

Grace for Today

G.R.A.C.E. Emmaus Community Newsletter December 2023

Coming Events

Saturday, December 9, Gathering

Emory Methodist Church, Emory
Potluck noon, Worship immediately after

Saturday, January 20, Gathering

Grace Methodist, Palestine
Potluck noon, Worship immediately after

Saturday, February 17, Gathering

1st Methodist Athens, Athens
Potluck noon, Worship immediately after

Spring Walks at Disciples Crossing in Athens

Men's Walk #104, March 7 – 10, 2024
Women's Walk #105, March 14 – 17, 2024

Help find PILGRIMS for these Spring Walks!

Do you know someone who is a good candidate? Prayfully consider being a sponsor! Helpful Information is on the website. See the Pilgrim Application tab.

**It's a new day, I'm alive,
I'm blessed, I'm happy,
I'm grateful...**



GOD IS GOOD!

Merry Christmas!



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Find More on the G.R.A.C.E. Website:
www.graceemmaus.com

Keep Christ in Christmas!
Wise Men Still Seek Him

Community Lay Director's Corner

Greetings and DeColores.

Have you ever wondered, "What exactly is "Worship"? Webster's dictionary describes "Worship" as both a noun and a verb?

But what does Worship look like? Is it something we feel, or something we do? Is it singing, is it praying, or is it doing works of service? What drives our worship?



"Well look at Mr. Grumpy Pants!
Somebody doesn't have their worship face on today!"

As the cartoon depicts, attitude can make quite a difference, can't it? It's so easy to let our moods drive us.

I believe our worship, reflects our relationship with God.

Psalm **100: 1-5** instructs us to *"Make a joyful noise to The Lord all the earth! Serve The Lord with gladness! Come into His Presence with singing! Know that The Lord, He is God! It is He Who made us, and we*

are His; we are His people and the sheep of His Pasture. Enter His Gates with thanksgiving, and His Courts with Praise! Give thanks to Him; bless His Name! For The Lord is Good; His Steadfast Love endures forever, and His Faithfulness to all generations."

To worship is to attribute worth. Worshipping God is to attribute worth to God! Our worship of God must be the priority of our lives as followers of Jesus! In **Romans** 12:1, Paul pleads "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by The Mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."

We were created to know, love, and enjoy God! If and when we get our worship of God right, then I'm convinced all of life will be right. Jesus declared, "But seek first The Kingdom of God and His Righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." - Matthew 6:33

Let us choose to worship God as we declare His Truth, Honor Him as God, Serve Him as Lord, Praise Him as King, and Surrender to Him as Savior with glad and grateful hearts!

Yay God!

Thank you and God Bless.

Chad Bearden
Community Lay Director

What Does Christmas Mean?

It is hard today to not recognize that Christmas means so much more to Christians than to the rest of the World. It should mean the same thing. But we know all too well that it doesn't.

What if we were asked to define Christmas. What would we say?

Most worldly people would talk of Santa Claus, gifts, and decorated trees. Christians may speak of Jesus' birth, or the Gospel. I believe John defines Christmas very well in John 1:14-16:

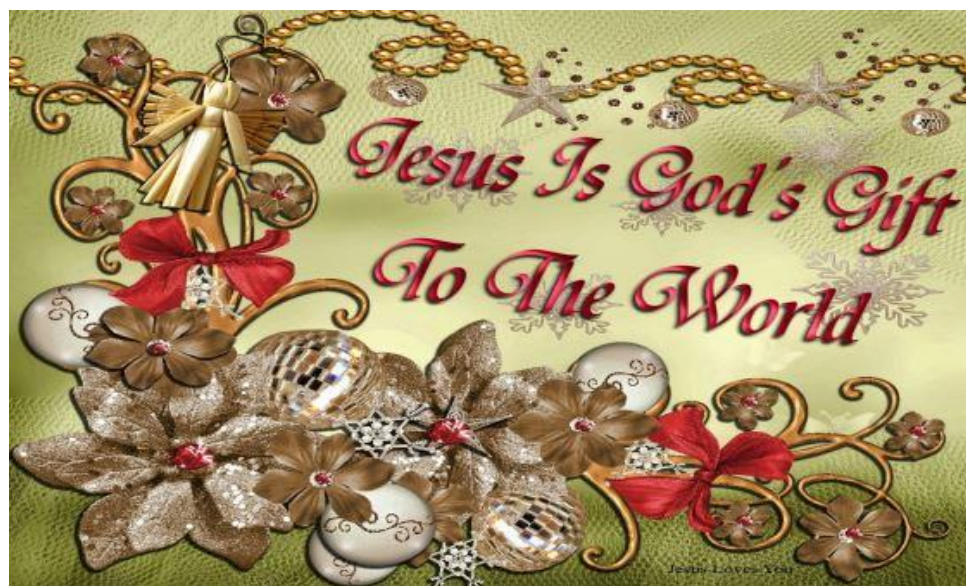
"And The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His Glory, Glory as of The Only Son from The Father, Full of Grace and Truth...And from His Fullness we have all received grace upon grace."

John details The Word becoming flesh! That's right. The Word is Jesus! And what do words do? Words reveal things. And The Word reveals God!

Jesus came to reveal God to us, and for us, so that we could know Him! Yay God!

Let us begin this day praising God for loving us enough to reveal Himself to us through His Son, Jesus. And begin our celebration of Christmas by declaring that Christmas is Jesus becoming flesh to reveal God to us.

Anonymous Submission
The Hands and Feet



How you can help prepare for Spring Walks #104 and #105

- **Spring Walks at Disciples Crossing in Athens**

Men's Walk #104, March 7 – 10, 2024

Women's Walk #105, March 14 – 17, 2024

Schedule of events during each Walk -

Thursday: Pilgrims arrive at 7pm

Saturday: Servers for the Agape dinner arrive at 4pm

Saturday: For Gathering, Worship and Candlelight arrive at 7pm

Sunday: Sponsors pick up Pilgrim's belongings at 3:30, Closing begins at 4pm

- **Pray, Pray, Pray for our Walks!**

- **Pray for Pilgrims!** Do you know someone you would like to share this amazing experience with? Prayfully consider asking them to attend a walk. Pilgrim information is found on our website www.graceemmaus.com -> Applications tab -> Pilgrim Application.

- **Start making agape gifts for men and women!** Recommended number of identical pieces of agape for each Walk:

- Agape for Everyone – 72
- Dining Room Agape – 64
- Bed Agape – 36

Feel free to make as many sets as you would like! It's not too early to start! **We will also need lanyards for nametags and crosses, and decorated place mats.**

- **Do you have a Golf Cart or Mule we could borrow for both Walks?**

- **Consider being a server for the Agape Dinner on Saturday evening of each Walk.** Women will serve for the Men's Walk on Saturday evening. Men will serve for the Women's Walk on Saturday evening. All you need are black pants, a white shirt, and a willing heart!

- **Mark your calendar to attend the Gathering and Candlelight for each Walk.**



People Must Know

The words of the prophet Isaiah began to take shape in the form of an infant. Jesus, foretold as Mighty God, was coming to earth, and His power would change everything.

His arrival had been anticipated for generations. Many had prayed and waited for His coming. Since the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden, He has been needed. His coming will change everything. And so, on a cold, dark night in a filthy, smelly stable a baby is born; the One we have prayed for, longed for, waited for.

Jesus performed countless miracles—He gave sight to the blind, calmed storms with a Word, and even brought the dead to life. He possesses power, strength, and wisdom beyond what we can imagine. He truly is sovereign in every detail.

But the miracle of Jesus' power wasn't limited to Him alone. To His disciples, Jesus said, "Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father." John 14:12

What greater works could He possibly think us capable of?

Peter, one of Jesus' closest followers, denied knowing Him three times, yet God still used him to preach a revival at Pentecost where 3,000 were saved. Paul was one of the worst persecutors of Christians, yet God redeemed him and used him to spread the gospel to the rest of the world.

While physical miracles were incredible and are certainly still possible with God, how amazing that He has called us to the work of opening people's eyes to the eternal hope and peace we have in Jesus. Jesus charged His disciples with the important work of spreading the gospel, and this still applies to us today.

This Christmas let's consider the power we have through Jesus, that He gave us eternal life, and the same power that raised Him from the dead is alive in us. Be encouraged that God not only wants to move powerfully in your life, but He also wants to move powerfully through you to reach others. How humbling that the God of the universe chooses to use us to expand His Kingdom!



Thank You, Father for loving us so much and choosing us to help build Your Kingdom. Your Word says that Your mighty power is at work within us. Help us, Lord, to always accomplish more than we can imagine through Your mighty name. In Jesus name, amen.

Liz Web

Musicians Needed

We would like to schedule musician coverage for the Gatherings/Walks shown below and need your help.

If you are familiar with leading/playing the songs from the songbook and the musical moments done during communion, please let Brad Burton know if you will be attending and available to participate as needed during the events listed below. This way we can have at least some musician representation pre-scheduled.

If you have not previously participated but you wish to be a part of the music team, let Brad know so you can be added to the available musician list.

We try to have at least one person able to play an instrument on all the songs for communion and a good selection of song book songs. In most locations we can use 2-4 instrument players with a couple of folks to lead the singing (can be the same folks).

Date	Event	Location	Start Time
Jan 20, 2024	Gathering	Grace UMC Palestine	Noon
Feb 17, 2024	Gathering	Athens First Methodist	Noon
March 9, 2024	Men's Walk Candlelight	Disciples Crossing Camp	7:00 PM
March 16, 2024	Women's Walk Candlelight	Disc Crossing	7:00 PM
March 30, 2024	Gathering	Crossroads Canton	5:30 PM
April 20, 2024	Gathering	First Methodist Gladewater	Noon
May 11, 2024	Gilmont Workday/Gathering	Camp Gilmont	Noon
June 15, 2024	Gathering	Carroll Springs Methodist	Noon

Please let me know if you can help!

Brad Burton

Phone/Text: 903-920-6662

email: brad.d.burton@gmail.com



Responding to Jesus' Birth

As my grandchildren and I went through the story of Christmas when they were little, we noticed that each character in this life-changing story responded to Jesus' coming in distinct, beautiful, different ways. They responded in ways that show us, over 2,000 years later, how to honor Jesus in our lives today.

Mary responded to Jesus' coming by submitting herself to whatever God wanted her to do and offering herself as his servant.

Joseph responded to the news of Jesus' coming by believing God's words from the angel, even though he couldn't see how things would turn out, then stepping forward in faith no matter what others would think.

The angels responded to the news of Jesus' coming by boldly announcing Jesus' coming to the lowly shepherds, bringing hope and light to the darkness of their world.

The shepherds responded to the news of Jesus' coming by opening their hearts to the Son of God and immediately telling others.

The wise men responded to the news of Jesus' coming by humbling themselves, worshiping Jesus, and offering gifts.

WHAT'S OUR RESPONSE TO JESUS' BIRTH?

Oh friends, it's easy enough for us to identify with one or two of the characters. Maybe you identify most with feeling lowly and finding hope in Christ. Maybe you have no trouble believing God's Word. But the appropriate response to the King of Kings is a beautiful, supernatural combination of

each character we see in this unexpected story.

God is looking for a different response. He doesn't just want our faith, but he also wants us to tell others the good news! He doesn't want worship alone, but our submission and trust. God simply wants it all because Jesus gave it all for us. That's the only truly appropriate response as we read about Jesus, the Creator of the Universe, choosing to become human as he saves us from our sin and the darkness of this world.

Will we ever be able to honor him enough for who he is and what he did for us? No, never. But because of God's mercy and grace, he receives the best we give him from our hearts. How will you respond to Jesus' birth today and in the year to come?

Charlene Burton

Prayer: God, I know that my worship, sacrifice, faith, and trust could never give you the full honor that you're due. But I long for you to open my eyes this year for how I can grow in giving you my trust, faith, worship...my entire life. Show me. You've given your all to me. Help me give my all to you. Thank you for sending your Son Jesus to be my savior, my redeemer, my friend. In His name, Amen.



[Spring Walks Lay Directors' Update](#)

[Men's Walk #104](#)

Greetings from Eddie, Lay Director Grace Emmaus Mens Walk 104.

The selection team meeting went well. We only had to change one member on the team I had drawn up. Praise God for the direction!

All team members have been notified as to their jobs and the talks they will be giving.

I asked a lady from our church if she could crochet or knit a prayer shawl to be used for each speaker during each team training meeting and she made this for me.



Below is the link to Men's Walk Prayer Vigil sign up:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0C4DA9AB22A0FE3-45868038-mens>

[Women's Walk #105](#)

The teams that we have been praying for are finally complete and preparing for the Spring 2024 Walks. It is so exciting to see God at work in this process. He has brought together a group of amazing individuals to form this one body to bring his agape love to a new group of pilgrims.

I want to say thank you to everyone who raised their hand and said here I am Lord. Please join our teams with your prayers. Pray for the team, the sponsors, and the pilgrims. Please also pray for our GRACE Emmaus Board and our community.

It is never too early to sign up for the Prayer Vigils. Here is the link to sign up for the Women's Walk: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0C4DA9AB22A0FE3-45867955-womens>

When our community comes together in prayer, there is nothing we cannot do. De Colores!

Sandra Grasch, Walk 105 Lay Director

Women's Walk #105 Team

Lay Director	Sandra Grash
Assistant Lay Director	Kathy Pruitt
Assistant Lay Director	Pam McAdams
Assistant Lay Director	Michelle Epps
Spiritual Director	Chris Harrison
Assistant Spiritual Director	Judy Hawn
Assistant Spiritual Director	Doug Smith
Assistant Spiritual Director	Joe Hall
Assistant Spiritual Director	Deb Miller
Board Representative	Diane Smith
Audio/Visual	Deborah Armstrong
Music Team Leader	Patti Jones
Music Team	Bonnie Wilson
Music Team	Abby Hassell
Table Leader	Patsy Pyland
Table Leader	Kim Brooks
Table Leader	Kim Hart
Table Leader	Donna Sustaire
Table Leader	Amber Denmark
Table Leader	Mary Rhodes
Assistant Table Leader	Alexis Odem
Assistant Table Leader	Michelle Tannery
Assistant Table Leader	Angelia Long
Assistant Table Leader	Kathy Morris
Assistant Table Leader	Debbie Hays
Assistant Table Leader	Alicia Bynum
Chapel Team Leader	Liz Webb
Chapel Team	Rhydonia Clem
Chapel Team	Charlene Burton
Chapel Team	Lisa Dockray
Chapel Team	Sam Luwizhi
Chapel Team	Lisa Brewer
Chapel Team	Brian Walker
Outside Team Leader	Nancy Edwards
Outside Team	Jay Edwards
Outside Team	Martha Walker
Outside Team	Brett Walker
Outside Team	Anita Duesterhoft
Outside Team	Cam Ray
Outside Team	Jayde Deshotel
Outside Team	Sandy Archer
Outside Team	Von Hogan
Outside Team	Wynn Harle
Outside Team	Janet Dunham
Outside Team	Regina Shafer
Outside Team	Tabitha Morgan
Outside Team	Christi George
Outside Team	Payton Nystrom

Men's Walk #104 Team

Lay Director	Eddie Liebold
Assistant Lay Director	Rick Rundquist
Assistant Lay Director	Todd Morgan
Assistant Lay Director	Kevin Abney
Spiritual Director	Mark Robinson
Assistant Spiritual Director	Herb Marlow
Assistant Spiritual Director	Mike Johnston
Assistant Spiritual Director	Joe Hall
Assistant Spiritual Director	Jim Pickens
Board Representative	Jay Edwards
Audio/Visual	Ken Duesterhoft
Music Team Leader	John Crow
Music Team	Mark Gerard
Music Team	Loren Lichen
Table Leader	Brian Arledge
Table Leader	Bobby Miller
Table Leader	Brian Jones
Table Leader	Larry Rosemond
Table Leader	Richard Smith
Table Leader	Joe Rhoades
Assistant Table Leader	Brian Walker
Assistant Table Leader	Daniel McMichael
Assistant Table Leader	Tim Thompson
Assistant Table Leader	Johnny Bynum
Assistant Table Leader	Brad Burton
Assistant Table Leader	Sean Cauley
Chapel Team Leader	Jim Buchanon
Chapel Team	Dale Jamerson
Chapel Team	Rob Gray
Chapel Team	Bob Holloway
Chapel Team	Shawn Heatherly
Chapel Team	Bill Clem
Outside Team Leader	Garry Mount
Outside Team	Brett Walker
Outside Team	Martha Walker
Outside Team	Jayde Deshotel
Outside Team	Bob Wade
Outside Team	Wendel Dockray
Outside Team	Cory Yates
Outside Team	Regina Shafer
Outside Team	Allen Breedlove
Outside Team	Douglas Denmark
Outside Team	Payton Nystrom



Gifts of the Season

Merry Christmas.

December is the month that we celebrate the birth of God's most precious **gift** to us. The angels announced His arrival with their **gifts** of songs in worship and praise. The shepherds brought **gifts** that were available to them. The Wise Men came later and brought expensive **gifts**. One of our favorite songs during this season is "The Little Drummer Boy" who had no **gift** to bring to the Savior, brought His **gift** of music.

Each brought what was priceless to them and we know God was pleased.

Some of us spend an excessive amount of money on our families and some of us are conservative. Many of us spend money on gifts and food for others. Have you thought about giving a **gift** to G.R.A.C.E.? There are several ways to do that.

You who attend gatherings regularly give there. A one-time gift is wonderful, and we thank you. Others of you have no opportunity to give at gatherings for many reasons. Wouldn't you like to have an easy way to make that monthly **gift** that others give at gatherings?


At the end of this newsletter is a form you can fill out that allows your bank to send a monthly gift to G.R.A.C.E. Any amount is a wonderful **gift**. Just print the page, fill it out and mail it along with a voided check to the address at the bottom of the page.

Make this the Christmas that you help G.R.A.C.E. continue to provide the Life-Changing walks that changed **Your Life**.

Carolyn McCain
GRACE Board Secretary



The Star of Christmas is Shining



John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.



The Star of Christmas Is Shining

**The star of Christmas is shining;
It's shining for all to see.
Follow it's light to the Savior;
Find Him, in faith bow the knee.**

**He's no longer in a manger;
Nor upon a cruel tree.
Death could not keep Him in a
grave;
His love won eternally.**

**A Christmas wreath hangs from the
cross;
A bow on the manger bed.
An evergreen tree is now standing;
Below the star up ahead.**

**In Jesus we live forever;
Our sins are all washed away.
God gave us a gift from heaven;
That astounding Christmas day.**

**The star of Christmas is shining;
From pages of love and truth.
The greatest gift ever given;
Was written in blood for you.**

**Susan Y Nikitenko
December 14th, 2012**

Betty Buchanan
Community Member

Let's Be Donkeys This Christmas

I love to watch the Nativity plays you see during the Christmas season. The basic story is always the same but each presentation has it's own flavor due to age and number of participants. However, there are always many common features: angels with chiffon wings, wise men and their gifts from afar. A weary innkeeper will turn Mary away. A wide-eyed Joseph will bunch the manger's hay. And Mary, weary and sweet will say, "I think *today*."

Beneath a suspended star a baby will be born, the angels will sing, the wise men will kneel and children of all ages will go home telling their parents that next year they want a part in the nativity play. Little boys want to be Joseph. Little girls want to be Mary. Some want to wear the angel wings or bear gifts from a distant land. A few might even offer to be the hassled innkeeper.

But no one, ever, as far as I know, volunteers to be the donkey. Which is odd, actually, for what greater honor could exist than to do what the donkey did? He carried Jesus. I know, Joseph is better looking and Mary is quite stunning. Wise men get the cool hats and angels have the hallelujahs. And the donkey? He just stands to the side and chews on hay.

But look at him. Do you not see contentment in those big, brown eyes? A look of satisfaction on his face? He just delivered history's greatest gift! Before Santa had a sleigh or UPS had trucks, God had a donkey. Thanks, in no small part, to

him, the choir can sing "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given."

I know, I know. We'd rather be Joseph, rugged and bearded. We'd rather be Mary, faithful, beautiful, and immaculate. But somebody needs to be the donkey. I'm thinking a donkey at Christmas is a good thing to be.



The Christmas donkey did his work. He delivered Jesus so Jesus could be delivered. He plodded. He didn't gallop or giddy-up. He did what donkeys do. He steadily stepped in the direction the master directed.

And, upon arrival, he stepped to the side. He demanded no recognition, expected no compensation. He isn't even mentioned in the Bible. He was happy to do his job and let Jesus have all the attention.

Perhaps we could learn a lesson from the Christmas donkey? There is always a place in the nativity, God's nativity story, for the person who will plod along expecting no applause, bear up under the weight of the long haul, and carry the One who will carry us all.

So here's to the donkeys of the story. May your ride be faithful and your rest be fruitful. And we will do our best to follow your example.

Brad Burton, Music Coordinator and Trailer
Modified Max Lucado Devotional, Dec 2017

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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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