

GREATER DAYTON EMMAUS

450 ALEX-BELL RD. CENTERVILLE, OH 45459



DECEMBER 2022

*For to us a Child is born,
to us a Son is given...*
Isaiah 9:6-7



The Unknown Gift

It was a cold and wintery night in Piqua, Ohio. My father got home from work after stopping by George's Dairy Queen to pick out our Christmas tree. But he had forgotten one thing, the sand.

When I was a kid, we would stick the end of the tree into a 5-gallon bucket of sand, then water it throughout the season, hoping fewer needles would find their way into the green shag carpet of our modest living room. Placed on top of a 2' x 2' piece of plywood, the bucket would keep our tree standing upright until after the first of the year.

Since I had not been part of the tree selection process, I begged to go with him to the gravel yard to get the sand (I'm sure he had made an arrangement). At a mere eight-years-old, I wanted to be responsible, grown up, and help my dad. With six to seven inches of snow already on the ground, it was promising to be a white Christmas.

We ventured out into the darkness in Dad's Ohio Bell pickup truck. He brought two buckets: the five gallon and a one gallon. I remember watching him fill the one with the other as I sat in the truck, staying warm.

Soon, we began our way home until the truck suddenly stopped running. Try as he may, it would not restart, and it left us with only one alternative: walk home.

I still remember traipsing through snow. Few sidewalks had been shoveled. I remember trying to carry one bucket, but it was too heavy with its load of sand. I remember being cold, walking behind my dad for it seemed like forever.

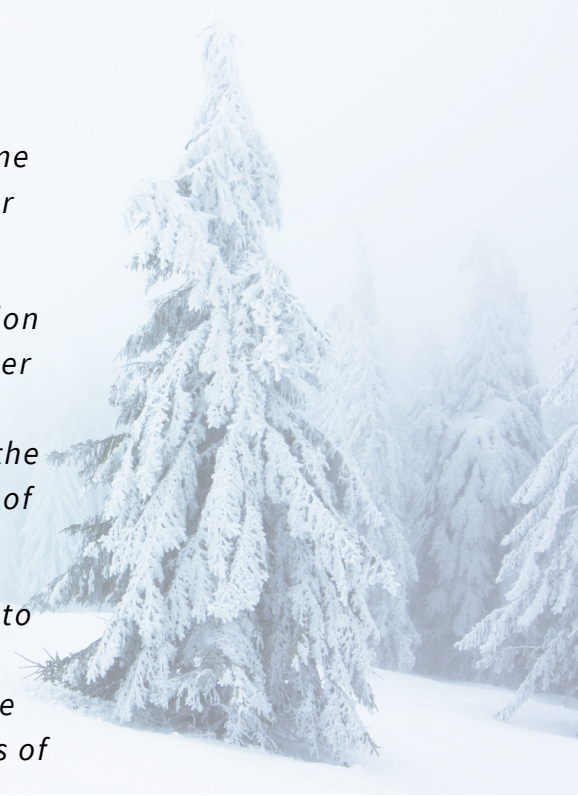
I checked out Google Map just now. It was seven-tenths of a mile, but it felt like a dozen. It was a long and painful walk.

I have also walked another path, one through the streets of the old city of Jerusalem. Called the Via Dolorosa, the "Way of Suffering," it is a half mile trek from the Antonia Fortress to the traditional site of Golgotha, where Jesus carried His cross to His crucifixion. I have stopped at the fourteen stations, places where the Bible and tradition record things happened. I went contemplatively, sometimes weeping, reflecting on what my Savior went through for me, even when I was eight-years-old and knew nothing of His sacrifice.


For many, the greatest gift ever given is still unknown. People are struggling the pathway through the problems and storms of life—wary, miserable, lost—without the knowledge of a Savior that has already walked the way for them.

Midst all the hype, celebration, joy, and yes, the self-centeredness of Christmas, don't forget the eight-year-old—or eighty-year-old—who is stranded and doesn't know anything about the gift.

Gary Wheeler
Spiritual Director



From the Community Lay Director



Greetings Friends! *This time of year is a favorite for many as children anticipate the coming of Christmas, time off from school and looking forward to snow falling. While parents and adults may rush around trying to find a particular gift for their children and special people in their lives as expressions of our love for others.*

Some find it a difficult time as they miss a loved one who has passed, and this will be the first Christmas spent without their familiar presence and voice.

Our hearts may be filled with many different emotions as we spend time during this Advent season preparing ourselves and our family to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, as well as remembrances of past Christmases.

We read in Isaiah 9:6 that foretold the coming of Jesus Christ: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

Seven hundred years later, in Luke 2:10-14, we read "...the angel said to them, "...I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ...Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." God had fulfilled His promise to send a Savior that would reconcile us back to Himself and end our separation from Him due to sin.

Christmas is indeed a time of joy and of hope as we remember what God has done for every single person on this earth -- offering reconciliation with our Creator God, a personal relationship with the Creator of the Universe who loves each of us way beyond our understanding, who gave us the Greatest Gift of all time in Jesus Christ, who later died for you and me to cleanse us from all of our sins yesterday, today, and tomorrow so that we can live with God not only in Eternity, but to have life in abundance now, here on earth. Jesus said in John 10:10b, "I came that they may have life, and have it in abundance" [to the full, 'til it overflows].

We remember our original Walk to Emmaus when Jesus met us right where we were, and we experienced God's abundant, unending love in a new way through the Body of Christ. Each of us felt a new, burning desire to strive to be the person God created us to be and we began to truly understand that each of us is created in the image of God "...to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Eph 2:10). Part of those good works is for us to help the Lord with His Emmaus ministry to reenergize leaders in our local churches for God's purposes and to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to more and more people in the Greater Dayton Community.

Friends our winter Emmaus Walks at Normandy UMC begin in just over a month and we need your help!

Continued on next page.



****Learn from the website:**

Click "EXPLORE EMMAUS" on the top navigation, then "Vision and Strategy" to learn about Emmaus Church Talking Points, Why Join a Share Group, and Recruiting Pilgrims.

Learn how to be a better sponsor by clicking "SERVE CHRIST" on top navigation and then "How to be a great sponsor!"



daytonemmaus.org

First, we need your help in registering many more pilgrims for Men's Walk #69 in January and Women's Walk #109 in February 2023. Please continue to talk to those 2 or 3 close friends, your church leaders, etc. about the benefits you found on your own Emmaus Walk including helping you to develop your personal call to discipleship and renewing your personal commitment and active support for your various church or your community's ministries. Ask your pastor to let you give your 2-minute testimony to your congregation on an upcoming Sunday and let the congregation know that you would be honored to sponsor them, including your pastor!

Second, we also need your help in expanding the number of Share Groups in the Greater Dayton area so pilgrims off future walks will have a better opportunity to find a group near where they live. If you are also looking for a Share Group, you can contact your Table Leader from your original walk, one or two people from your table or from your church to form a group, or join an existing Share Group. You can also contact our Good Shepherd, Che McGowan, at phone 216- 857-8109 or email goodshepherd@daytonemmaus.org. To see just some of the benefits to you and your church from being in a Share Group, go to Vision and Strategy | Greater Dayton Emmaus and click on "Why Join a Share Group".

Our next two Emmaus Walks will be at Normandy UMC, 450 W Alex Bell Rd, Centerville, OH 45459:

Men's Walk # 69, January 19-22, 2023

Men's Registrar: Steve Holmes, 937-681-1986, or email mensregistrar@daytonemmaus.org

Women's Walk #109, February 16-19, 2023

Women's Registrar: Lisa Keller, 937-684-3856, or email womensregistrar@daytonemmaus.org

To sponsor a pilgrim, please contact the registrars above, see "How to be a great sponsor" on the Dayton Emmaus website or consider attending Sponsor's Hour before Gathering at 6:30 pm in the Loggia (near the Small Chapel) at Normandy UMC, and complete a Pilgrim Registration form at Pilgrim Registration, also on the website.

Thank you for your willingness to support the next Emmaus Walks, to sponsor a pilgrim, and to continue to develop your faith journey by being involved in a Share Group. May the Lord continue to bless you and your family as you seek a closer relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Merry Christmas and DeColores,

Kirk Lehneis

Men's Walk #14, Table of Peter

Community Lay Director, Greater Dayton Emmaus

Greetings from the community agape chair

It is time to start thinking about making agape for the upcoming men's and women's walks in January and February. They will be here before we know it.

We were blessed with an overflowing amount of agape gifts for the pilgrims and teams of our last walks. Let's do it again!

This is your time to be creative in showing the pilgrims how much God loves them. If you are looking for ideas, look through the agape you received, that may help you.

Remember your name does not go on the agape gift. However, you can put the name of the church where your group is from on the agape. Our gifts are to be given in love not for recognition.

This is also the time for sponsors to start getting the agape letters together for their pilgrims. Remember: there are only to be 15 letters in the Sunday packet!

This is done for two reasons.

1. So that the pilgrims can read all the letters in the time they are given on Sunday afternoon.
2. So that each pilgrim is treated the same and no ones feels left out.

Letter agape is to be completed and brought by candle light on Saturday night so they can be put into packets if needed. If the pilgrims have all 15 letters before candle light, the sponsor will be asked to save the extra letters to give to their pilgrim as 4th day gifts on the ride home.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Enjoy your time with the Lord as you create agape for the pilgrims and team on our upcoming walks!

**De Colores,
Linda Haller
Agape Chair**



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