



Community Humble Servants

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Teresa Holderfield Walker

Spiritual Director

Gary Formby

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Deanna Shotts

Asst. Spiritual Director

John Simmons

Community Coordinator

Angel Rait

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Karen Cotton

Bob DeHaven

Tami Glenn

Jane Hagler

Clay Hammond

Sherry Johnson

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Randy Nelson

Sandy Parker

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Deanna Shotts

Melanie Skillman

Jennifer Swinney

Literature

Patricia Bush

Supplies

Amy Talton

Community Agape

Bruce Parris

Name Tags

Dan Bell

I Heard It Through the Grapevine

By Teresa Holderfield Walker, Community Lay Director

This title may make you envision dancing California raisins or maybe Gladys Knight and the Pips swaying to their #1 Billboard R&B Single. Recently the grapevine has been ringing my number because Alabama gardeners should prune muscadine grapevines heavily from December to March to ensure better fruit quality and more productive vines. Prune each year; skipping pruning can result in messy vine that bears fewer or poorer quality grapes. It is March 26 as I am typing and I have not pruned the grapevines yet. Tomorrow is Saturday, I will put it on the To Do list.

Possibly the most common verse associated with pruning in the Bible is in John 15:1-4. Jesus is speaking with his disciples in the Upper Room right before his death:

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch of mine



that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.”

(Please See Walker Page 3.)

I Am the Resurrection and the Life

By Gary Formby, Community Spiritual Director

The worse times are never the last times. I believe it was Frederick Buechner who put his view of life in these words. After a year of COVID with all its destruction combined with countless other ways that rob us of life, we need such words as Buechner's! I am writing this article on Good Friday. I am reminded that on the original Good Friday, there was nothing good about it, no good news, only bad. Evil had won which led all followers of Jesus to conclude that what had happened to Jesus is what happens to all of us, no exceptions. Jesus suffered unmercifully, so do we! Jesus was dead and that's the end, so with us! On the day he suffered and died, they learned evil wins. The day of suffering and death is the last day and the worst times are indeed the last times!

Then God speaks the word of resurrection! Jesus in body is resurrected from the dead and his followers discovered there is more to the story, not only to Jesus' life but to ours as well. This life of course comes from God as a gift to us as surely as it came to Jesus. Death does not have the last word. God has the last word. Evil doesn't win. Love wins! The sad day is not the last day. There is another day, a very glad day in our lives. God is good and while we have to wait for his goodness to be revealed in all its fullness, in Christ our wait is full of hope, peace, joy and power for living fully every day of our life! This is the gift of the resurrection in the now, as well as the future. I remember Jesus words to Martha with confidence that they were said to me as well, and to you my friend, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.” John 11: 25-26.

Life and love to you now and forever in Christ Jesus!

Gary Formby, Emmaus Community Spiritual Director

Vibrant Renewal

By Angel Rait, Community Coordinator

My daughter gave me this plant for Mother’s Day last year. It was beautiful; huge and full of vibrant purple blooms all over. Its beauty was short lived, though, because every bloom soon began to fall off. I moved the plant to the other side of the porch in different sunlight, enabling it to revive a little. Fertilizing it created another burst of color, but which also quickly faded. The blooms continued to fall off, then the leaves, then there was nothing but dead sticks. Last fall I hung the virtually dead plant in the tree by the driveway so I could reuse the pot this spring.

A few weeks ago it was warm enough for me to go on a walk. As I walked by the tree I noticed that this dead plant had some purple blooms popping out on it. I started breaking off the dead parts and talking to it about new life. When I got finished it was not full like when I first received it, but it was VIBRANT and beautiful. Each day the purple seems to get deeper and the plant healthier. Who would have ever thought that it had a chance to come back to life?

How appropriate for this to happen at this time of the year. Isn’t this what our Savior did? Didn’t he die, and go away for 3 days, only to reappear VIBRANT, beautiful and healthy?

This reminds me of Emmaus. So many come as a “basket of sticks” and leave as VIBRANT, beautiful and healthy blooms. Some would describe their experience as a chance to come back into the fold, a chance to live again, a chance to see ourselves as worthy. This Easter season is a time for us to step out of a year of being camouflaged. It is time for us to claim the victory of Jesus, to share how He has been present in a time of uncertainty. It’s a time to take the opportunity to shed our “dead stuff” and renew us looking VIBRANT, beautiful and healthy.

Although it’s only Friday, let’s celebrate because we know that Sunday is coming! Hallelujah!



SPRING CLEANING

According to Executive Director Tony Jones, Camp Sumatanga is gearing up for Summer Camp, and hopefully the return of Emmaus Walks in August. There is a lot of clean-up and fix-up work needing to be done, and your Cluster or church group could really help with that. The work may include cleaning and painting, tending flower beds and shrubs or clearing brush. To work with plumbing or electricity, you must have the qualifications. To schedule a work time and work assignments for your group, contact Tony at 256-538-9860.

Tentative 2021 Walk Schedule

<u>WALK</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>GENDER</u>
494	Aug 12-15	W
495	Aug 26-29	M
496	Sep 9-12	W
497	Oct 14-17	M

Tentative 2022 Walk Schedule

<u>WALK</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>GENDER</u>
498	Feb 10-13	W
499	Mar 3-6	W
500	Mar 17-20	M
501	April 21-24	W
502	May 19-22	W
503	June 16-19	M
504	July 7-10	M
505	Sep 8-11	W
506	Sep 22-25	W
507	Oct 20-23	M

Any needed changes to this tentative schedule will be announced at a later date.

With the 2021 Walks postponed, there will be no income for the Community until the walks resume in August. If you would like to give a love offering, please make checks to the Alabama Emmaus Community and mail them to Community Treasurer Jim Sims at 535 Sims Road, Oneonta, AL 35121.

Walker

(continued from Page 1)

The gardener in me loves the analogy of Jesus as the root and stems of a vine. We are the branches that grow from his firm base. He gives us the nutrients we need to live, branch out, and produce fruit.

I don't know about you but pruning sounds a little painful to me. God acts out of love for us. His acts of pruning are done with love, to help us grow into someone who reflects his character. "The Lord corrects those he loves, just as a father corrects a child in whom he delights." Proverbs 3:12

We are pruned to strengthen our character and strengthen our faith. We should think of God's pruning as a positive, even if there is some pain involved. Pruning sharpens our focus on how God wants our lives to look. Would you rather He neglect you? Of course not! Look at his pruning as a blessing in your life.

God's timing in his pruning is always perfect. In comparing to my poor vines, if I don't get to snipping these long gangling branches will run on the ground and have a criss-cross network and produce nothing and take up space in my garden plot. Looking at myself I see the pruning process addresses bad habits and distractions that need to be pruned out of my life. If left unchecked and unpruned they will drag me down. Prune away anything that competes with God in your life. Don't let fear or weakness stop you from doing the necessary pruning we need. God is with us daily encouraging us, loving us and shaping us. Isn't that what the pruning process is all about?

Thank you Lord for the pruning work you do in the branches of our lives that produce the lasting fruit that brings you the glory. Amen!

DeColores!

The Grapevine

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BOARD BITS

The Alabama Emmaus Board has a tentative plan to resume Walks in August. This plan will be evaluated in May. As was noted in the December 2020 issue, the maximum number of Pilgrims per Walk is now 21. This will allow for any distancing that may still be required with five at each table. With this lower number, the Board historically lowered the number of pieces of agape requested from 80 to 60.

In 2020, with no income from Walks after March, the Board stopped printing and mailing The Grapevine newsletter and began publishing it digitally. It is now emailed to Board Members and Cluster Leaders with the request that these leaders make the necessary hard copies for those who are not able to access the document electronically. In addition, the Board has made the decision to ask that each Walk Team print the 21 copies needed for their Pilgrims' packets.

Please keep the Alabama Emmaus Board in your prayers as they make the necessary decisions in the next few months regarding Walks.

Praying For You

Our heartfelt sympathy is extended to members of the Emmaus Community and their families in the loss of loved ones.

To **Nita Livingston (247)** and **Kathy Dark (247)** in the loss of their sister, Ann Ficquette

To **Ed Johnson (90)** in the loss of his wife, **Norine Johnson (88)**

To **Delores Childree (236)** in the loss of her husband, **George Childree (237)**

To **Greta Ayres (214)** in the loss of her husband, **Charlie Ayres (212)**

To **Don Gordon (24)** in the loss of his wife, **Jerry Gordon (25)**

To the family of **Scott Aldredge (78)**

To the family of **L.O. Boyett (136)**