did in passing that old tackle box along to someone I loved; it is my joy and responsibility to pass on God's wonderful gift of Grace to others.

Let's all remember this Christmas that the best gift is the one that we can pass along...

To quote something I've heard somewhere....our job is to give and give freely, the rest is up to God !

Merry Christmas everyone !

Anonymous Community Member



Wine and Cookies and the HustleBustle

I woke up this morning rushed...
Not stressed, but an anxious feeling of getting things done. I was about to make my final Christmas "to-do" list AND cook breakfast when I got a text and stopped and took a breath.
Just breathe.... change of plans today... Quick breath, finished my Christmas list... checked my calendar for the coming week... cooked breakfast... made a crockpot full of meatballs for the Emmaus gathering at noon...
Great time! Fun! Fellowship! Merry!

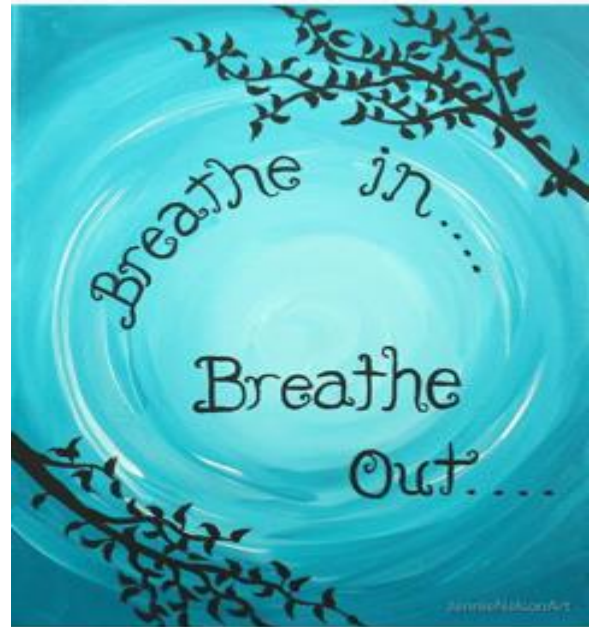
Breathe and focus. Focus and priorities are what our life is all about! (Made my bed at this point because if you make your bed, you at least have one accomplishment for the day)!

Proverbs 23:7

"For as he thinks in his heart, so is he." NKJV

Focus is about what we fix our thoughts on, what we pay attention to. And, according to Proverbs what we think about is really who we are at the core of us. So...I had to stop and ask as I sat here for ONE minute with coffee. Where is my focus?

In the middle of the hustle and bustle and change of plans, I am reminded that my focus is to be on the God who gives me life. Breathe...yes! Breathe....yes! Breathe in His Grace and breathe out praise! Your very breath calls His name... Yah... Weh... Breathe in the fresh peace that only comes from God. Not as this world gives...but as only God can give.



After all, the crux of the Christmas message was foretold in Isa 9:6...

For unto us a child is born, and he will be called:

Wonderful Counselor

Mighty God

Everlasting Father

Prince of Peace

Be filled with Peace in the midst of it all.

Smile...God is with you

Smile...the son was born to be LIFE to you

Smile...God is our source

Smile...it could be worse, you could have no plans and no one to share your day

Smile...Because of Jesus, this is the day He made for you. Rejoice and be glad in it!

Christmas Prayer

Lord, may my hustle and bustle remain focused and not frenzied. May I gain strength from you as I race about my errands and live through this day....your day. May I glorify and honor you in ALL that I do. Lord, I want you. I want my heart to be fixated on you.

Amen.

Charlene Burton

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SUPPORT FOR THE GRACE EMMAUS COMMUNITY

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 donating \$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.

De Colores

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 in 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 #: _____

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