



# G.R.A.C.E. Emmaus Today

## September 2020

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Men's Walk #94

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Women's Walk #95

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Check G.R.A.C.E.

Emmaus website for updates

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

[www.graceemmaus.com](http://www.graceemmaus.com)

## A WORD FROM COMMUNITY LAY DIRECTOR

The last several days for me have been remarkable as I have seen God change the seasons. To see His beauty and handywork and know that He is still at work in this world...priceless!

This year has been challenging, and God has been with us through each struggle, and even through death as I have lost dear friends. But even through death God is with us.

Many have fretted over this pandemic and have become sick just from the pressures associated with it....but God is still with us!!

This is likened to the Israelites that have been wandering in the wilderness for 40-years, but God was with them...as He is still with us! God provided them with manna from heaven, water though bitter to their taste, quail to eat....and yet they were not satisfied. Does this sound familiar?

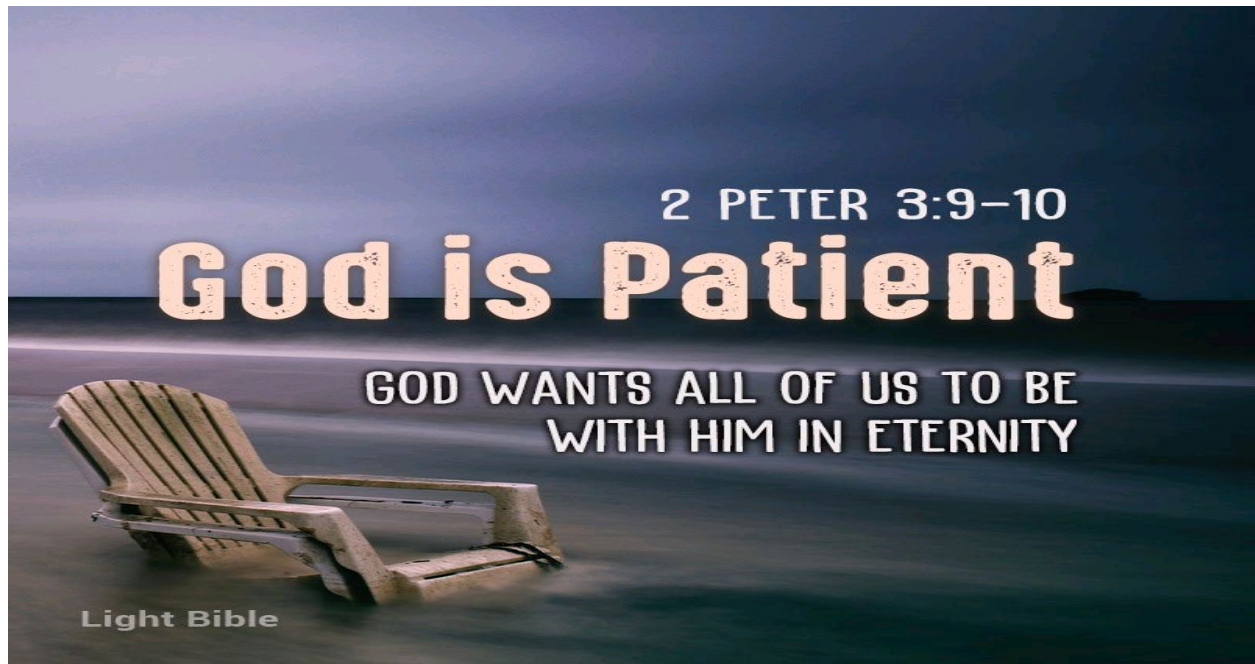
This year has not been one we may wish to repeat...but to have Him with us is amazing! His love for us has never failed us...and even though you want this pandemic to be over and life to go on as usual, I hope that you have grown even closer to Him. Our rock, our fortress, our redeemer and constant friend, our savior, and our Lord!

We missed many of you at the last gathering, which was live. What a wonderful time of worshipping the Lord and being in community with each other.

There will be additional opportunities to worship as a community as our gatherings for the next several months will be live. We hope to see you soon, and may God continue to strengthen each of us!

DeColores!

Mike Johnston

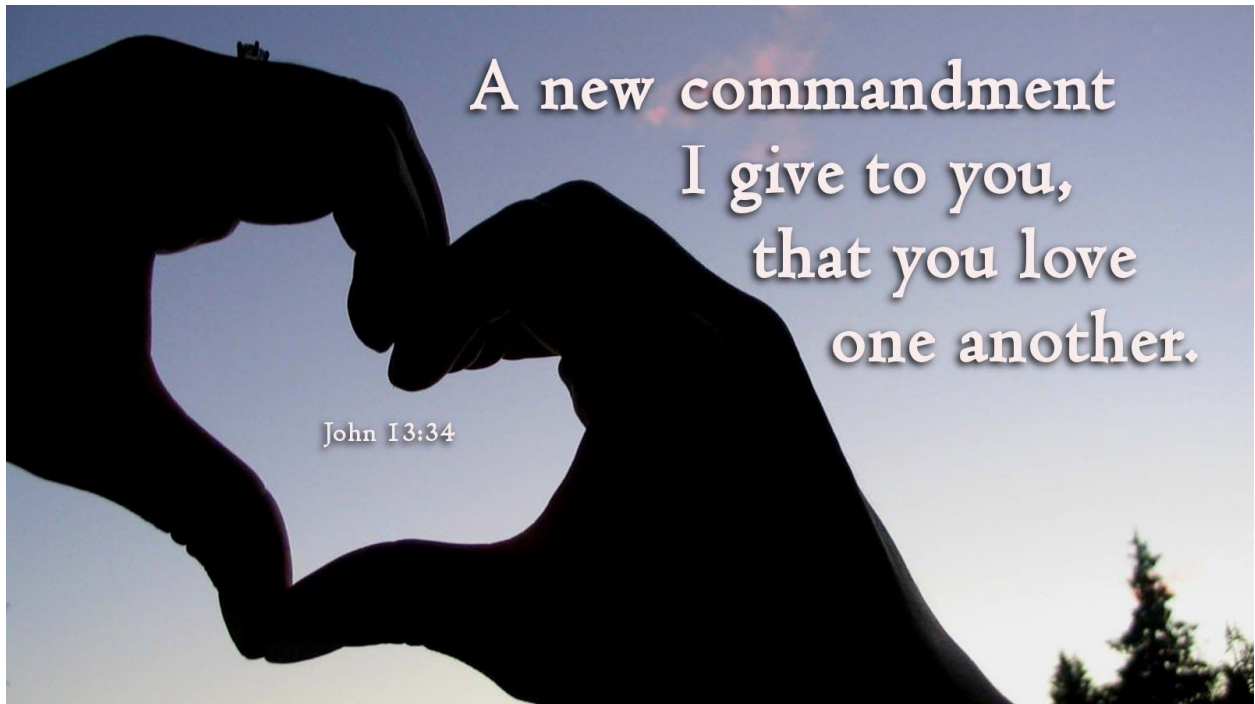


## **I AM IN YOUR MIDST**

Jesus is speaking to us today from his Jewish tradition that had a similar statement, that if two were sitting together and the words of the Torah were between them, there was also the presence of God. I have usually heard these words in the context of group prayer. This indicates the belief that when two or more are praying for the same thing, there is a greater strength. I'm sure you have all heard of prayer groups and prayer lines. In times of difficulty or stress, we often turn to others and ask them to pray for us or for our intention. When tragedies happen, communities gather together to pray for those affected. There are groups of people who live in monasteries and abbeys whose sole purpose is to pray for peace, to pray for the needs of the world, etc. There are men and women in church communities who keep track of the sick or the homebound and pray for them and when they become aware of someone in the community who is in the hospital or has died, they call one another and put them on the prayer list. Today, with the computer age, there are online groups that solicit prayer intentions and then all those who are connected to the online group pray for the intentions that are listed. Jesus is not telling his disciples that God is not present to us all the time, or that God doesn't answer our prayers unless we're in a group, but that we can feel his presence more when we are with others. After all, we are all made in God's image and so we should be more aware that we are in God's presence when we are with another, and they should feel the same when they are with us. We should look for God in others and allow them to see him in us and we can always reach out in times of trouble and invite others to join us in prayer.

## **PRAYER**

Lord God, You are with us always. May we be open to recognize You in the faces around us and also allow others to see You in us. Amen.



**The Next Walks are getting close and your Reunion Groups hold a vital part in the role of Agape. Giving is the nature of God's love. Agape received during a Pilgrim's Walk to Emmaus experience has a ripple effect. As pilgrims reflect on being showered with nonstop agape in all its forms, many recognize the love of Christ in ways they have never imagined before. The hope is that they will return to their church and communities ready to share God's unconditional love with others. Thank you for making tangible signs of Agape through small gifts to be given to the Pilgrims throughout the weekend. Please bring them to the next upcoming Gathering or call Charlene Burton at 903-920-6677 to make arrangements to drop them off.**



### **From the G.R.A.C.E. treasurer**

Thanks to the generosity of the G.R.A.C.E. community, donations continue to come in regularly each month by the ACH, personal checks, and at monthly gatherings. Every dollar received goes back into the community to continue to spread the life changing experiences that an Emmaus weekend can deliver. Donated funds can also be used for pilgrim and team member scholarships, updating equipment, and the general fund of our community. Thank you, for your continued support of our Emmaus community.

Treasurer, Boni Demaree

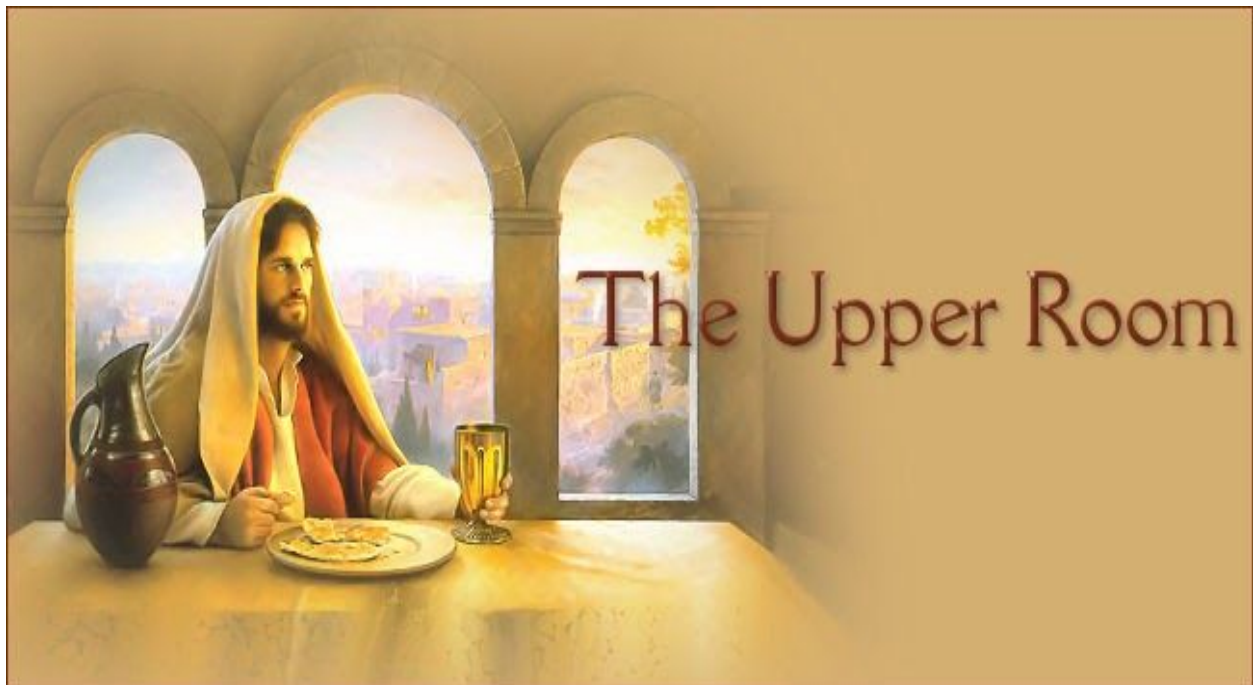
## **EMMAUS GATHERINGS**

Community Church Members, planning to host a Walk to Emmaus Gathering? Here is your chance. We usually meet on the third Saturday. We are looking for Emmaus groups to volunteer to welcome the G. R. A. C. E. Community to their church for fellowship, worship, and food. Please consider hosting us at your church! If you are interested, please contact Debbie Hays 903-452-5331 or [dhays55@yahoo.com](mailto:dhays55@yahoo.com)

Thank you, Debbie Hays



# THE UPPER ROOM



<https://www.upperroom.org/newsletters>

## **Stay Connected**

Sign up to receive newsletters and updates from The Upper Room.

Newsletters Upper Room Daily Reflections (Daily) - Words of wisdom and faith found in the pages of Upper Room Books. From the Center (Monthly, 1st Tuesday) - A monthly email newsletter from The Upper Room with resources for your soul care as a spiritual leader.

Academy Bulletin (Monthly) - Updates, news, and special reflections exclusively for The Academy for Spiritual Formation participants, faculty, and leaders. Emmaus eNews (Every Other Month) - Get the latest news and tips for your fourth day journey. Especially for leaders and participants in Emmaus Ministries, including the Walk to Emmaus, Face to Face, and Chrysalis.

Upper Room Recommends (Weekly, Thursday) - A weekly email for those seeking resources for spiritual formation and prayer. The email contains excerpts from Upper Room authors, plus book and online resource suggestions for small groups, congregational studies, and individual spiritual growth.

My Quiet Spaces (Quarterly) - A quarterly newsletter for women seeking inspiration, tools, and support to deepen their walk with God. Rising Generations (Every Other Month) - Whether you're a church leader or parent, this bimonthly newsletter provides tips and tools for ministry with Children, Youth & Young Adults.



## **A REMINDER OF WALK FEES:**

**STARTING IN 2021**

**Pilgrim: \$195.00**

**All others: \$195.00**

**Deposit : \$75.00**

Boni Demaree, Treasurer



Walk to  
**Emmaus**  
THE UPPER ROOM®

The Upper Room, part of United Methodist Discipleship Ministries, began the three-day ecumenical spiritual-renewal retreats in 1978. The self-supporting ministry grew out of the Catholic Cursillo movement, and took the name Walk to Emmaus in 1981. The goal of Walk to Emmaus is to equip church members for Christian action. Following the three-day experience, participants are joined in small groups to support each other in their ongoing walk with Christ. The movement also includes the [Chrysalis](#) program for youth, the [Face to Face](#) program for adults 60 and older, and the [Journey to the Table](#) program for adults 18 to 35.





## Dear God,

I trust You will get this letter wherever You are. I'm writing to you because I have a very special request. This isn't Your typical prayer because I'm not asking for something small. I'm also not asking for You to intervene and restore peace in the growing number of war torn countries, to end world hunger and poverty, to heal disease, or to make my dreams come true (although all of those would be awesome)...but I am asking for a miracle. In fact, this is the biggest, most significant, and most important thing I've ever asked for.

I want to know You.

Like really know You.

I want to know who You are, what You're all about, and what You're like.

I've spent my whole life being told by others who You are and who you're not, what You are and what You're not, how You are and how You're not, and everything in between. I've been told where I would find You and where not even to bother looking. I've seen so many different depictions and pictures of You, and I've heard countless stories about You, including many people's personal accounts of their experiences of You.

I've heard it said that You are Love and that I only need to look within to discover You. When I think about that, my heart lights up, and yet so many people become closed and shut down at the mere mention of Your name. In my lifetime, I've also witnessed senseless tragedies and acts of violence committed in Your name and several disasters signaling the decline of our planet and civilization. Some say that if You really existed, You would have intervened, and others say that these things have happened because we have created them with the free will that You gave us.

Throughout all of this, I admit that I've had my moments of doubting You and questioning You, but deep down in my heart and soul, my faith and belief in You have always remained strong.

Now I'm coming straight to You. I'm going to the source and asking You to let me get to know You, to reveal Your true nature to me so that I might live in complete alignment with You and give my life to serve your purpose. That's what I really want more than anything else, and in order to do that, I feel I really have to know You, and our connection has to be direct, personal, intimate, and undeniable.

I know there's this tricky thing about faith, which says that true faith is measured by our belief in that which we haven't seen, experienced, or had proof of.

I hear that, and I understand it.

Rest assured, this request is not a question of faith. I have faith. A heart full of it. I believe You are real. I know You exist. I have no doubt about that whatsoever. I am not asking for a sign or for proof of any of that.

I'm asking to know who You are. I want to feel your presence and recognize it the way a child knows his mother's touch or the sound of his father's voice. I want to know You so closely that I can be as cozy with You as I am with my best friends, knowing that You get me and that You are there for me even when I'm not making sense or going off the rails.

God, wherever You are and whoever You are, I'm ready to receive You with open arms and a heart full of love.

I'm ready to live my life to serve Your purposes and to further your cause. With my own free will, I'm coming to You and asking you to let me in, let me see You, not obscured by others, no degrees of separation, completely revealed, as the true essence of who You are. I am ready. I am listening. I love You.

DeColores, Ernest Rodriguez

**My dear sisters and brothers in Christ,**

**I greet you in the name of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, praying and trusting that, by God's grace you and your loved ones are keeping as well as can be.**

**Day by day, it is increasingly clear that we are living in puzzling times. As I write, individuals and communities around the world affected by wildfires, storms, hurricanes, various forms of violence and illnesses, are particularly on my mind. Amidst it all, during the past week, I found [this note from Fr. Richard Rohr](#) to be a wonderful source of inspiration. I share it with you with an invitation to share it with your community members. I pray that it will be of worth on this leg of your 4<sup>th</sup> Day journey.**

**On behalf of Hess "Doc" Hall – Associate Director – and Lilia Ramirez - Administrative Manager, I thank you for your commitment and contribution to your local Emmaus Ministries community, even as we continue to hold you and all things in God's light.**

**Much grace and peace to you and everyone around you.**

**Rev. Stephane Brooks**

**Spiritual Director of Emmaus Ministries**



**Some simple but urgent guidance to get us through these next months.**

I awoke on Saturday, September 19, with three sources in my mind for guidance: Etty Hillesum (1914 – 1943), the young Jewish woman who suffered much more injustice in the concentration camp than we are suffering now; Psalm 62, which must have been written in a time of a major oppression of the Jewish people; and the Irish Poet, W.B. Yeats (1865 – 1939), who wrote his “Second Coming” during the horrors of the World War I and the Spanish Flu pandemic. These three sources form the core of my invitation. Read each one slowly as your first practice. Let us begin with Etty: *There is a really deep well inside me. And in it dwells God. Sometimes I am there, too ... And that is all we can manage these days and also all that really matters: that we safeguard that little piece of You, God, in ourselves.*—Etty Hillesum, Westerbork transit camp

Note her second-person usage, talking to “You, God” quite directly and personally. There is a Presence with her, even as she is surrounded by so much suffering. Then, the perennial classic wisdom of the Psalms: *In God alone is my soul at rest. God is the source of my hope. In God I find shelter, my rock, and my safety. Men are but a puff of wind, Men who think themselves important are a delusion. Put them on a scale, They are gone in a puff of wind.* —Psalm 62:5–9

What could it mean to find rest like this in a world such as ours? Every day more and more people are facing the catastrophe of extreme weather. The

neurotic news cycle is increasingly driven by a single narcissistic leader whose words and deeds incite hatred, sow discord, and amplify the daily chaos. The pandemic that seems to be returning in waves continues to wreak suffering and disorder with no end in sight, and there is no guarantee of the future in an economy designed to protect the rich and powerful at the expense of the poor and those subsisting at the margins of society. It's no wonder the mental and emotional health among a large portion of the American population is in tangible decline! We have wholesale abandoned any sense of truth, objectivity, science or religion in civil conversation; we now recognize we are living with the catastrophic results of several centuries of what philosophers call *nihilism* or *postmodernism* (nothing means anything, there are no universal patterns). We are without doubt in an apocalyptic time (the Latin word *apocalypsis* refers to an urgent unveiling of an ultimate state of affairs). Yeats' oft-quoted poem "The Second Coming" then feels like a direct prophecy. See if you do not agree: *Turning and turning in the widening gyre The falcon cannot hear the falconer; Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world, The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere The ceremony of innocence is drowned; The best lack all conviction, while the worst Are full of passionate intensity.* Somehow our occupation and vocation as believers in this sad time must be to first restore the Divine Center by holding it and fully occupying it ourselves. If contemplation means anything, it means that we can "safeguard that little piece of You, God," as Etty Hillesum describes it. What other power do we have now? All else is tearing us apart, inside and out, no matter who wins the election or who is on the Supreme Court. We cannot abide in such a place for any length of time or it will become our prison. God cannot abide with us in a place of fear. God cannot abide with us in a place of ill will or



hatred. God cannot abide with us inside a nonstop volley of claim and counterclaim. God cannot abide with us in an endless flow of online punditry and analysis. God cannot speak inside of so much angry noise and conscious deceit. God cannot be found when all sides are so far from “the Falconer.” God cannot be born except in a womb of Love. So offer God that womb. Stand as a sentry at the door of your senses for these coming months, so “the blood-dimmed tide” cannot make its way into your soul. If you allow it for too long, it will become who you are, and you will no longer have natural access to the “really deep well” that Etty Hillesum returned to so often and that held so much vitality and freedom for her. If you will allow, I recommend for your spiritual practice for the next four months that you impose a moratorium on exactly how much news you are subject to—hopefully not more than an hour a day of television, social media, internet news, magazine and newspaper commentary, and/or political discussions. It will only tear you apart and pull you into the dualistic world of opinion and counter-opinion, not Divine Truth, which is always found in a bigger place.

Instead, I suggest that you use this time for some form of public service, volunteerism, mystical reading from the masters, prayer—or, preferably, all of the above. You have much to gain now and nothing to lose. Nothing at all. And the world—with you as a stable center—has nothing to lose. And everything to gain.

Richard Rohr, September 19, 2020

# **G.R.A.C.E. BOARD ASSIGNMENTS FOR 2020**

Lay Director: Mike Johnston

Cell: 903-521-0860 **Email: revmike.johnston@gmail.com**

Assistant Lay Director: John Crow

Cell: 903-288-1881 **Email: jwcrow56@gmail.com**

Ex Officio Lay Director: Wynn Harle

Cell: 903-245-2701 **Email: cowboycentral@suddenlink.net**

Spiritual Director: Rev. Joe Hall

Cell: 903-742-5828 **Email: joehall@mhd.com**

Assistant Spiritual Director: Dan Vickers

Cell: 214-673-6233 **Email: dvickerspmp@gmail.com**

Secretary: Paula West

Cell: 903-918-9067 **Email: pjwest57@yahoo.com**

Treasurer: Boni Demaree

Cell: 903-352-2857 **Email: boni@sysresourcegroup.com**

Music Coordinator: Scott Snyder

Cell: 903-539-1754 **Email: scott\_snyder@att.net**

## **COMMITTEES**

(Board Member is chair of designated committee)

Agape (Banquet, Afterglow, handmade items): Charlene Burton

Cell: 903-920-6677 **Email: cburtonlindale@gmail.com**

Babe Chick Training: Ken Duesterhoft

Cell: 903-520-0294 **Email: kwdues@gmail.com**

Book Table : Betty Buchanan

Cell: 903-930-2678 **Email: jimbet85@gmail.com**

Prayer Vigil/Wall Agape: Debbie Wade

Cell: 903-520-8495 **Email: eleridancer@gmail.com**

Gathering Coordinator: Debbie Hays

Cell: 903-452-5331 **Email: dhays55@yahoo.com**

Newsletter Editor: Ernest Rodriguez

Cell: 903-810-0633 **Email: erod7707@gmail.com**

Community Trailer: Rhonda Gorrell

Cell: 575-749-1221 **Email: fire322dfd@yahoo.com**

Publication Coordinator: John Epps

Cell: 830-444-1400 **Email: j.epps1400@gmail.com**

Sponsorship Training: Laura Resler

Cell: 617-953-4486 **Email: ltfnp2@gmail.com**

Reunion Groups: Scott Catchot

Cell: 903-373-5415 **Email: pastorscottcatchot@gmail.com**

Non-Board (non-voting) Positions

Registrar: Jim and Betty Buchanan

Cell Betty: 903-930-2678 Cell Jim: 903-930-2360 **email: jimbet85@gmail.com**

Walk Crosses: Elizabeth Minor

Home: 903-657-8112 **Email: mnm-design@msn.com**

Cell: 903-720-1740

Doves: Jay Edwards, je7255@aol.com

Webmaster: Martha and Brett Walker

Cell Martha: 903-235-0158 Cell Brett: 903-987-3090

**email Martha: marthasgarden55@gmail.com email Brett: brettfcall@gmail.com**

# GRACE EMMANUS 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 #: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL INFORMATION TO:

Tyler Emmaus GRACE Community

P.O. Box 132212

Tyler, TX 75713-2212