



Three Rivers Walk To Emmaus

Newsletter Article for February

Community Lay Director

IMPORTANT DATES

GATHERINGS

Lutheryn

At Men's Candlelight 3/21/09

All Community Gathering

Inogomar UMC 4/17/09

SPRING WALKS

LUTHERLYN

Men's Walk Men's Walk #69 March 19-22, 2009

Women's Walk #70 March 26-29, 2009

FALL WALKS

Men's walk #71 11/5-11/8/09

Women's Walk #72

11/12-11/15/09

CHRYSALIS FLIGHTS

COMM.LAY DIRECTOR PG.1

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4TH DAY PG.4

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TO: Tom Gomola: c/o Leesburg Presbyterian 1831 Perry Highway Volant, Pa 16156-1521

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I am writing this on the Monday after the Steelers' big Super Bowl win and I am joyful as most Steeler fans are today. My grandson is just learning about the Steelers and had trouble handling adversity when the Arizona Cardinals pulled ahead near the end of the game, but he learned there was still time left on the clock and his faith paid off. In the end, he was a happy camper.

But joyfulness is something we Christians need to be all the time. If you are reading this, there is still time left on the clock and you too can become a joyful servant of Christ. Centuries ago the psalmist wrote, "But let the righteous be joyful; let them exult before God; let them be jubilant with joy." Psalm 68:3 (RSV)

How about you, are you jubilant and joyful when things are going your way – like my grandson? What about adversity? Do you become sour and depressed? Note the psalmist didn't say, 'let the righteous be a joyful servant, except if he or she is facing adversity, be joyful'. We are commanded to be joyful in all situations.

Have you ever been to an Irish wake? If you haven't, it brings you a whole new perspective on celebrating death. My late father once said, "When I die I want you to party and sing." He hated the conventional sorrowing which accompanies so many funeral or memorial services. His favorite hymn was the bouncy "Church in the Wildwood" and I can't sing or hear it today without thinking of him.

If we truly believe we are saved by Grace and a new life awaits us in heaven, then why are we dour. We should greet each day with optimism and a realization we have the opportunity to change others' lives by spreading the Gospel. Outside my office window, as I write this article, a spring peeper is chirping his song as the snow melts from a brief warm up—talk about an optimist!

This past October a man, many of you have never heard of, died quietly. His name was Charles Jones but he went by the nickname of 'Tremendous' Jones and he traveled all over the nation, motivating sales organizations and spreading God's love. I never knew Charlie Jones to be down. When asked once if he ever felt miserable he replied, "I tried that once and didn't like how it felt so I don't do it anymore." To which he would usually add, "Life is tremendous". I hope your life is tremendous, if it isn't, you need to make a decision to be a joyful servant of the Lord.

Blessings Gary Wakefield, Community Lay Director

FROM THE COMMUNITY SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

Jerry



February 11, 2009

As I sat here contemplating what I should write about for this newsletter, I cannot get my mind off of my dear friend Sam Bavely. Some of you may remember Sam. He was a table leader on the last Spring's men's walk. The past week I visited with Sam almost every day. You see Sam was fighting the good fight and yesterday, my Lord Jesus greeted Sam with a "Well done, good and faithful servant!" I will miss him in our reunion group every Monday morning. I will miss his stories of his years on the deep diving submarines, his time with the telephone company, and his days as a captain of a 100 passenger charter boat that toured the seas from Virginia to Maine. Most of all I will miss his passion for Jesus Christ. It is that passion for Jesus that I want to share with you. Until the morphine levels had gotten so high that his mind could not function, Sam was sharing his faith. Much to the discomfort of the staff at the hospital, Sam's room was full of people and he wasn't going to miss any opportunity to share his faith and challenge people to respond to God's call. With Sam there was no sadness or despair—just love and caring for others.

Paul, too found himself facing the cold yellow face of death. He was in prison and he was pretty sure that he would soon be executed. Paul could have fretted, been depressed, been angry, or wallowed in self-pity. Instead, like Sam, Paul was optimistic and focused on others and writes a thank you note to the church at Philippi. Paul writes, "Yes, and I will continue to rejoice,¹⁹ for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will result in my deliverance.²⁰ It is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be put to shame in any way, but that by my speaking with all boldness, Christ will be exalted now as always in my body, whether by life or by death.²¹ For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain.²² If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labour for me; and I do not know which I prefer.²³ I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better;²⁴ but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you.²⁵ Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith,²⁶ so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again." Paul wanted to see them again, but he also wanted to see Jesus and he was torn to figure out which was better.

In the United Methodist Book of Worship funeral service, the congregation prays, "**Help us to live as those who are prepared to die. And when our days here are accomplished, enable us to die as those who go forth to live, so that living or dying, our life may be in you, and that nothing in life or in death will be able to separate us from your great love.**" Sam showed us all how to live this prayer. I will miss him, but I still have many memories that I will always cherish. Most of all, however, I will cherish those last joyful days with him as he showed me how to "live as those who are prepared to die." *De Colores, Jerry.*

January Gathering with Bishop Thomas Bickerton

For those of you who were unable to attend or January Gathering, suffice it to say it was an evening with great fellowship, great music and a tremendous message. Kudos go to those who worked so hard to

make the evening a success. The attendance was more than we could have imagined given the nasty state of the weather. But old man winter could not deter some members of the community who traveled from as far away as Greenville and Clarion where the snow was even deeper.

Music was provided by the Acts 29 Praise Band from Slippery Rock UMC and all agreed, including the Bishop, that their music was fantastic and he lauded them for their ministry of song. Following Bishop Bickerton's message he celebrated Holy Communion with those in attendance.

All in all it was an exciting evening with ended with an abundance of snacks, beverages and fellowship. We thank the Ingomar church staff for permitting us to use their beautiful sanctuary and helping with all the details. This gathering was truly a blessing.

Gary Wakefield, Lay Director

Sponsor Someone for the Spring Walks.

You know it's not too late to invite someone to experience the unbounded joy and love of an Emmaus Walk. Remember how you felt when you walked through candlelight or the love you felt from those around you during the weekend. What a gift to give someone you care about and at the same time make the church stronger.

Many of us are afraid to approach acquaintances for fear of what they will think. Others are afraid to extend the invitation for fear of rejection. We must come to understand that the invitation is from God and we are only the messengers. If they reject the invitation it is not their time and they are probably not ready. All we do is offer them the opportunity -- a gift of love.

Have you ever thought of it like this: What if some one else sponsors one of your friends and they go on the walk and they return filled with the Spirit and all aglow? They know you are involved in Emmaus and so the first time they see you after their walk they ask, "Why didn't you tell me about the Walk to Emmaus? Why didn't you ask me?"

Now think about that -- try to come up with an answer that will hold water. "Ah, I didn't think you'd be interested..." To which your friend would reply, "Not interested in learning more about God's love?" Perhaps you say something like, "I thought you were too busy." That sounds pretty good until your friend replies, "Too busy for Jesus?" Nope, you are sunk and there's not much you can say. Jesus calls us all to be his ambassadors to a needy world. Remember he has no hands but yours. So start jotting down some names.

Mens' Walk is March 19-21; Womens' Walk is March 26-29. Both are at Camp Lutherlyn in Butler County. Scholarships are available. Gary Wakefield, Lay Director



Fourth Day Corner



A movie came out a few years ago, that you might have seen, called “Pay it Forward”.

In it a young student is given an assignment in his Social Studies class to come up with an idea that could change the world. His idea was to do something nice for 3 people. If they should offer to repay the kindness, then they were told to “pay it forward”, by doing something nice for 3 other people, and so on, and so on. Eventually, thousands of lives were affected by this one idea, and by the action that followed it.

Each Emmaus Walk, including the one you went on initially, were made possible by the selfless acts of hundreds of individuals, most of whom didn’t even know you at the time.

Those people had each been similarly blessed on their 3-day experience, and so on and so on. Looking to the future, and the past, we can endlessly picture one act after another, reflecting on God’s love for us all.

Are you ready to take your place in this “chain-reaction of love?” That’s what 4th Day is all about. The upcoming Walks provide us with many opportunities to “pay it forward”.

You can sponsor a pilgrim, make a donation to the scholarship fund, or share your presence at the Sendoff, Candlelight, or Closing celebrations.

You can also take a ½-hour time-slot on the 72-hour Prayer Vigil, volunteer to serve a meal, help with setup or teardown, or clean the bathrooms sometime during the weekend.

It’s easy to get involved! Our community website provides on-line forms to sign-up for the Prayer Vigil and 4th Day service for Walks 69 & 70, as well as “Desire to Serve” forms to communicate ways you might feel led to serve in the future.

For more info, go to www.trwe.org or you can contact me at 412-833-2944.

I look forward to serving with you all real soon! De Colores!

-Mike Varner, Community 4th Day Coordinator

Lutherlyn Work Day

Lutherlyn Work Day is scheduled for May 2, 2009

"Come help us prepare for summer! Individuals, families and groups are invited. Children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. No fee, but please let us know if you are attending". Register at www.luthelryn.com or by phone at 724.865.2161

