



The Greater Austin Emmaus Community Newsletter



October 2020

Volume 31, Number 10

EXPECTING A MIRACLE

I pray that you and your family are safe from the COVID-19 pandemic. We have rolled out the new GAEC website that we feel is easier to use and more graphically pleasing. Go check it out at www.austinemmaus.org! We are adding more items as we continue to update the content. Thanks to our website subcommittee for their hard work!! We are still requesting the Fourth Day community to send TESTIMONIES of how the Walk to Emmaus has changed their life to put on a TESTIMONY page. Remember that Paul stated in 2Timothy 1:8 "So do not be ashamed to TESTIFY about our Lord." You can check the last two WalkTalk editions and this one for my and other Board member testimonies to give you an idea of what the article might look like. Send a written or video TESTIMONY to communications@austinemmaus.org. Start sharing now and make a difference in the GAEC community on the new website. We have not received many yet, so step out in faith and be changed by the experience!

This year has been a very busy year for me and my wife Paula. With the COVID pandemic, we cancelled our summer first time trip to Europe for our anniversary. We still needed to get away over Labor Day and I decided to take Paula to see the Salt Lake, Grand Tetons, and Yellowstone Park. Paula had never been to that part of the U.S. and COVID is almost nonexistent there. We had a great time seeing history and the beautiful landscape and animals that God created. When we came back, Paula had a breast biopsy and found out that she has breast cancer. Paula's vocation is as a X-ray tech doing mammograms. She is a uterine cancer survivor now for 13 years. She has always told women to get their mammograms as recommended by their age. The good news is that she found the cancer early since she has mammograms every year. We are confident that God will get her through the lumpectomy and radiation treatment. Please keep Paula in your prayers.

This situation brought to mind a statement I had seen once in a Christian movie and wrote down. It is as follows:

EXPECTING A MIRACLE

First do what is necessary.
Then do what is possible.
Then suddenly you will be doing the impossible.
Some people blame themselves for things they cannot do, or disappointments of others, or their own failings.
But in their distress they forget that God does not expect us to be successful, only faithful!
We must remember this when even doing the necessary seems impossible.

God is always with us no matter what is going on. **Joshua 1:9** "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

Isaiah 41:10 "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." Remember to take your issues to God in prayer!

Last, remember **Matthew 28:19-20** "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Share your TESTIMONIES with each other to make disciples and to encourage each other.

With the hope of Jesus, we continue to step forward one day at a time. Thank you for all you are doing to keep hope alive! Stay connected to each other, your Church, and God. Continued blessings on you and all those around you.

De Colores!
Steven Scott, Lay Director

Greater Austin Emmaus Community Board of Directors and Non-Board Positions

Lay Director

Steven Scott

LayDirector@austinemmaus.org

Assistant Lay Director

Dennis Perryman

AssistantLayDirector@austinemmaus.org

Past Lay Director

Fred Widmer

PastLayDirector@austinemmaus.org

Secretary

Harold Sundbeck

Secretary@austinemmaus.org

Treasurer

Patti Bizzell

Treasurer@austinemmaus.org

Upper Room Support

Mel Chambers

UpperRoom@austinemmaus.org

Assist Upper Room Support

George Scherer

AssistUpperRoom@austinemmaus.org

Communications Support

Lauren Moffatt

Communications@austinemmaus.org

Walk Support (Sign-up/Trailer)

Jeanne Randall

WalkSignups@austinemmaus.org

Assistant Walk Support (Agape)

Jo Peters

Agape@austinemmaus.org

Gathering Support

Chuck Tencer

Gathering@austinemmaus.org

Spiritual Director

Rev. Sylvester Chase

SpiritualDirector@austinemmaus.org

Team Selection Support

Susan McMillan

TeamSelection@austinemmaus.org

Reunion Group/POC Support

Christian Nelson

ReunionPOC@austinemmaus.org

Training Support

Nelda Carpenter

Training@austinemmaus.org

Database/Website Support

Rick Seifert

DatabaseWebsite@austinemmaus.org

Non-Board Positions

Music Coordinator

Mike Carmagnola

Music@austinemmaus.org

Assistant Music Coordinator

Jesse Maddera

AssistMusic@austinemmaus.org

Registrar

Myles McKemie

Registrar@austinemmaus.org

Website Developer

Eric Bursley

WebsiteDeveloper@austinemmaus.org

WalkTalk Editor*

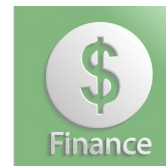
Lauren Moffatt

Communications@austinemmaus.org

*denotes a change in person holding position



Board of Directors



**Financial
Statement**
as of 9/29/20

Bank Balance

\$34,984.78

Scholarship Fund

\$5,301.50

GAEC Website

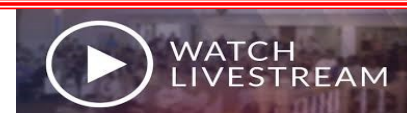
<http://www.austinemmaus.org>

GAEC Facebook page

[www.facebook.com/groups/
GreaterAustinEmmaus/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/GreaterAustinEmmaus/)

Emmaus Sunday! Don't forget!

The first Sunday of each month is Emmaus Sunday. Wear your cross and lanyard to worship. This is a great opportunity to help bring awareness to the Walk to Emmaus at your church!



Join us for our next
LIVE STREAM Gathering
from Hope Presbyterian Church!

November 21, 2020

Music and Worship at 6:15 p.m.

Further details coming soon!

The *WalkTalk* deadline is the 20th of each month; items received after that will be printed only if space is available.

Communications@austinemmaus.org

Our First Live Stream Gathering at Lake Travis

We had our first live stream gathering on Saturday September 12, 2020 at Lake Travis UMC. There were only a few people at Lake Travis to facilitate the live streaming. We had our 3 musicians and 2 singers welcome us with 3 songs to start the live streaming. I then discussed the announcements and Dennis Perryman read the Board Officers names and their roles. We then had our worship service with 3 more songs. Our Fourth Day speaker was Margaret Herman who provided an uplifting talk. We had an offering for the few people at Lake Travis and reminded everyone that you can also participate in the offering by sending a check to our treasurer:

Austin Emmaus
12005 Black Angus Dr.
Austin, Tx 78727

We had a joint communion led by Pastor Sylvester Chase for the few present and for those at home that had their own communion elements, so we could have communion together at the same time.

We had 146 different devices join in the live stream gathering by Vimeo and 165 different devices join in the live stream gathering by Facebook which in some cases had more than one person in the room viewing the live stream. We have had 344 more views or impressions by Vimeo later that may have been repeat viewing or partial viewing. We have had an additional 15 views on Vimeo since 9/13/2020. That is a lot more views by people then we had been having by in person attendees at gatherings before Covid!! I think it is because the GAEC Fourth Day spread the link and notification of the live stream to people that you knew have not attended a gathering for a long time as I requested. Great Job GAEC Fourth Day!!!!!!

The live stream was a way for us to worship together and feel connected to the Austin Fourth Day Community and God. For those who did not get a chance to see the live steam yet, you can still view it on the following Vimeo link:

<https://vimeo.com/456737525>

It was a very different feeling to speak to a very empty sanctuary! We have learned a few things from this first live stream and will improve the next one at Hope Presbyterian Church on November 21, 2020 at 6:15pm.

With the hope of Jesus, we continue to step forward one day at a time. Thank you for all you are doing to keep hope alive, and continued blessings on you and all those around you.

De Colores!
Steven Scott Lay Director GAEC

<u>OFFICER ROLE</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>TERM EXPIRES</u>
Lay Director	Steven Scott	2021
Assistant Lay Director	Dennis Perryman	2021
Past Lay Director	Fred Widmer	2021
Secretary	Harold Sundbeck	2022
Treasurer	Patti Bizzell	2023
Upper Room Support	Mel Chambers	2022
Assist Upper Room Support	George Scherer	2021
Communications Support	Lauren Moffatt	2023
Walk Support (Sign-up/Trailer)	Jeanne Randall	2022
Assistant Walk Support (Agape)	Jo Peters	2021
Gathering Support	Chuck Tencer	2023
Spiritual Director	Rev. Sylvester Chase	2021
Team Selection Support	Susan McMillan	2021
Reunion Group/POC Support	Christian Nelson	2023
Training Support	Nelda Carpenter	2022
Database/Website Support	Rick Seifert	2023



Term Expiration 2021-4, 2022-4, 2023-5
Top three Directors expire every year.
Officer roles and terms expire on May 31st of the above years.



Next GAEC Board Meeting

Saturday, November 21, 2020 3:00 p.m.

The above Board meeting will be held online.

Greater Austin Emmaus Reunion Groups

Looking for a reunion group?
Want to add a new group?
Need to update info on an existing group?
Send information to the
Reunion Group/POC Support person at
ReunionPOC@austinemmaus.org.



GAEC Facebook Group



Lauren is working diligently to ensure that the Upper Room devotionals for each day are posted here as we know many of you are not able to get your copy from your respective church.

The latest information regarding our Live Stream gatherings as well as WalkTalk issues and any other important information are posted as well.

If you are not already a member of our Facebook group, we invite you to join us by clicking the link below!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/GreaterAustinEmmaus/>

Clergy Corner

Community clergy, would you like to write an article to share with the Greater Austin Emmaus Community?

It can be as long or as short as you would like, and on any topic of your choice. Just send your musings to:

Communications@austinemmaus.org

We will all be blessed by your words of wisdom!



My 2020 God Experience

When I was in my early 40s, everything seemed to be going my way. I had a great job at Dell. I have a wonderful wife and 3 amazing children. We had great neighbors and friends and a wonderful church family. But somehow, I wasn't feeling totally fulfilled. It was like something was missing, but I couldn't put my finger on it. A good friend asked me if I would be interested in deepening my relationship with Christ and his question came at the right time and place for me. I jumped at the opportunity to go on a Walk to Emmaus in hopes that I could find what I was missing.

Now, dial forward almost 20 years. Here I sit, in late July of 2020, the year that will be hereafter known as the "year of the pandemic". I retired from my corporate job in January, when there was but a whisper of a strange new disease in China. I wasn't exactly miserable at work, but I certainly wasn't doing anything new or fun or interesting and it was affecting my leadership and reflecting on the people on my team who were young, talented and energetic and needed a leader who had passion to inspire them.

After a couple of years of trying new things at work, I sat down with my wife to discuss my situation. She reflected that she could tell I just wasn't getting the same joy out of my job as I had in the past when over 4 decades, I was continuously challenged with new roles, new skills, new ideas, and new experiences. We agreed to see if early retirement was an option.

Everything was set – I had done my financial analysis and reviewed it many times with my wife and financial advisor. We used all the different scenarios they had available and while we wouldn't be rolling in dough in our retirement, we would be comfortable and there would be enough to enable us to start chipping away at our bucket list of world travel. We planned a trip with another couple to Puerto Vallarta, a trip to South Padre, a family trip to Alaska, trip to the South Carolina Coast with my siblings, a trip with two couples to Scotland and Ireland, and a cruise from New Zealand to Australia – all within my 1st year of retirement. Woo Hoo!

Through February as the 1st trip approached, the new novel virus, Covid-19, was showing signs of becoming a pandemic. The first cases in our area would not be confirmed until early March, so we watched the pandemic like spectators watching a sporting event. First it was China, then Europe, and then the Northeast and Northwest of the US started to see the rise in cases with an alarming death rate. We took our trip to Puerto Vallarta as the stock market started having some signs of weakening and while we were in Mexico, the bottom fell out. BAM – suddenly my retirement fund didn't look so healthy after all. When we returned and re-ran the financial analysis – things looked bleak. Then the realities of the pandemic and associated lockdown caused us to postpone or cancel much of our travel and we went into lock-down mode.

One side-benefit of the pandemic has been the time to do a lot of reading and I started a novel called "The Sparrow" by Mary Doria Russell. In the novel, a Jesuit priest is asked, "Do you experience God?" His answer, "Not directly. Not as a friend or a personality, I suppose. Not, I think, even in a tiny whispering sound."

"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me." Matthew 25:35-36

As I reflect on the last 6 months, I find myself wondering how in the world I didn't have a total meltdown and fall into a deep depression. But the answer is simply – Faith! Throughout all the changes that came our way, God has been a constant. I have been able to see him in all aspects of this pandemic.

God put me to work:

We quickly moved our weekly men's breakfast/Bible study, "Band of Brothers", to the Zoom platform.

- ✝ We used Zoom in 2019 to enable remote attendance for a brother on a temporary Dallas assignment.
- ✝ I became technically savvy with Zoom during that time.
- ✝ When the long-time leader of the group "retired", I took over leadership just before COVID.
- ✝ When it became clear we couldn't continue church services in the sanctuary, I joined a small group of people that teamed with our pastor to pull together a Zoom-based worship service.
- ✝ I have helped members who are not "tech-savvy" learn to use Zoom and now we have members joining that were not able to physically attend church even before the pandemic.
- ✝ Each week, I am a zoom "stage-hand" as we use Zoom live and then record the sermon for those who can't attend the Zoom meeting.
- ✝ After we got the church zoom services working smoothly, my volunteer job at Round Rock Senior Access restarted enabling me to help those who can't drive to attend appointments.

I see God in this everyday sequence of events that has enabled our church family to continue to worship and study during our pandemic and kept me from being overwhelmed in the process.

It was my Walk to Emmaus that provided the tools I needed to grow in my faith journey and teach me to channel my work through my church. It is through my Emmaus family that I continue to draw strength and spiritual renewal. It is this strong foundation that has kept me working for the Lord! Do I experience God? The answer is a clear "yes" for me – every day of my life!

Amen!

DeColores!
Rick Seifert,
GAEC Board Database/Website Support

GAEC Board of Directors' Meeting Minutes September 12, 2020

The September Board Meeting was held by Google Meet due to the current limited gathering size directives to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. The following members were present: Steven Scott, Lay Director; Dennis Perryman, Assistant Lay Director; Fred Widmer, Past Lay Director; Harold Sundbeck, Secretary; Patti Bizzell, Treasurer; Lauren Moffatt, Communications Support; Mel Chambers, Upper Room Support; Chuck Tencer, Gathering Support; Jeanne Randall, Walk Support (Sign-up/Trailer); Jo Peters, Assistant Walk Support (Agape); Nelda Carpenter, Training Support and Rick Seifert, Database/Website Support.

Steven Scott, Lay Director, called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. and opened the meeting with a prayer.

QUORUM: Twelve Board members were present by Google Meet providing a quorum for the meeting.

MINUTES: The Board of Directors Meeting Minutes were sent by email for the previous meeting held on July 11, 2020 and were approved by email.

REPORTS - The following officers, directors, or other persons presented reports to the Board of Directors, with any items discussed or actions taken as noted below. The following items were discussed:

LAY DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Steven Scott will finalize the Board job descriptions and send out to the Board for review. Kellye Noret thanked the Board for the nice gift (provided by Board Members) recognizing her 17 years of service to the Emmaus community.

Our upcoming Walks in 2021 are scheduled at Eagles Wings Retreat Center for 3/18-3/21, 6/10-6/13 and 11/4-11/7.

We are hoping to live-stream the November 21, 2020 Gathering at Hope Presbyterian Church. Fred will facilitate.

Our website is up on Amazon Web Service (AWS) offering many more options and we are deleting Verve that costs \$67/year vs Amazon Lightsail, which costs \$60/year. Additionally, we will be utilizing Amazon S3 Storage in the future for document sharing. This will free up Kristen's Dropbox which we had been using. Thanks goes out to Lauren Moffatt, Eric Bursley and Rick Seifert for their work on making these changes from the old site to the new site.

TREASURER'S REPORT – Patti Bizzell reported the Frost Bank balance reconciles with the Aplos balance of \$35,190.97. Patti made the motion to accept the financial report, Steven Scott seconded the motion. The motion passed.

UPPER ROOM REPORT – Mel Chambers reported he has sent the signed Covenant to the Upper Room.

DATABASE/WEBSITE SUPPORT – We will migrate our Domain Names to Amazon from GoDaddy and redirect the web traffic from the old Diakonia website to GAEC for a savings of \$21.80. We will delete Diakonia from Go Daddy and move e-mail forwarding from Go Daddy to ImprovMX, which provides a more secure solution with increased functionality at the cost of \$90 per year. Once we complete the transition, we will cancel Go Daddy. In addition, we have up to a \$300 credit on Amazon good through February which will offset some of the additional costs. Steven made a motion to approve these items and Dennis Perryman seconded. The motion passed.

COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT – Lauren Moffatt reported she is now an administrator for our Facebook page and has completed the updating. She is now posting daily devotionals to our Face Book page.

WALK SUPPORT – Jeanne Randall will send a copy of our Agape Community Letter to Steven for his review. Steven will coordinate with Jo to get Agape items to her.

Continued on
next page



GATHERING SUPPORT – The September Gathering will take place today at Lake Travis UMC with a live-stream showing. The Gathering will take place at 6:15 with a limited attendance and music. Rev. Chase will preside, and Margaret Herman will be the 4th Day Speaker.

The November 21 Gathering will also be live streamed from Hope Presbyterian Church. Fred will help facilitate getting the service set up.

REUNION GROUP/POC SUPPORT – We need to set a deadline for updating our Reunion Group listings.

TRAINING – Nelda will schedule a time to attend the Upper Room training session.

NEW BUSINESS – Fred, Nelda, Susan, George and Rick will provide two names for inclusion to the 4th Day Team Selection committee. Steven will work on the Bylaws update.

Steven made a motion to cancel the October Board meeting and hold our next Board meeting in November. Nelda seconded the motion. The motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS – Steven will provide the Upper Room with an official letter stating the merger of Diakonia EW into GAEC. Steven and Rick will submit articles to the WalkTalk.

Steven closed the meeting with prayer and the meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Minutes written and respectfully submitted by GAEC Secretary, Harold Sundbeck.



Kairos Prison Ministry

Kairos Prison Ministry is a lay-led, interdenominational Christian ministry in which volunteers bring Christ's love and forgiveness to prisoners and their families. The word Kairos is a Greek word meaning in "God's Special Time" or in the "Fullness of Time," indicating an opportunity for participants to reconsider their life choices. Kairos Weekends are typically held in the June/July and December/January time frame at the Ferguson Unit near Huntsville, Texas.

There are several ways you can participate in a Kairos weekend. One of them is by baking cookies.

Watch this video on YouTube to see how Kairos cookies change lives:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NXV_lgVWwA4

For more details on preparing cookies, or other ways you can support Kairos, contact Randy Nettles at 512-636-0832.

“ . . . I was in prison and you came to visit me.” Matthew 25:36

I Heard God's Calling

I went on my walk to Emmaus in Oct of 2011. I did not realize that the weekend would be a life changing event for me. I have been a Christian for over 20 years. I thought that I had a pretty good relationship with God, I read the Bible, attended bible studies, attended worship every Sunday, sang in the choir and had an active prayer life. I had heard about the Walk to Emmaus through the church, but didn't know much about it. I thought it was some kind of mystery weekend that friends just talked about in general without saying much about the weekend.

My wife and I were involved in a church activity called Dinner for 8, where 4 couples would get together for dinner at different homes and enjoy each other's company for a few hours. It was our turn to host the get together, and it just so happened, a Pastor of our Church and 2 other couples that were close friends attended the dinner. We were talking, and I made the bold move of asking "What is the thing called The Walk to Emmaus?" We had a short discussion and before the conversation ended, both the Pastor and one of my close friends asked if they could sponsor me on the Walk. Wow, I was thrilled and terrified at the same time!

The weekend came and, of course, it was nothing like I had ever experienced before and not anything like I expected. I am not an extrovert, but yet I found myself participating in all the activities, sharing things I really wasn't comfortable sharing and found myself getting close to my brothers at my table, as well as all the brothers on the walk. I remember vividly one moment during the weekend that I will never forget. I had a great deal of anger and frustration with my parents for the way they raised me, and all of the things that I thought they should have done during that time, but never did, like saying "I love you" or "I am proud of what you are doing." In one moment, that anger and frustration that I had been carrying all those years disappeared. I found myself realizing that my parents had done the best they could with the little education they had.

I left that weekend feeling energized and alive in Christ and knew that I experienced God in a new and amazing way. I knew I would not forget my experience with God. I learned from my walk that I had a servant's heart and calling. In addition, I learned how I could become a better disciple for Christ. Now, I heard God's call and started serving where he wanted me to.

Since my walk, I have been on 2 conference teams and worked several outside servant teams. I immediately got involved with a reunion group that I am still active with each week.

I got reinvolved with the Stephen Ministry, a group of trained Christians to walk with other brothers or sisters in Christ while they are struggling with personal, financial or emotional issues without judging them. I also serve as a trained Crisis Counselor which I do at home several days a week via my computer on a confidential text line. The Crisis Line provides a texter a confidential text line for those in a crisis, including depression, suicide, and other mental struggles. I have found this very rewarding, and found many opportunities to share my faith. It's not about me, but instead it is always about the texter's feelings, validating the texter as we walk through their crisis, and providing resources.

Before the Pandemic, I volunteered at our Church once a week entering attendance. I also worked as a volunteer for the Samaritan House once a week in the office checking in patients and answering the phone. I have not been able to do them since March due to the pandemic, but hope to go back soon. Most recently, I became a member of the Emmaus Board in March serving as the Gathering Support Person.

The pandemic may be slowing the world down, but I am not slowing down as I answer God's calling!

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19, NIV)

DeColores!

Chuck Tencer,

GAEC Gathering Support

Upcoming 2020 GAEC Emmaus Community Gatherings



Hope Presbyterian Church
Music and Worship
at 6:15 p.m.
4th Day Speaker TBD

Details regarding this event will be sent out via MailChimp when they become available!

To view the video of our September Gathering from Lake Travis UMC, please click the link below:

<https://vimeo.com/456737525>



TESTIMONIES

Do you have testimonies or 4th Day experiences you would like to share with the community? Perhaps a reflection on your spiritual life before you attended the Walk to Emmaus, or your spiritual journey since your Walk? Or maybe sharing your answers to the two questions asked at Closing: What has this weekend meant to you? What are you going to do with it?

Send your reflections and testimonies to:
Communications@austinemmaus.org

We will all be blessed by your sharing!



Fourth Day Speakers Needed!

Would you like to give a Fourth Day talk at a Gathering? Fourth Day speakers are always needed! Please contact Chuck Tencer at Gathering@austinemmaus.org if you are interested.