

Northwest Georgia Walk to Emmaus

December 2017



Northwest Georgia Walk to Emmaus - For the Development of Christian Leaders. www.nwgwte.com

Greetings Emmaus Community,

WOW!!! Where has the time gone? It is hard to believe that we are in the last month of the year and Christmas is just around the corner. This is a very busy time of the year for most of us. There are the Christmas parties to attend, kids', and grandkids' functions at school and church. Then the list of things you need to complete before company comes. Oh and let us not forget we only have this many shopping days left. Although by the time you read this article you may have completed all your shopping with black Friday and Cyber Monday sales over. Of course let me not forget the wrapping of presents. I do wrap them but I use bags and boxes a lot too. With all that is going on, I pray you take time to pause with your family and reflect on the true meaning of Christmas.

God has put so many wonderful people in my life because of my Emmaus/Chrysalis involvement. Working a weekend for me is like waking up Christmas morning. You know that excitement you have, because you are not sure if you will receive the gift you really want. Participating in team meetings and working weekends, well it is different every time and the gift of love is deeper at Emmaus/Chrysalis than anywhere else I have ever been. God's love is real and radiates from you. So seeing you and working a walk together allows us to see and feel that love. At one Chrysalis weekend, we had Christmas in July. It was an awesome reminder that Jesus came to walk along side of us every day not just one day a year. We even had a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus, and they reminded us about the true meaning of Christmas. Enjoy, this little story the author is unknown but the words are so true.

Teach the children...

Late one Christmas Eve, I sank back, tired but content, into my easy chair. The kids were in bed, the gifts were wrapped, the milk and cookies waited by the fireplace for Santa. As I sat back admiring the tree with its decorations, I couldn't help feeling that something important was missing. It wasn't long before the tiny twinkling tree lights lulled me to sleep.

I don't know how long I slept, but all of a sudden I knew that I wasn't alone. I opened my eyes, and you can imagine my surprise when I saw Santa Claus himself standing next to my Christmas tree. He was dressed all in fur from his head to his foot just as the poem described him, but he was not the "jolly old elf" of Christmas legend. The man who stood before me looked sad and disappointed, and there were tears in his eyes.

"Santa, what's wrong?" I asked, "Why are you crying?"

"It's the children," Santa replied sadly.

"But Santa, the children love you," I said.

"Oh, I know they love me, and they love the gifts I bring them," Santa said, "but the children of today seem to have somehow missed out on the true spirit of Christmas. It's not their fault. It's just that the adults, many of them not having been taught themselves, have forgotten to teach the children."

"Teach them what?" I asked.

Santa's kind old face became soft, more gentle. His eyes began to shine with something more than tears. He spoke softly. "Teach the children the true meaning of Christmas. Teach them that the part of Christmas we can see, hear, and touch is much more than meets the eye. Teach them the symbolism behind the customs and traditions of Christmas which we now observe. Teach them what it is they truly represent."

Santa reached into his bag and pulled out a tiny Christmas tree and set it on my mantle. "Teach them about the Christmas tree. Green is the second color of Christmas. The stately evergreen, with its unchanging color, represents the hope of eternal life in Jesus. Its needles point heavenward as a reminder that mankind's thoughts should turn heavenward as well."

Santa reached into his bag again and pulled out a shiny star and placed it at the top of the small tree. "The star was the heavenly sign of promise. God promised a Savior for the world and the star was the sign of the fulfillment of that promise on the night that Jesus Christ was born. Teach the children that God always fulfills His promises, and that wise men still seek Him."

"Red," said Santa, "is the first color of Christmas." He pulled forth a red ornament for the tiny tree. "Red is deep, intense, vivid. It is the color of the life-giving blood that flows through our veins. It is the symbol of God's greatest gift. Teach the children that Christ gave His life and shed His blood for them that they might have eternal life. When they see the color red, it should remind them of that most wonderful Gift."

Santa found a silver bell in his pack and placed it on the tree. "Just as lost sheep are guided to safety by the sound of the bell, it continues to ring today for all to be guided to the fold. Teach the children to follow the true Shepherd, who gave His life for the sheep."

Santa placed a candle on the mantle and lit it. The soft glow from its one tiny flame brightened the room. "The glow of the candle represents how people can show their thanks for the gift of God's Son that Christmas Eve long ago. Teach the children to follow in Christ's foot steps... to go about doing good. Teach them to let their light so shine before people that all may see it and glorify God. This is what is symbolized when the twinkling lights shine on the tree like hundreds of bright, shining candles, each of them representing one of God's precious children, their light shining for all to see."

Again Santa reached into his bag and this time he brought forth a tiny red and white striped cane. As he hung it on the tree he spoke softly. "The candy cane is a stick of hard white candy: white to symbolize the virgin birth and sinless nature of Jesus, and hard to symbolize the Solid Rock the foundation of the church, and the firmness of God's promises. The candy cane is in the form of a 'J' to represent the precious name of Jesus, who came to earth. It also represents the Good Shepherd's crook, which He uses to reach down into the ditches of the world to lift out the fallen lambs who, like all sheep, have gone astray. The original candy cane had three small red stripes, which are the stripes of the scourging Jesus received by which we are healed, and a large red stripe that represents the shed blood of Jesus, so that we can have the promise of eternal life."

"Teach these things to the children."

Santa brought out a beautiful wreath made of fresh, fragrant greenery tied with a bright red bow. "The bow reminds us of the bond of perfection, which is love. The wreath embodies all the good things about Christmas for those with eyes to see and hearts to understand. It contains the colors of red and green and the heaven-turned needles of the evergreen. The bow tells the story of good will towards all and its color reminds us of Christ's sacrifice. Even its very shape is symbolic, representing eternity and the eternal nature of Christ's love. It is a circle, without beginning and without end. These are the things you must teach the children."

I asked, "But where does that leave you, Santa?"

The tears gone now from his eyes, a smile broke over Santa's face. "Why bless you, my dear," he laughed, "I'm only a symbol myself. I represent the spirit of family fun and the joy of giving and receiving. If the children are taught these other things, there is no danger that I'll ever be forgotten."

"I think I'm beginning to understand."

"That's why I came," said Santa. "You're an adult. If you don't teach the children these things, then who will?"

Merry Christmas Emmaus/Chrysalis Family

DeColores

Judi Rainey

Northwest Georgia Walk to Emmaus

Community Lay Director

678-416-9440

DeColores

Clergy Corner



GRINCH AND BEAR IT!

A recent government survey has confirmed what many feared. Not only are they alive, but they are doing well. Yes, research has proven the existence of Grinches. Of course, they are not green and fuzzy as Dr. Seuss would have you believe. No, Grinches are grumpy, human looking creatures. They can be found most anywhere; especially in churches and (God forbid) sometimes in Emmaus Communities.

For dozens of decades, Grinches have been plentifully parked in pews. They sit muttering about the pudgy pastor, new hymns, or the color of this or the temperature of that. The scary part is these Grinches look a lot like you and me.

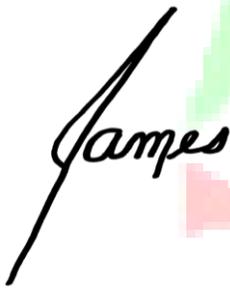
Below is a Grinch Diagnostic Exam that reveals hidden Grinch traits. According to researchers, answering "Yes" to three or more questions indicates a high Grinch potential. Be forewarned, I took this test myself and scored a 6+.

1. Has putting a Christmas tree in its stand ever involved cursing and a two day cooling off period?
2. Would you rather clean your bathroom instead going to visiting in-laws?
3. Does Christmas make you mean more than the meaning of Christmas make you nice?
4. During the Christmas season, does your debt increase more than your faith?
5. Have you ever punched, kicked, or been rude to an elf?
6. Do you ever feel resentment when church interferes with your Christmas plans?

7. Has "having a chunk of lights go out on your pre-lit Christmas tree" ever sent you into a hysterical frenzy or resulted in an emergency room visit for you or someone you love?
8. Do you use side store entrances to avoid bell ringing Salvation Army members?
9. Do you have a smallish dog named Max with an antler tied to his head?

Fear not! There is hope. Each year I watch Dr. Seuss' mythological character discover the true meaning of Christmas. His grumpiness melts. His heart grows. He learns to share and care. Sitting at the Table of John in 1997, my heart grew three sizes in one day. If the Grinch can do it, maybe there is hope for us. Do you have too much stuff between you and true meaning of Christmas? Hurrah! Jesus came for us Grinches one and all. As Christmas comes, let us take this opportunity to "de-grinchify" our hearts. Pray for me and I'll pray for you.

Your Christ-loving servant,



Rev. James Gwinch

One of your Community Spiritual Co-directors

Upcoming Weekend Info.

- ✚ **NWGWTE Men's Walk #58** will be held on March 1-4, 2018. The Lay Director for this weekend will be Gary Grenier: gardongre@aol.com or 770-505-7481
- ✚ **NWGWTE Women's Walk #61** will be held on March 8-11, 2018. The Lay Director for this weekend will be Marcia Dillard: marciadillard@gmail.com or 678-232-2451

Please be in prayer for these weekends. Please be praying regarding potential pilgrims you can sponsor. Please pray about serving on these weekends. Sign-up sheets will be available at upcoming Gatherings. Please feel free to contact the upcoming Lay Directors to volunteer to work as well.



Welcome New Board Members

At our November Gathering, we elected new Board members for the upcoming year. The following community members were elected, and will be serving on the board in the upcoming year:

- + Guppy Gladstone
- + Ron Dishman
- + Bonnie Standridge
- + Marcia Dillard
- + Janice Russell
- + Fran Davis

All Board Members and their spouses are invited and encouraged to attend our Board Christmas dinner/training on Tuesday, December 12th at 6:00 at the home of Donna Lucas, our community Spiritual Director. Please be looking for an email with the information for this meeting.

King's Retreat Trustees needed:

The King's Retreat Board of Trustees serves as a committee of the Northwest Georgia Walk to Emmaus Board. The trustees are responsible to the board for the ongoing care and maintenance of the King's Retreat. The board of Trustees is made of twelve volunteers, each serving a three year term.

The board will have openings for two new trustees for terms beginning in January 2018. The trustees meet monthly at Powers Ferry UMC in Marietta with the exception of the January meeting which will be held at the King's Retreat. If you are interested in possibly serving on the board of trustees, please contact Judi Rainey: judi.rainey@yahoo.com or 678-416-9440.



and
suddenly
there was with
the *angel*
a multitude of
the heavenly host
praising God
and saying
Glory to God
in the highest, and on earth
peace, goodwill towards
men
Luke 2
13-14

*You're
Invited*

DUE TO THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS, THERE WILL NOT BE A DECEMBER GATHERING!
May your family have a blessed Christmas celebrating the birth of our Savior.

Please make plans to attend our January Gathering which will be held Saturday, January 20th, at Love Community Church.
5598 Bells Ferry Rd.
Acworth, GA 30102

Graze at 6:00 (bring a covered dish to share), and Praise at 7:00.
Childcare will be provided.
Directions will be available on the website.

Gathering Hosts Needed

We are looking for churches that are willing to host Gatherings for the upcoming year! If you are interested, or would like more information, please contact Linda Wallace. We currently have churches booked to host Gatherings through March of 2018, but are always looking for host churches for the following months as well.

linda.wallace66@gmail.com

Communication Updates

There are several ways to communicate and stay in touch with your NWGWTE community:

- + Visit our website www.nwgwte.com to find applications, upcoming walk information, Gathering directions, and other community info.
- + Like us on Facebook:
"Northwest Georgia Walk to Emmaus"
- + Email us at nwgwtenews@gmail.com to share any prayer requests or contributions for the monthly newsletter.

We look forward to hearing from you, and staying in touch in the future!



2017 Board Members

Position	Name	Contact Information
*Chair/Training	Judi Rainey	judi.rainey@yahoo.com
*Vice-Chair/Website Manager	Mike Amsbaugh	mike.amsbaugh@gmail.com
*Secretary/Newsletter	Katie Fowler	katie.fowler@carrollcountyschools.com nwgtnews@gmail.com
*Treasurer	Susan Davis	Susan.Davis@childressklein.com
*Community Spiritual	Donna Lucas	donnatlucas@comcast.net
Asst. Spiritual	Rich Arcaro	iwitnesslegal@comcast.net
Asst. Spiritual	James Gwin	jamesrgwin@gmail.com
Agape	Melody Crowe	bornhigh38@yahoo.com
Send-Off/Candlelight	Chuck Standridge	wcsjr3@comcast.net
Set-Up/Take Down	Roger Hitchcock	augustusmayday@gmail.com
Gatherings	Linda Wallace	lindajwallace66@gmail.com
Follow-Up/ King's Retreat Board Rep	Bill Rhodes	billthetreeman@gmail.com
Kitchen/Chrysalis Rep.	Lori Haney	lorijhaney@comcast.net
Literature & Supplies/Music/ King's Retreat Board Rep	Gayle Watkins	gaylewtkns@gmail.com
Registration	Winnie Buchanan	winnie19@bellsouth.net
Ex-Officio	Gary Henkel	gthenkel3@gmail.com
Women's Team Selection	Bonnie Standridge	bonniestandridge@aol.com
Men's Team Selection	Phil Cole	folkstonefarm1996@yahoo.com
Sponsorship/Group Reunions	Calvin Waddell	clw1967@comcast.net

* Denotes Executive Board members