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# GSMEC NEWSLETTER

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December 2019

## Gathering

**December— 12/14/19**

The December Gathering will be  
at **Trinity United Methodist  
Church** - 5613 Western Ave,  
Knoxville, TN 37921

at 6:30pm

We will have our usual pot luck  
dinner followed by some  
fellowship and worship

If you play an instrument or sing  
see the “Calling All Musicians”  
bubble below for more info about  
the gathering

## UPCOMING WALKS/FLIGHTS

2020

2/15-17 Chrysalis Flight

3/12-15 Men's Walk to Emmaus

4/23-26 Women's Walk to Emmaus

Walks/Flights are held at  
Sevierville First United Methodist  
Church  
214 Cedar Street, Sevierville, TN

## Team Selection News

The latest from what is going on with  
Team Selection:

First, calls are being made to recruit the  
team members to serve on men's Walk  
115 in March. Rich Kissell (LD) and Les  
Ault (LDIT) are contacting men to serve  
in all the team positions. Preachee  
Burkhart and Kenny Tucker (SD) are  
working on contacting clergy to serve.

Second, Elizabeth Stooksbury will be  
serving as LD for women's Walk 116 in  
April. The Team Selection meeting for  
that walk will be conducted in December.  
If you would like to volunteer to serve in  
some capacity on that Walk, please  
contact Lee Carleston or Elizabeth ASAP  
to have your name included.

Third, I am in the process of contacting  
qualified men and women to serve in  
Walk leadership positions for the Fall  
2020 women's Walk 117 and men's Walk  
118 and into the 2021 year. Please pray for  
those who will be contacted and asked to  
serve in those leadership positions.

Fourth... For the 2020 year, I am looking  
for several folk (men and women) to serve

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## CHRYSALIS

"If Jesus was standing right here today and asked you to go on vacation with Him, what would you say"?

Someone said this to me at the Women's walk. It might have been Preachee. Forgive me if I am incorrect. It's a perfect invitation to Emmaus and Chrysalis. (I'm sure no one will mind if you use it. I intend to.) Truly, this is a great description, a mini vaca with Jesus!!

We are currently preparing for our President's Day Flight. Stephanie Wasserman and Scott Brewer will be our leaders. Please pray for them, their teams and the caterpillars. We still need some team members. I am so thankful that God knows exactly what He is doing. I am also thankful for a core group of people who make up our board. They are faithful and reliable. they know who they are. Among my many blessings, I count each one of you!

Merry Christmas and God richly bless you,

Debbie Pope  
Chrysalis Community Lay Director

on the Team Selection committee. There are normally only four meetings to attend (one for each Walk) during the year. The only requirement is that committee members need to be active in the Community and have served recently on a Team in some position. If you would be interested in serving the Community in this limited commitment, please contact Lee Carlestone (384-2602) ASAP.

And, lastly, an action taken from the last Board meeting.... In an effort to make recruitment of all the positions for a Walk weekend more efficient, the Walk leadership is again responsible for recruiting all positions, including Music Team, Prayer Chapel Team, and the Agape Team, for the Walk weekend. All the folk recruited for these positions will be considered "Team Members", asked to attend all Team meetings, asked to be present for the entire Walk weekend, and asked to pay the Team fee. For Agape Team Leader, we will be looking for persons who have served in the Conference Room and previously helped with Agape.

DeColores,

Lee Carlestone

## COMMUNITY LAY DIRECTOR

It has been an honor and privilege to serve our Lord and this Emmaus Community as your Community Lay Director this year. I rejoice and praise God for the increase in pilgrims attending the walks and I am so thankful for all the sponsors and volunteers who make the walks and flights possible. Also a big thankyou to the Emmaus board for their hard work and for getting me through my “learning curve”. I have seen many instances of what Paul wrote in Colossians 3:23, “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters”. I will continue to serve this Emmaus Community next year as the outgoing CLD as a new Community Lay Director takes over for 2020.

As the year comes to a close, the Emmaus board continues to work with the Chrysalis leaders to develop a restructuring plan that will make it easier to secure future board and committee members needed to strengthen the Great Smoky Mountain Emmaus Community. We will have updates as this initiative progresses.

As you may know my wife Joy continues to face serious health issues and could not continue in her role as Emmaus Treasurer. It was our Emmaus Walks that brought us closer to Jesus which has given us the strength to persevere during this trying time. We both thank you for the love you have given us and all of your prayers.

Please continue to support this GSMEC with your time and talents. God does amazing work through this community and He is not done yet.

Merry Christmas and DeColores,

Todd Fisher

## Agape

Hello! I hope this missive finds you joyful and healthy! De Colores to you!

I wanted to re-iterate the requirements for working on the Agape Team for a Walk. If you have never worked Agape before, here is what it would entail:

1. You would be spending the weekend at First UMC Sevierville.
2. You would need to help with set-up Wednesday evening if at all possible.
3. The Agape Team will stay out of sight and will perform acts of Agape love for the pilgrims all weekend, including:
  - a. Making up the pilgrims sleeping places on Thursday evening,
  - b. placing gifts on the beds, conference and dining tables,
  - c. keeping the bathrooms clean and stocked,
  - d. providing drinks and snacks outside the conference room as necessary,
  - e. collecting letters for the pilgrims and arranging them for reading,
  - f. putting together the folders they will receive at the end of the walk,
  - g. And generally supporting the Pilgrims with whatever they need!

Yes, it is a hard job, but the more people that agree to help, the easier all the jobs are! Please consider helping out the walk by working the Agape Team. You do not have to have worked a walk before to be on the Agape team!

Thank you and may God Bless you!

Sylvia Creswell

Outgoing Agape Board Representative

## CALLING ALL MUSICIANS!!!!

I would like to invite all musicians, their instruments, their voices, their abilities to the December Gathering of the Great Smoky Mountain Emmaus Community. We would like to have a group singing of Christmas Carols and would like to raise the roof in song. This is a time of celebration and also a time for learning.

If you've always wanted to play or lead music for the Gathering here is your chance to find out what is needed. Please join us for this wonderful celebration. AND, if you, by chance, would like to lead or work on the music team on the Walks this would be a good opportunity to put your name in the hat for next year!

There is also a need on the Board for a person to coordinate with musicians in the Community. God wants you to serve, since He is counting on you to be His hands and feet on this earth!!!!

A Member of our Community and Board, Joy Fisher, went to be with our Lord on Sunday. Thank you all for your prayers over the course of her journey and for being her friends. She loved working with Emmaus and the results that God accomplished through it.

There will be a celebration of life service at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the American Cancer Society in her name.

# COMMUNITY SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

## Putting on My Christmas Socks

It's been one of those Christmas Seasons where I have struggled to get my joy elevator past the first floor. With the recent death of my Mom, I have been stuck in the grief delay that happens when you find yourself being a Pastor/caregiver for the family in the services and estate management. Add to this the number of routine Christmas Season congregational and community "needs and challenges" that each Pastor expects, strives to prepare for, and considers not as burdens, but as holy kingdom moments; and I realized as I awoke this morning, where I have been able to campaign joy flowing to others, I have not quite been able to receive a re-stocking of the joy necessary to even prepare for the "next round" or more importantly embrace the Joy of the Season. In such times I find I am at risk of choosing isolation over fellowship. And this reality weighed heavy upon me as I awoke this morning and struggled with how I could even hope to write an article for the Great Smokey Mountain Emmaus Community Newsletter... I asked the Lord for help to restore my joy. As I was dressing and leaned over to put on a brand new pair of Carhartt socks, the Lord provided a memory and I started laughing....

Fifteen years ago, I was completing my Pastoral training taking a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education at Johnson City Medical Center. I was serving as Chaplain on the Cancer Ward and in the midst of a brutal Christmas Season 24-hour on-call shift. I was on assigned rounds and walked into a patient's room and said the stupid thing that all Chaplains know never to say "How are you doing today?" Realizing my error immediately, I started to apologize. But the old man in the room, now grabbing hold of his IV pole to shift from lying in bed to sitting up with his feet and legs dangling but not quite touching the floor interrupted." No sir Preacher! You asked the question and I am going to give you the answer. I feel like crap all the time. The

cancer is spreading quickly to every part of my body. They put a few drain tubes in to keep the tumors from pressuring other parts of my body. I am refusing anything but the basic pain medicine because they tell me the cancer is also now migrating to my brain and I want to be able to communicate as much as I can for as long as I can. They say I probably won't see this Christmas. But you want to know the worst damn thing?" Stunned I nodded my head and he continued " The worst thing is that I have had bad circulation in my feet my whole life; my feet have been cold and in pain my whole life." Then to my surprise I saw the man's countenance shift from pain to great joy. His eyes sparkled and his smile opened from ear to ear and he continued " But with Jesus, there is always good news! I met with my accountant today. I've made arrangements to make sure all my hospital bills are fully paid, and there is enough money left to pay a tithe to the church, and to get Christmas presents for every child, grandchild and great grandchild; every nephew, niece, and cousin. And they are all getting the same kind of present. You want to know what I am getting them?"

Amazed as he openly laughed even as he winched from the pain the laughter caused, I said "What?". Joy now fully flowing to every corner of the room, even shocking the nurse who had overheard the conversation and had entered the room, the old man proclaimed "I know each one's size and I am getting each several pairs of the warmest, best socks that money can buy. I may not be around to help them anymore. But at least they won't have cold feet." The old man took a breath, moved back under the covers and laid back comfortably on the bed. " God is so good preacher man! God is so good! Will you pray with me, and for my family"... And we prayed.

So today I pray "with" each of us, that regardless of what we encounter this Christmas Season, we will each decide to embrace the fullness of Holy Spirit Joy that is available, and put on our Christmas Socks.

May your days be Merry and Bright!..... and your feet warm! -----Preachee

We have several shirts left over from previous times when we sold shirts on the weekends. I will have tables out showing all the items that we have and they will be available for sale. We would like to clear this inventory, so please bring some extra cash, take a look and buy an item or two!!!!

Thanks!

### CONTACT US-

AS ALWAYS IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS FOR YOUR GSMEC BOARD, PLEASE LET US KNOW. YOU CAN SEND EMAILS TO

[COMMUNICATIONS@GSMEC.ORG](mailto:COMMUNICATIONS@GSMEC.ORG)

Also our new board positions and contact info are at [GSMEC.org/leadership](http://GSMEC.org/leadership)