



Three Rivers Walk To Emmaus

August 2005

IMPORTANT DATES

GATHERINGS

September 9 at Dutilh
October 14 at Dutilh
November 12 at Lutherlyn
(preceding Men's Candlelight)

FALL WALKS LUTHERLYN

Men's Walk Nov. 10-13
Candlelight Nov. 12
Women's Walk Nov. 17-20
Candlelight Nov. 19

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 ADDRESS PLEASE NOTIFY
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 IF YOU CHOOSE TO GET YOUR
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 FOR A ONE YEAR SUBSCRIPTION
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 PORTMAN LANE, BRIDGEVILLE,
 PA 15017.

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FROM THE COMMUNITY LAY DIRECTOR

I recently opened an e-mail stating that this month and next, Earth is catching up with Mars, the closest approach between the two planets in recorded history. Mars has not come this close to Earth in the last 5,000 years, and it may be as long as 60,000 years before it happens again. It says that on August 27, 2005 it will be the brightest object in the night sky next to the moon.

I'm not sure if any of this is true; I didn't research the authenticity of the information, but it made me think about our relationship with God. When good things are happening in our lives, like our walks to Emmaus, God seems to be so close to us, so big in our lives. At other times though when we are involved in the crazy busy routines of our lives, or when things aren't going our way, God seems to be so far away. The simple truth, however, is that like the planet Mars, He is always there. We are like the planets that move around the sun, getting closer or going farther away. God is steadfast; we move. We can keep God close if we put our hearts to it.

I know for me, participating in Emmaus activities is a way to feel close to God. Attending reunion group meetings and gatherings once a month, making agape, helping at the walks and flights, attending sendoffs, candlelight, and closing ceremonies are great ways to keep that closeness to God.

Through sponsorship, we can also share the opportunity for a closer relationship to God with others. My husband and I sponsored a pilgrim who later thanked me for this very feeling. The chance for a closer relationship to God is a wonderful thing to share.

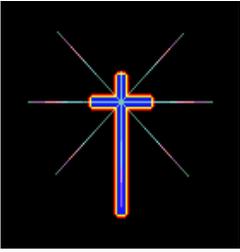
So watch for Mars this month as it passes by, but keep you eye on our Lord always. DeColores, Bonnie Wiegand Community Lay Director

FROM THE TREASURER

Since we are now officially recognized as a **501 (c)(3) non-profit organization**, we are required to file a tax return. This tax return is considered public record. If you would like a copy of our tax return, please send a self-addressed stamped envelope to Mike Wild, 1605 Shadow Ridge Court, Pittsburgh, PA 15237.

Due to higher costs at Lutherlyn, the fees for a Walk for Team and Pilgrims are \$150.

Spiritual Director's Thoughts



Three Things In Life:

Three things in life, that once gone, never come back---Time, Words & Opportunity

Three things in life that may never be lost---Peace, Hope & Honesty.

Three things in life that are most valuable---Love, Self-confidence & Friends

Three things in life that are never certain---Dreams, Success & Fortune

Three things in life that make a man (woman)---Hard work, Sincerity & Commitment

Three things in life that can destroy a man (woman)---Wine, Pride & Anger

Three things in life that are truly constant---The Father, The Son and The Holy Ghost

The preceding came to me in my email one day and I couldn't help but compare it to the "Piety, Study, Action" Talks in the Emmaus Community. They could be prefaced by Three things in life that make a difference Piety, Study & Action.

My question after I pondered this awhile was how well do I reflect any of the sayings, and what am I going to do about it? That might we all do?

DeColores, Barb Moore, TRWE # 8 Community Spiritual Director

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YOU'VE HEARD THE BOOK

YOU'VE READ THE MOVIE

NOW, COME AND HEAR FOR YOURSELF—

THE MIME COMMUNION

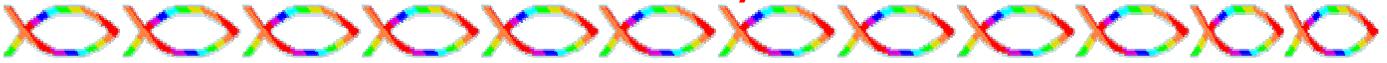
THE SEPTEMBER GATHERING

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2006

DUTILH UMC

The Mime Communion that occurs on Chrysalis Flights is one of the most powerful Communion experiences any of us has ever been blessed to experience. You don't want to miss this special service. Mark your calendars now for Friday, September 9, 2005, and come to Dutilh UMC and join us for this unforgettable Communion Service.

Fourth Day Corner



The people, places and events that God uses to teach us continuously amaze me. This past July, Rick and I were privileged to go on a mission trip, with several other members of our church, to a rural area high in the mountains of Jamaica. Rick and I were to provide dental services to the people of the area.

We spent several months planning this trip. We collected an impressive amount of medications, vitamins, toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, soap and reading glasses from our church congregation. One generous, anonymous church member donated \$3000 for a sterilizer, which we could donate to the clinic in Jamaica.

As the big trip approached, we were ecstatic about all the wonderful things we were going to do and the people we were going to help. We soon came to realize that we were to receive so much more from the people of Jamaica than we were bringing to them.

Upon arriving in Jamaica, we were taken by bus high up into the mountains. The roads were extremely narrow and riddled with potholes that made Pittsburgh roads look great. This road trip provided us with a glimpse into Jamaican life. The people lived in small shacks with only the bare necessities, yet we were always greeted with a smile and a wave. As we pulled up to the Bonniegate clinic, we were met by many Jamaican people, already lined up and waiting for our services.

This clinic was very different from any dental office found in the United States. There was no water, no electricity and definitely no air conditioning. Our dental chair was an old beat up kitchen chair with a makeshift headrest, and a flashlight directed at the patient's mouth provided the dental light.

We were soon open for business. Rick could do little for these people except to extract their badly decayed teeth. Many of the patients waited three days for their turn to see the dentist. They never complained about the long wait or the uncomfortable conditions. Many teeth were extracted which helped to relieve dental pain. While we were providing our services, we were fortunate to meet many truly tremendous Jamaicans. They had a much more profound effect on us than we did on them.

By our standards, the people of Jamaica had very little and lead extremely simple lives, yet these were some of the happiest and most gracious people we had ever met. For people who seemed to have so little, they seemed to have it all. What they lacked in luxuries and comfort, they made up for with a strong faith and love of God.

We began to realize that all the luxuries and things that we think are so important are not necessary for a full and happy life. In fact, all the trappings of our society may just get in the way of a true relationship with God.

Rick and I are grateful to God for the opportunity to meet and learn from the amazing people of Jamaica. We have been reminded, in a very profound way, of what is truly important.
DeColores! Suzanne Rackley TRWE # 50 Table of Rachel



What has my 4th Day been like? For starters, I didn't know what the heck a 4th Day was, let alone realize just how amazing and insightful my life would become after that Walk to Emmaus.

About 4 years ago, my life was in turmoil. There I was, at age 42, starting the beginning process of "mid life" with my own set of overwhelming circumstances: divorce, empty nest syndrome, selling my home of 23 years, moving out on my own for the first time since I was 19 years old. Any one of those alone would be considered highly stressful, yet when coupled together at one time made for a very huge, dark pit. However, it didn't stop there. Immediately after the divorce, I quit my job to return to school and then began working two jobs to put myself through. I could continue adding to the list as it seemed that daily something new was happening toward more change. I began to notice a pattern. I was struggling with the feeling that my identity had disappeared. I didn't know how to be Joyce the single person. When I was by myself, I didn't know who I was. I had never spent much time alone. I didn't know how to be comfortable being alone. What

was more important, I didn't want to be alone. When I was alone, I found myself reflecting on my life, my situation, all of the mistakes that I had made and I didn't want to do that. Once I began coming out of the depression that followed the divorce, I felt that too much introspection and self pity were not healthful or helpful.

So, I did the only thing I could think to do. I began filling my time with activities. These were all worthwhile activities. It was during this time that I found my way to Christ Church. Immediately I knew I was home and began throwing myself into many volunteer activities. God the opportunist, always taking advantage of the tiniest opening we allow, came to guide me. Through that guidance I found my way to serve at the Jr. High Youth Group and the most amazing group of kids, volunteers and staff I had ever met. Since I'm a slow learner, it took a few years to notice the changes that God was making in my life. But those changes were developing, and among the new friendships I was forming was one with a married couple who also volunteered there and whom I came to truly admire (and who later became my sponsors for my walk). Because of their example, I decided to stick out my service to the youth, even when things began to get rough.

Life seemed to be moving along. I was beginning to date again (at age 46, dating was in a league of its own). During this time I heard about the Walk to Emmaus and decided to participate. I was very excited, yet there was a part of me that wondered and questioned why I needed to go. Again with the tiny opening of willingness on my part, God's direction led me to what I needed. I started memorizing the Letter to the Colossians. I started with Chapter 2 because it asked me to address how firm my faith in Christ was. Chapter 3 talks about applying your heart and mind to your life in Christ. I was struggling with how to be in a new relationship. I saw through my sponsors that there was indeed life after divorce, and I asked God to show me how to accomplish this, too. When I attended my Walk to Emmaus I had one issue lying on my heart: How can I be a whole person in a relationship? Boy, did I ever get the lesson of a lifetime!

Since my walk last November, I have had to let go of the new relationship. I came to see that as long as I seek in human relationships what I can only get from God, my identity is up for grabs. Being a wife, mother, career woman, or anything else I might say defines who I am could be gone in an instant. If I depend on these roles or relationships for my identity, I am nobody. The only identity that life cannot take from me is my identity in God. It is a privilege to have people to love and a privilege to be part of their lives. But I cannot depend on others for my happiness or my identity. This is how my 4th Days have been filled. I have a sense of what God wants me to do and to be. This helps me to more easily push away the things that aren't right for me. When I hold in my heart a clear sense of myself as infinitely valued by and valuable to God, I can resist when someone crosses my boundaries or mistreats me or intrudes on who I am. I can choose more wisely in relationships. I can treat myself like I am somebody-because I am! My true identity is that I am a loved child of God and that cannot be taken away from me, ever. There is a huge misconception that I was guilty of believing--that married people have two better halves. I no longer believe that two halves make a whole, for since my Walk to Emmaus, I truly understand that only two whole people can make a whole relationship.

My 4th Day experience has been anything but ordinary. Ups and downs continue but not to extremes. The feeling of wholeness is awesome and Christ is the source of that wholeness. Colossians 2:6-7 "So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as your Lord, continue to live with Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught and overflowing with thankfulness." DeColores! Joyce Cortese TRWE #52 Table of Sarah



Did you sign up to receive the prayer chain requests but are not receiving them? Did you change your email address and not let Bo Pratt know? If you want to be included in the prayer chain, please send your correct email address to Rpratt2707@aol.com. Prayer requests may also be sent here.

Three Rivers CHRYSALIS

If you have ever served on an Emmaus Walk, you know how through our serving we tend to grow ourselves in one or more of the fruit of the spirit. The Boys' Flight # 2 and the Girls' Flight # 3, which took place this past June and July; allowed 15 teens who came to the weekend as caterpillars grew and left the weekend as butterflies to Fly with Christ! In addition to the 15 teens who had never experienced an Emmaus type weekend, we also had 10 brave teens who presented talks on priorities, being prodigals and returning home to the Father, Christian growth through study, Christian action in our world, and taking next steps in our fourth days. Imagine if you will, teenagers giving these talks! The other clergy and adult talks were just as powerful! Other adults served as table leaders and more teens were assistant table leaders and musicians! What an experience for all! All who participated in these flights were blessed--whether it was inside the conference room, serving in the prayer chapel and praying in and out each and every speaker, cooking in the kitchen, decorating the dining room, working in logistics, delivering agape, setting up snack agape, playing music or coming in as fourth day to serve a meal, attending candle light or participating in the prayer vigil.

High School is filled with so many choices and so much peer pressure! Experiencing a "crash" course in Christianity, being served and supported by a loving community like The Three Rivers Emmaus Community, and being in the presence of the Holy Spirit throughout the weekend is a life-changing experience. Praise God to all those who served, to all those who came and witnessed, to all those who unselfishly and lovingly gave unconditionally.

I am pleased to announce that our next **Boys' Flight # 4** will be June 23rd, 24th and 25th, 2006. Bill Korbel will be our Boys' Flight Lay Director. Our next **Girls' Flight # 5** will be July 7th, 8th and 9th, 2006 and Bonnie Wiegand will be our Girls' Flight Lay Director. Please be a part of this valuable outreach by praying for Bill and Bonnie's leadership, team selection and for all aspects of these flights. I would also remind each of you that it is not too early to begin prayer about sponsoring a high school aged youth whom God places in your life.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support! Fly with Christ! Heidi Varner,
Three Rivers Walk to Emmaus # 44

**Therefore, encourage one another
and build each other up, just as in
fact you are doing.
1 Thessalonians 5:11.**
