



The Greater Austin Emmaus 4th Day Group Newsletter



March, 2009

<http://www.austinemmaus.org>

Volume 20, Number 03

God's Time

I saw the first blooming redbud tree a few days ago. A day or two later, I saw a few other trees beginning to show their leaves and a few sprigs of grass turning green. Then I saw a mountain laurel beginning to bloom. It must be spring although the calendar still says February as I write. I'm not sure I'm ready for winter to be over but I don't know why. Maybe I'm too used to looking at the calendar.

I love spring with all the plants flowering and turning green. The weather is usually not too hot or not too cold. The earth is waking up. Spring is when I feel closest to God as I see all His creation around me. I think this year God is reminding me that I should be following His time, not just the calendar.

Maybe following God's time is what I should focus on for Lent. The stores are already focusing on Easter, but Lent gives us time to focus on Jesus and what he would have us do. Jesus was tempted by the world and so are we. We should follow Jesus' example of focusing on what God wanted Him to do instead of what the world thought He should do. God is every where and with us always, but spend some extra time with Him this Lent. I know I need to spend some extra one on one time with God. Maybe God is trying to tell me something if I will just listen.

Dearest Lord, thank you for all of your creation. Spring reminds us of your presence in our lives. Help us to spend more time with you during this season and help us to listen to what you would have us do. In Jesus name, Amen.

De Colores! Leslie Smith, Lay Director
Greater Austin Emmaus 4th Day Group



2009 Austin Sponsored Walks

Women's Walk # 1497
Highland Lakes

April 23 - 26

Teddy Broeker, Lay Director
Andy Smith, Spiritual Director

Men's Walk # 1513
Highland Lakes

Sept. 10 - 13

Keith Bible, Lay Director
Sue Wells, Spiritual Director

Women's Walk # 1530
Highland Lakes

Oct. 22 - 25

Joan King, Lay Director
Georgia Stone, Spiritual Director

Chrysalis Flights!!

Save the Date!! Time to start thinking about this year's butterflies for the most awesome of adventures - a Chrysalis Flight!! All youth who are currently in 10th - 12th grades are invited to attend.

July 9-11: Boys' Flight # 325 at Marble Falls UMC

July 23-25: Girls' Flight # 327 at Marble Falls UMC

Registration forms are posted on the SWTX Conference and Greater Austin Emmaus Community websites, or you may contact one of the Board Members or any member of the Chrysalis Next Steps Group. Scholarships are available!



Greater Austin Emmaus 4th Day Group

2008/2009 Board of Directors and Volunteers

Lay Director

Leslie Smith
835-5249
lsmith79@sbcglobal.net

Spiritual Director

Rev. Georgia Stone
pastorgeorgia1@aol.com

4th Day Board Representative

Bud Broeker
261-6001
bbroeker@austin.rr.com

Assistant Lay Director

Jim Anthony
jim-anthony@sbcglobal.net

Board Member for Gathering Support

Gene McConnell
gene.mcconnell@jicompanies.com

Board Member for Walk Support

Diane Merwarth
dmerwarth@seton.org

Board Member for Member Services

Jack Foreman
252-1001
jcforeman@sbcglobal.net

Treasurer

Mike Rhodes
494-5834
soxymr@att.net

Immediate Past Lay Director

Bud Broeker
261-6001
bbroeker@austin.rr.com

Chrysalis Representative

Liz Gray
zil@austin.rr.com

Electronic Communications

Rob Turk
robturk@gmail.com

Weekend Follow-Up Coordinator

Lynn Hoermann
238-9554
lynn.hoermann@tdi.state.tx.us

Registration Liaison

Ted Shaw
989-3866
tedshaw@swbell.net

Database Coordinator

Bud Broeker
261-6001
bbroeker@austin.rr.com

Prayer Vigil Coordinator

Kay Shout
Kayshout@yahoo.com

Food/Gift Agape Coordinator

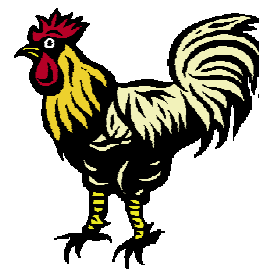
Bonnie Harper
bonnieharper@earthlink.net

Music Coordinator

Vacant

Walk Talk Editor

Gina Franklin
970-1393
franklingdom@gmail.com



Visit the Greater Austin Emmaus
4th Day Group Website:
<http://www.austinemmaus.org>



The Walk Talk Deadline for April is March 25th!

Please send your articles, 4th Day Stories, Group appreciation and reflections to
Gina Franklin 12905 Irongate Ave., Austin, TX 78727;
or email to franklingdom@gmail.com

Were You There?

Have you been going to the monthly Gathering?

Why not?!?!?!?

They are normally on the first Thursday of each month. Childcare is available at all Gatherings! Check out the schedule on page 6!

We'll be looking for you!

SWTX Walk/Flight Leadership Training Sessions

To register for an Emmaus Leadership Training Event please go to www.swtxumc.org/emmaus or contact Emmaus Register at Emmaus@umcswtx.org

Date: March 14, 2009	Location: San Angelo
Date: May 16, 2009	Location: La Vernia
Date: August 15, 2009	Location: Johnson City
Date: Sept. 15, 2009	Location: Beeville
Date: Oct. 17, 2009	Location: Kerrville



Purpose: Training Lay Directors, Board Reps and Spiritual Directors Leadership teams for Emmaus/Chrysalis. The Walk/Flight Leadership Training is required for all incoming Lay Directors and Board Reps and Spiritual Directors. Lay Directors and Board Reps need to attend training within 15 months of serving, Spiritual Directors need to attend training at least once every 3 years. However LT is open to anyone interested in learning more about Leadership. This is a great time for the Lay Directors, Board Reps, and Spiritual Directors to develop effective Communication and Leadership skills. The outside support coordinators are invited to attend as well. Training will be conducted by the SWTX Conf Emmaus/Chrysalis Lay Directors and Spiritual Director or their appointees.



Fill Lent with God, not stuff

Why does God hate stuff? That's the question I was asked once as the season of Lent approached. Lent is a season in which Christians give up stuff for the 40 days leading up to Easter. So the question goes; if the stuff I'm giving up isn't bad stuff (and, if it is, shouldn't I give it up for more than 40 days?) then what's the point of giving it up? It's a fair question, and one worth answering with the season of Lent upon us - it begins Wednesday with Ash Wednesday.

First of all, God doesn't hate stuff. God isn't opposed to earthly pleasures, in fact he infuses them with a foundation for meaning. Calls to fasting aren't meant to deny ourselves of physical things so that we can concentrate on "spiritual" things, but so we can redeem the physical things as spiritual things. Food can become more substantive and enjoyable; so can entertainment, relationships, sex and other pleasures.

Going back at least to the time of Augustine is the concept of a "God shaped hole" that exists in all of us. Augustine argued that every human being was created with a place inside that can only be filled by the presence of God. He went on to say that humans make the mistake of trying to fill that hole with other things, the things that make them "happy."

Blaise Pascal, the French mathematician and philosopher, argued that the God-shaped hole in the human heart is, in fact, an infinite and terrifying abyss that we try to cover over with all sorts of façades. Then when, eventually, a crack appears in the façade, and we see through it the well of eternal nothingness plunging down forever, we hurl ourselves back in horror. We will do anything to fill that empty space. So we pour alcohol through the crack in the façade in the hopes of filling the abyss and removing the horror. Of course, any recovering alcoholic will tell you this doesn't work. Not for long.

Sigmund Freud said in "Civilization and Its Discontents" that no mood-altering chemicals ultimately perform this job satisfactorily. For a while, Freud thought that cocaine could safely do this and had to learn the hard way, through his own personal experience, that in the long run it worked no better than alcohol.

So we reach for money or sex or power or security. And we discover, either by witnessing it or through firsthand experience, these things don't fill that space either. Only that which is infinite and completely transcendent, Pascal said, could fill such an infinite abyss.

The Bible says that we cannot love both God and mammon. Mammon is just a word for "stuff" or things. God is to be loved and things are to be used. And it is increasingly important that we love God and use things, for there is much in our gadget-minded, consumer-oriented society that is encouraging us to love things and use God.

When Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness (this is where the 40 days of Lent comes from), He was tempted by Satan with provision, wealth and power. The pursuit of happiness. The American Dream. But we are called, as Christ was, to pursue holiness. Jesus' words to Satan are, "man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." Jesus knows where his blessings come from. His time in the desert has been a reminder of that. He knows to put the giver before the gift.

So, in this season of Lent, we follow the example of Christ in the wilderness and make a conscious choice for emptiness.

Now there are many schools of religious thought that teach an embracing of emptiness as the key to happiness. That we must die to ourselves. That a denial of our physical selves will, in and of itself, redeem our spiritual selves. That the physical is bad and the spiritual is good. That is not what Christians proclaim.

We proclaim the physical and spiritual are connected, and we witness that in the incarnation of Jesus. If we deny ourselves, it is only so we can take up the cross of Christ. If we die, it is only so we can live again. If we embrace emptiness, it isn't with emptiness as the end goal, but as a means to an end, experiencing the fullness of God. If we stop grasping at stuff, it is so we can grab hold of God.

I encourage you to give something up this Lenten season. Something you really like. Something you'll miss. Something that you think keeps you from being empty, from facing that abyss. I encourage you to ask God into that time and that place that you normally fill with television or chocolate or shopping. Let this season of Lent be a time when you embrace emptiness in order to better understand the sacrifice of Christ and to be more filled with the spirit of God.

Reprinted with permission: Kester Smith is the pastor for the Immanuel Austin Community (www.immanuelaustin.com) and blogs at www.pastorkes.blogspot.com

Greater Austin Emmaus 4th Day Group Board of Directors Meeting

The Greater Austin Emmaus 4th Day Group Board of Directors met on Thursday, February 5, 2009 at First United Methodist Church of Austin. In Attendance were: Leslie Smith, Lay Director; Bud Broeker, SWTC Board Representative; Jack Foreman, Member Services; Diane Merwarth, Walk Support; Gene McConnell, Gathering Support; Mike Rhodes, Treasurer, Georgia Stone, Spiritual Director; and Cortney Smith, Chrysalis.

Leslie Smith called the meeting to order at 6:02 P.M. and the meeting was opened with prayer by Cortney Smith. The minutes from the January 8, 2009 meeting were approved.

Treasurer's Report: The General Fund balance on January 31, 2009 was \$3,086.60. An additional \$1080.00 was available for distribution for Walk #1485. The Scholarship Fund balance was \$915.23. There was also \$24 available for distribution to Chrysalis. The total balance was \$5,105.83.

Mike Rhodes also offered a financial recap of 2008 with a break-down of income and expenses for the year. The cost per Walk is \$357.67. The treasurer's report was approved.

Bud Broeker reported on changes in requirements by the Southwest Texas Conference. All childcare workers must have a background check submitted to the Conference office 6 weeks before the event. Each event must have a separate background check even if the same childcare workers will be used. There will be a joint Triennial Board Training with Hayes Praise after the new Board starts in June. There should be no handouts for talks. They should be included in the closing packet only. Walk Flight Leadership Training (WFLT) should be attended by the Walk Lay Director, Spiritual Director, and Board Representative within 6 to 18 months before the Walk.

There was discussion regarding the need for deaf interpreters for a possible pilgrim on Walk #1487. The weekend would require three interpreters. There was discussion as to whether students could be used who had not attended a Walk to Emmaus. The Board will look into interpreters that may be available in the Emmaus Community and consider using the students if needed.

Dates for 2010 were approved by Conference. Possible Lay Directors for 2010 Walks will be reviewed at the March Board meeting.

Diane Merwarth reported that childcare is covered for the upcoming Men's Walk. She is still looking for coverage for the Women's Walk.

Cortney Smith will send an electronic copy of the document outlining the break even points for various sites that was created by the Conference Chrysalis Board to the Emmaus Board.

The Board is still in need of a Music Coordinator. There has been some trouble filling agape lists. It was suggested that the sign-up lists be passed around at Gatherings instead of being placed on a table.

The members of the Board who had not already done so, signed forms that were required by the Upper Room.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 P.M. with a closing prayer by Gene McConnell.

Respectfully submitted, Cortney Smith

Worried About Your Future?

For Christians and non-Christians alike, the quicksand of the indefinite can be intimidating. Only God knows what the next day will hold, but most of us are pretty sure that it won't always be rosy.

Some of us might want to go back to the past -- to the "good old days." That's safer than running into the unknown future. But we don't have a choice. Which is why Jesus' example is important. Lent allows us to look at how Jesus faced His difficult future.

In the days before His sacrificial death, even God's Son was distressed about His future. In Matthew 26 we see Jesus admit His soul is overwhelmed with sorrow, even to the point of death. Knowing all that was to come, Jesus saw the kiss of betrayal from a disciple. He saw Himself deserted by His friends and arrested by His enemies. He saw the trials He would endure, the slaps and the scourge, the spit and the suffering. He know about the crown of thorns and the terrible taunts which would be directed against Him.

No wonder Jesus admitted, "*Now my heart is troubled*" (John 12). No wonder He pleaded, "*Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from Me*" (Matt 26).

If we were to face such a future, would we remain committed to the Father's cause of salvation? Not likely. Nobody wants to accept such a dark future. We might have said, "This is not fair! The innocent should not be punished for the guilty. Don't make me suffer this cruel and inhuman punishment."

It was only human for Jesus to want to walk away from His dark tomorrow. But He is also God's Son who had been entrusted with a mission. The Savior is unique. Jesus looked forward. He said to His Father, "*Not My will, but Yours be done*" (Luke 22).

Why? Why did He suffer and willingly give up everything so sinful souls could be saved? He provided the answer: "*For this reason I was born.*" (John 18).

If you believe nothing else, I hope you believe this. If you hold on to nothing else, cling to this scriptural truth. If you do, because of God's grace, you are assured that the good old days are not in the past ... they are ahead. Indeed, the best of days have become yours through Jesus' selfless sacrifice. **Thanks be to God!**

De Colores! Gerard Kern

Austin Next Steps Chrysalis Board Minutes

February 3, 2009

IN ATTENDANCE: Kathe Boothby, Penny Mills, Cortney Smith, Darren Mock, Paul LeBlanc, Tracy Boothby, Greg Mills, Tanya Eustace

MINUTES: Minutes were read. Minutes approved and seconded. Motion carried.

TREASURERS REPORT: Treasurer reports balance of \$2,183.45. This includes the Hoot pizza check for \$226.69 that is outstanding and t-shirt money. The Treasurers report was approved and it was seconded. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

Boys Journey – There was a wide range of diversity which was good. Improvements - being aware that some may not do a contemporary service and not aware of the songs, etc. It was a great experience and having a different style of clergy was good too. Darren likes the 3 day model.

Girls Journey – Good flight. Great interaction and talks. Concerns – preview talks within a better time frame to work out kinks. Girls outside fees were reduced because there were 16 in 1 room with only 2 baths.

Both Journeys are almost closed. LD's will forward the reports.

The Board approved a motion to give each LD an additional \$200 to cover extra outside expenses.

Girls Chrysalis: Marble Falls will host the summer Chrysalis on July 23-25 Team will arrive on 22nd for set up

Boy Chrysalis: The dates will be July 9-11.

Marble Falls UMC has been approved and secured for the summer flights. Cost will be \$300 for weekend. Penny Mills will check on showers, \$50 conference fee/person. \$2000 food stipend for doing our cooking. Possibly we could have reunion groups provide food. Charges for the summer flights - \$95. This was approved and seconded. We viewed a map of Marble Falls UMC and the set up for the weekends.

OTHER BUSINESS

Collecting of inside team fees will be handled by the Board Rep. Outside fees will be handled by logistics coordinator and they will then pass on monies to Board Rep. This was approved and seconded. Motion carried.

Hoot Report: Good games and good location, there was a discussion as to how it worked having Hoot on a Saturday.

Conference Board Meeting Update: 3 communities have turned in dates for 2010. As far as the prayer vigil we are doing out job, but need to make sure we are doing our job for other communities.

Discussed possibly 2010 Chrysalis lay

The Journey Flights for 2010 will be Jan. 7-9

**We will need to do the Letter of Agreement at our next meeting.

SOMETIMES

SOMETIMES even the best of us get stressed out.

SOMETIMES laughter can solve the problem.

SOMETIMES a carefree attitude can free the soul.

SOMETIMES the right words can change the situation.

SOMETIMES we could all use a break.

SOMETIMES a light heart can save the day.

SOMETIMES a smile can warm the coldest of hearts.

SOMETIMES it's just not enough...

SOMETIMES there's nothing you can do, you just have to pray.

Always~ God will listen!! ~

Volunteers Needed!

Music Coordinator:

The GAE4DG is looking for a music coordinator volunteer. This role consists of coordinating with Host Churches, Lay Directors and the GAE4DG's wonderful musicians to provide music at Gatherings and/or Candlelight Service. Music is an important part of each Gathering and Walk.

Childcare:

The GAE4DG is looking for child care volunteers for Candlelight Service for each Walk. This role requires several reliable volunteers with a current personal background check on file as required by SWTC, GAE4DG and the Walk sites. The need for a qualified group of volunteers to provide child care is essential. The response will determine whether child care at Candlelight Services may be provided.

For more information or if you are feeling called to serve in either of these roles, please contact any Board Member listed on Page 2.

Upcoming Greater Austin Emmaus Gatherings

Singing at 7:00 p.m., Worship at 7:30 p.m., Agape Feast Following

March 2009

Thursday, March 5, 2009
Crestview UMC
1300 Morrow Ave.
Speaker: Harold Sundbeck

April 2009

Thursday, April 2, 2009
First UMC of Pflugerville
500 East Pecan Street
Speaker: TBA

May 2009

Thursday, May 7, 2009
Memorial UMC
6100 Berkman Dr.
Speaker: Alberta Shelton

June 2009

Thursday, June 11, 2009
The Rock UMC
2001 W. New Hope Rd.
Speaker: TBA

July 2009

Thursday, July 2, 2009
TBA
Speaker: TBA

August 2009

Thursday, August 6, 2009
TBA
Speaker: TBA

Reminder: Childcare Services are available
at all Gatherings.

**GAE4DG is now accepting
volunteer host churches and
speakers for the upcoming 2009
Gatherings.**

Contact:

Board Member for Gathering Support
Gene McConnell
gene.mcconnell@jicompanies.com