

ALDERSGATE PILGRIM

Fall/Winter 2021



Reflections from our Lay Director Beth Minks

2021 Aldersgate Community Lay Director
davesgirl0800@gmail.com

Despite our longing to get back on track to light the fire of Christ to our Community, it is with a heavy heart that we announce the postponement of the October Men's & Women's Walks #160. This decision by the Board of Directors was not made lightly, but made, ultimately, with the safety and well-being of potential pilgrims and our beautiful team members. But do not lose hope!

The Board of Directors has also voted to begin anew in 2022 with Walks that will happen with no postponements or cancellations! The year will begin January 27-30, 2022, with the Men's Walk #157 to get us going back on track! This exciting trend will continue as we embark on Men's Walk #158 to happen March 3-6, 2022, and Women's Walk #158 happening March 10-13, 2022. Our Fall Walks will be October 13-16, 2022, for the Men's Walk and October 20-23, 2022, for the Women's Walk.

We look forward to our community coming together by applying to serve on teams and Sponsors to reach out to potential pilgrims in order to make 2022 the year we bring Emmaus back in a wonderfully loving and Christ-centered way! Please visit www.aldersgateemmaus.org to update your profile and complete applications.

Pray for our Community and for our Country.

Thank you, God bless, and DeColores!



All scheduled 2022 Emmaus Walks
will be held at Camp Geneva in
Leesburg/Fruitland Park, FL

2022 Walks

Fall 2021 Walks have been postponed

Men's Walk #157	January 27—30
Men's Walk #158	March 3—6
Women's Walk #158	March 10—13
Men's Walk #159	October 13—16
Women's Walk #159	October 20—23

Editor's Note

DeColores! I'm Gary Brelsford, your Aldersgate Pilgrim newsletter editor. One of my favorite Bible verses comes from Psalms; in particular Psalms 46:10. It starts like this, "Be still, and know that I am God..." Those first two words are probably the toughest in today's world. I have a very hard time being still or being quiet for any length of time. For example, your Board just had two sessions that were pivotal in deciding the fate of the Fall 2021 Walks. As Past Community Lay Director, I had no vote in the matter, only an advisory position. It was a hard decision, and one that was not taken lightly. "Be still..." those words kept coming back to me. Be still, pray, ask the direction of the Holy Spirit. The discussion was impassioned and heartfelt, but the decision was made to postpone for health's sake. Several times, the Board stopped to pray. "Be still..." It works. DeColores!

Fourth Day Follow-up

Hi. My name is Terry McCorvie, I attended Aldersgate Emmaus Walk #138 in October 2012 where I sat at the table of Matthew. I turned 70 last Sunday; we've been celebrating all week. For many people, that would not be a reason for unbridled celebration, but for me it is. A year ago, I was not sure I would make it to 70.

In October 2019 I was diagnosed with terminal, inoperable stomach cancer. I firmly believe I am standing here today because of the love and grace of Jesus and the power of prayer, hundreds of little miracles created by so many of you. Yes, each of us can be miraculous. Love heals. Before I go on, let me go back a few years, because I want you to see how my 4th Day has unfolded.

I grew up in the church ---the Disciples of Christ Church and later, after I married Kathleen, converted to the Catholic Church. We joined St. Luke's Methodist Church 33 years ago.

We went to church most Sundays, but that was the extent of my Christian action. We gathered the family, sat through the service and then bolted for the door. Woohoo. I was a Christian!

That went on for 20 plus years until my wife, Kathleen, came home from a Stephen Ministry meeting and said she wanted to go to this thing called the Walk to Emmaus. She said there was a men's weekend, too, and asked me if I wanted to go. I immediately knew I did not. My Christian journey and my knowledge of the bible was far too immature to risk exposing my vulnerabilities to a bunch of other guys, some of them clergy. Who knows what they might make me do or say? Kathleen wisely said, "Well don't go for me. Only go if YOU want to go." Obviously, I ended up going, but I was definitely not into it. I rode up to Leesburg with Tom Vanis, my sponsor, and Steve McIntosh, who attended my same walk. I remember saying, "I guess this shows how much I love my wife because otherwise I would not be here."

Well, my attitude and my life changed on Saturday night. That's when God touched my soul. Pastor Rusty Belcher was the Spiritual Director on that walk. A new pastor, Todd Bardin, who was the Assistant Spiritual Director, saw that I was emotional and came over to me. We prayed together for a long time. Not much sleep that night, but the Walk to Emmaus profoundly changed me and my priorities.

I came home and Kathleen instantly saw the difference. I talked about God's grace, a term that was not all that familiar to us. I couldn't tell her much, because she was going on the women's walk the next weekend. But I did say I had to be the hands of feet of Christ. That going to church was just the tip of the iceberg.

I began to understand what God is asking of me, to love and serve Him by loving and serving others. I got involved,

boy did I.

Jobs Partnership, Circles, Communion Server, Go Full Steam, Cost of Poverty Experience team, finance committee, St. Luke's Vision 2020 Plus Task Force and of course, supporting and serving on Emmaus walks and board.

I felt good about my service, but I still didn't have a really strong, personal relationship with Christ. It was something I saw in others. Something I wanted, too.

BUT -- Christ is always working on us and I had my real "wake up" moment in October 2019. That's when the doc told me I had terminal stomach cancer. I asked him how long I had to live and he said "Probably 18 to 24 months. I'm sorry." What a jolt!

All I could think of to say to him was "Wow, you have a hard job." I couldn't imagine having to give that news to family after family. That's when I surrendered my life to Jesus. I guess I had no choice. I realized that my cancer was nothing I could control so I told Jesus I would do my part with the medicines and chemotherapy, but I was putting "in" in "Incurable" in his hands. So, we began talking and walking together and I literally gave my life to Him and trusted Him to carry me down this unexpected path. No matter where it might lead.

I remember telling Kathleen I did not want a memorial service because only a handful of people would come. And then it started. The outpouring of love that I never saw coming. Cards and calls and visits and meals and prayer chains. Our refrigerator was overflowing with your generosity. The love and support and grace has been unfathomable. Hundreds of people have been and still are praying for me and that has made all the difference. Hundreds of individual acts of kindness. The love of Jesus at work! God's grace being lived out by ordinary people. Each of us can be a miracle. Love heals. Prayer heals. I am living proof.

So, I heard my diagnosis 21 months ago. There were some hard times. I went down to 149 pounds; lost most of my hair. BUT -- I'm still here and Jesus and I are still talking and trusting. I don't know how much time I have left -- none of us do, but I am so blessed by the time I have been given. So blessed by the love of Jesus, manifested through you.

In so many ways God has used me as an example of what a personal relationship with Jesus really means. What it looks like to let go and give your life to Him. My cancer -- and my response to it -- has inspired people. Hard for me to believe, but it's true. I have heard that from family, friends and even pastors. It's not me. It's Christ working through me. And he is working through you, too.

Now I remain an active Christian. We have so many wonderful people in our lives. So many truly AMAZING friends. I still have a long way to go, but my faith has carried me this far and I know it will serve me going forward, no matter where that takes us -- Jesus and me.

DeColores

WHAT MAKES A GOOD SPONSOR FOR THE WALK TO EMMAUS?

With our Spring Walks currently scheduled for March 3-6 (Men's Walk #158) and March 10-13 (Women's Walk #158) as well as a make-up Men's Walk #157 January 27-30 at Camp Geneva, many of you are considering being a sponsor.

Good sponsorship is vital to the Emmaus movement within our Aldersgate Community. When we become a sponsor, we pass the Emmaus experience from person to person, reflecting the relational nature of God and the manner in which God purposefully reaches out to people through people.

- Good sponsorship uses discernment in inviting and recruiting participants. Good sponsors don't simply set out to recruit anyone with a willingness to attend.
- Good sponsorship is the first act of agape.
- Good sponsorship demonstrates sacrificial love on behalf of each pilgrim and provides personal acts of agape during the event through acts of agape including prayer, agape letters, supportive presence at Candlelight, Closing and Fourth Day activities.

As a sponsor, our aims are to bring spiritual revitalization to Christians who, in turn, will bring new life and vision to the work of the church in their congregations, homes, schools, workplaces and communities.

WHOM DO WE SPONSOR?

The Walk to Emmaus is for active Christians and church members whose personal renewal will bring fresh energy, commitment, and vision to the church and everyday environment for Christ's sake.

The sponsorship could include the following:

- Church leaders (pastors and laity)
- Dependable church members who serve as the quiet backbone of the church
- Less active members who need their awareness of grace rekindled and their commitments renewed
- Christians who hunger for "something more" and want to grow spiritually

As a Sponsor, we must be aware that the Walk to Emmaus is right for many people-BUT not for all people. Some examples of questionable sponsorship are these:

- Non-Christians or persons with no interest in the Christian faith or the church
- Christians whose theology and/or practice totally differs from the traditional theology and practices represented by Emmaus. This includes Christians who have specific dietary restrictions and Sabbath celebrations that the Emmaus experience cannot provide, members of groups who will feel a need to defend the uniqueness of their beliefs throughout the event and persons who do not share beliefs in traditional doctrines of the faith basic to the major denominations of the church and to the Emmaus ministry.
- Persons undergoing an emotional crisis.
- Persons whose behavior pattern is to disrupt
- Persons whose family members do not want them to participate
- "Church Hoppers"; members who frequently have an axe to grind with the church
- Persons who are always seeking another spiritual high or experience to help them "arrive"

Are you willing to serve our Community as a Sponsor? Remember, recruiting and helping your Pilgrim complete the application/reservation are not the end of your responsibilities.

Once you have prayed about asking a specific person or couple that you feel are ready, you meet with them privately to discuss more in-depth what they will experience without giving away the content of the weekend. Confirm that they are interest, complete their application and submit it to the Aldersgate Board Registrar. If they are unable to afford the full application fee, contact your church, cluster group for financial assistance. We never want to turn away anyone that cannot afford the expense. We, the Aldersgate Community have scholarship monies also available to assist in meeting the financial expenses. Continue to spend time with them and be available for discussion and reassurance. While your Pilgrim is in attendance, you will need to handle whatever responsibilities arise. Keep in touch with their family and reassure them that things are going well. Sign up for a slot on the Prayer Clock, be present at Sponsor's hour, Candlelight and Closing. Encourage their participation in Fourth Day Activities. Help to connect them to Reunion Groups, Cluster meetings and especially encourage them to serve on future teams.

Now is the time to become proactive and recruit and sponsor. Our community can only grow stronger if we take an active role in spreading God's love.

DeColores!

Frank Pifer, Walk #141 Table of Luke

Board Treasurer, Community Trainer

A Word From “Doc” Hall About COVID-19

Tuesday, April 20, 2021

The pandemic has affected Emmaus Ministries in various ways. Some communities had to completely shut down, and many of them had trouble staying connected to ministry activities that were important to them. Other communities managed to use technology to stay connected through Virtual Gatherings and Reunion Groups. We can only speculate about what the pandemic and the changes it has brought about will mean for the future of these ministries.

My experience with COVID

From the beginning of the pandemic, I've been careful to follow the rules where I live. I was not overly cautious as many people have been, but I wore a mask and washed my hands regularly. I tried to keep a safe distance from people around me. I often told others that I was not following all these precautions just for myself but in hopes that I would not spread COVID to anyone.

On February 25, 2021, I started feeling under the weather. I struggled through the weekend, feeling worse every day. On Monday, March 1, I tested positive for COVID-19. Okay, fabulous—let's just get through this, right? Not quite!

On Friday, March 5, my daughter took me to the emergency room, where they rushed me to the hospital COVID unit under severe respiratory distress. COVID attacked every weakness of my body, not only respiratory and gastrointestinal, but my blood sugar stayed over 350, and my blood pressure ran about 190/110 for most of the next five days. I was miserable and only saw three nurses and two doctors while I was hospitalized. When I was released and allowed to return home, the first thing I did was hug my wife and daughter fiercely! Then I put my oxygen tube on and went back to bed. I could not return to work until March 22, and even then, I had to pace myself for the first two weeks. I lost 40 pounds—all muscle—in two weeks and still struggle with lingering side effects even today.

My friends, this experience scared me! I continue to wear my mask and take precautions even though most restrictions have been lifted in the area where I live, and I supposedly have immunity for 90 days. I *still* do not want to take even the slightest chance that I could cause someone else to get sick!

I encourage all Emmaus Ministries Communities to continue to be vigilant. Err on the side of caution—you don't want your event to forever be known as “The COVID Walk,” or Flight, or Encounter, or Gathering! Following your local, county, state, national, and Centers for Disease Control guidelines is the safest way to progress when your community Board decides it is time to begin in-person events again. Here is a PDF with advice for moving forward: [“Guidance for Emmaus Ministries in a Post-COVID World.”](#) I want to emphasize two points:

- **Form a task force** of lay and clergy people familiar with the environment in which the community hosts events. Look at event schedules with the facility in mind and find where problems could occur (potential bottlenecks, limit on the number of participants to maintain safe distances, increase in sanitization policies, etc.).
- **Check with your insurance carrier.** We have not heard of any carriers who are offering COVID riders on liability policies. It is always appropriate and important for us to be prudent and cautious when it comes to the well-being of our team members and participants. I can only say again, Please..., please be careful and vigilant in doing all you can to prevent others from becoming ill!

Thanks for listening.



Hess B. “Doc” Hall, Jr.
Assistant Director of Emmaus Ministries



Guidance for Emmaus Ministries Communities in a Post-COVID World

As the vaccine for COVID-19 has begun to be available, Emmaus Ministries communities continue to reach out to the International Office for guidance.

As a basis for conversation, we want to inform you that The Upper Room as a whole continues to exercise, and to invite its constituents to exercise, prudence and caution. In 2020 Discipleship Ministries and The Upper Room took bold measures to ensure the health and wellbeing of not only its employees, but also all our partners in ministry by having all staff begin a work-from-home plan and to close our building to visitors and staff. This has since become a permanent work-from-home scenario and reduction in use of our building. There is also a halt on all travel until mid-2021 to assist as well.

At this time, with global infection numbers approaching 100 million and death numbers in the United States alone over 400,000, we want to again advise great caution and discernment in plans to begin offering full 4th Day experiences as we have in the past. As the vaccine becomes more widely available the ability to return to a new normal will be more accessible. But, until that time, we will continue to advise following the Wisconsin Council of Churches release in the midst of the pandemic; *"The way forward will not be a matter of following a timetable, but of faithfully discerning the signs of the times, and responding accordingly."*

Therefore, as local Emmaus Ministries Communities deliberate, we want to encourage you to:

- **be sensitive to the above-mentioned concerns.**

- prayerfully seek divine guidance on the most appropriate season, location, and conditions in which events will be held.

- to keep **the physical, mental, and spiritual wellbeing of potential team members and participants at the forefront of any decision.** The last thing any community wants is to have an event be forever known as "the COVID Walk (Flight, Encounter, etc)."

- **Check with your Insurance carrier.** We have not heard of any carriers who are offering a COVID rider on Liability policies. However, we have heard of communities who have hosted events in the last year and have become "super-spreaders" of the virus. These communities have no insurance to fall back on as the carriers are saying these events are not covered due to the community going against Federal, State, and Community mandates.

- **form a Task Force** of both Lay and Clergy who are familiar with the environment in which the community hosts events. This Task Force will look at event schedules with the facility in mind and find where problems could possibly occur (bottlenecks, limit of numbers of participants to maintain safe distances, increase in sanitization policies, etc.) and recommend changes.

- ensure that team members will be in the best possible position to contribute to the development of an environment of grace in which participants will experience God's amazing love and grace in new and life changing ways. o Some excellent information is available from the CDC website. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/index.html>

Where the decision is taken to continue to host events, local Emmaus Ministries Communities will need:

A- To adhere to Federal recommendations for gatherings.

o <https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/governorsoffice-documents/House%20of%20Worship%20Guidance%20FBCI.pdf>

o <https://www.asafenashville.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Fifth-Amended-and-Restated-Order-12-FINAL-SIGNED-30-Dec-20-1.pdf>

B- To follow YOUR States recommendations for gatherings – A TN example is provided below.

C- To abide to Local recommendations for gatherings – A Nashville example is provided below.

D- **Respect the facility's (retreat center, camp ...) policies.**

There are some wonderful resources for spiritual wellness in anxious times available from The Upper Room at the link- <https://www.upperroom.org/COVID-19>

As God's people, more than ever, we are confident that the things we hope for will become reality. To this end, in our effort to honor God, team members and participants, together with our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world, will continue to seek divine guidance for the work that lies ahead of us.

Much grace and peace going forward.

De Colores!

Six Steps for Properly Cleaning and Disinfecting Your School

Protect Your School Against COVID-19

Properly cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and objects can help safely and effectively reduce the spread of disease in your school or facility. Routinely clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.

- ✓ **Always wear gloves and other personal protective equipment (PPE)** appropriate for the chemicals being used. The PPE may include eye protection
- ✓ **Cleaning and disinfection products should not be used by or near students.**
- ✓ **Make sure that there is adequate ventilation (air flow) when using chemical products** to prevent yourself or others from inhaling toxic vapors.



Step 1:
Visit [epa.gov/listn](https://www.epa.gov/listn)
or scan the QR code
with your smart
phone to see EPA's
list of approved
disinfectants.



Step 2:
Follow the
directions on the
label carefully.



Step 3:
Clean surfaces and
determine how
areas will
be disinfected.



Step 4:
Follow the contact
time shown on
the label.



Step 5:
After cleaning and
disinfection, wash
your hands with
soap and water for
at least 20 seconds.



Step 6:
Store chemicals in
a secure location
away from
students' reach
and sight.



[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)