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## TALES FROM THE OLE WEST

I can't believe that this year is coming to an end, and how fast it has gone by. I have been Community Chair for a year, one of the many things I said I could never do. Now I know that God had a different plan. One of the big concerns I had about being the Community Chair was the fact that I would have to write newsletter articles each month. I'm not a writer, I can't spell, and what would I write about? We all know how the Lord works, and when I answered His call by saying yes to be the Community Chair, He began to lift my concerns by putting thoughts and topic ideas in my head. Many times I would be driving along in the car or watching television and a thought would come to mind. Not overwhelming topics but ones on which I could do a little research and put something on paper. Topics that the Lord lead me to write.

The Lord blessed me through these twelve months by being by my side through the gather-

ings, the board meetings, and the daily activities of the Emmaus Community. Another blessing comes from the other board members who support and work for the community to make the Emmaus experience happen successfully. I was truly blessed to be the Community Chair and I pray that I was able to share my blessings with someone in some way.

The song comes to mind to "Count your blessings, name them one by one, count your many blessing see what God has done". We know what God has done, by giving us the greatest blessing of all, His Son, Jesus Christ. But what have we done with what God has blessed us with? Blessings come in many forms. Webster says a blessing is "the act of one that blesses; a thing conducive to happiness or welfare". Blessings are not just material things, but come in many forms such as knowledge, wisdom, friendships, daily activities, food—the list goes on and on. Stop and think about how many prayer request are sent up to our Lord in a day and the number of these requests

that are granted. They are all answered in God's time and in the ways that only God knows. The one blessing that we have is the ability to ask for God's blessing for whatever needs we feel we must have. God knows our needs more than we do and many times we think that He has not blessed us, but in fact He has and we don't even know it at the time. Though someone can pray for a blessing, that doesn't mean they will receive it. In James 1:17, "Every good and perfect gift is from heaven above". This can be interpreted as meaning that if someone isn't ready for the situation involving the blessing they pray for, they will not receive it. It will be in God's time. What we understand as a blessing is only a very small understanding of what God has ready for those who love Him. In Isaiah 64:3-4: "For when you did awesome things we did not expect, you came down, and the mountains trembled before you. Since ancient times, no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen (continued on page 2)

SWAN SONG

**QUICK  
MESSAGE**

**Think  
about  
MEN'S  
WALK  
PILGRIMS**

## Tales (continued)

any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for Him."

God has a plan for each of us, the blessings that we receive, and the time at which we receive them are gifts from God. If we don't share those gifts we are doing God an injustice. These gifts from God are not ours alone but are to be shared and be passed forward and used for His service. These gifts come in many unique forms, talents and abilities. It does not matter whether we have been given great talents, abilities and wealth, or very little. What matters to God is whether we make good use of what we have been given, we put them to good use, whether it be large or small, and whether we say yes to God's calling. Romans 12:6-8: "We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully."

And now for me, one of the greatest blessings I could imagine is coming to an end. I can't begin to tell you what a blessing and a privilege this past year has been for me. A year ago I was sit-

ting in the back of the sanctuary being content to be a spectator and saying what a good job Cindy Bloom was doing. And then the Lord spoke to her and to me when she ask if I would consider being the Community Chair. I tried to come up with all kinds of excuses as to why I should not say yes. But as I said before, God has a plan for us and a blessing that we don't even know it will be a blessing. He has blessed me in so many ways: with my faith, my marriage, my family, this Emmaus community, prayer partners, and the list could go on and on. And now I have been blessed to serve as your Community Chair. Through the support of the board and the community, and the Lord at my side I have done things that I thought were impossible and improbable for me. And what I have concluded is that with God all things are possible if only you will say yes to His calling.

May God continue to bless us so that we can all have "Happy Trails."

May I wish all a Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year and remember to be A Blessing.

Happy Trails!

*Jim*



## MUSINGS FROM MAURICE

**I**t is difficult to wrap my minute mind around the concept that God, the Creator of the universe and all of life, would come to earth not only as a person, but even as a helpless infant. It reminds me of another story about a student and teacher.

I read about a girl in Africa who presented a gift to her teacher. When the teacher unwrapped the present, she found a beautiful seashell. She asked the girl where she got it and was told that they are found only on a certain beach many miles away.

The teacher was deeply touched because she knew the girl had walked many miles to find that gift. "You shouldn't have traveled so far!" she said. The girl looked into her eyes, smiled, and said, "The long walk is a part of the gift."

As with the young girl the journey Jesus made was part of the gift. He left the splendors of heaven to come to a sin filled world. And He lived as we should live and died for our sins. Consider John 1:14: **"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld His glory, glory as of the only Son of the Father."**

On December 2<sup>nd</sup> we begin to observe the season of Advent, a time to

remember why Jesus came to earth. It is a celebration of God's love. Our society has caught the beauty of the season and exploited it. Let's celebrate Jesus' birth in Bethlehem; it was part of the gift. Share the joy, share the love. Be sure your friends, and neighbors, co-workers know the reason **you** celebrate!

*Maurice*



### PRAYER LIST FROM NOVEMBER GATHERING

Tim Bageant  
John & Cindy Bloom Family  
Dave Bond  
Dinah Bond  
Sandra Daugherty  
Jennie Harner Family  
Family of Pete Little  
Clinton Pelfrey  
Amber Young



## A Story

*In a church in Houston, Texas, there is a very large painting of Jesus hanging above the altar in the chapel. In the picture, Jesus is about six feet tall and naked, covered only by floating burial clothes. His handsome face is clean-shaven, and behind him a great red cloud erupts from the earth. This painting baffles visitors as they walk in the door. Some hate it; others love it.*

*The writer who shared this story told that he came to love the painting over time. Perhaps because the face of Jesus, he learned, is the face of the artist's son, a young man who was executed for murder. Whatever your views on the death penalty, it's an arresting image. It's almost as polarizing as Jesus himself, who came to upend our expectations, to divide us and rebuke us even as he demonstrated great love. You can't make Jesus easy. He's always right there, like the painting above the altar, asking something of you, forcing you to pay attention.*

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[www.forwardmovement.org](http://www.forwardmovement.org)*

## CHRISTMAS EVE

*Psalm 46: Be still, then, and know that I am God.*

Christmas Eve, 1818, Oberndorf, Austria. In a small church, the pastor and the choir director sing a newly written carol, "Stille Nacht! Heilige Nacht." After Midnight Mass, the villagers head home, never imagining they are the first to have heard what would become one of the world's most beloved hymns.

Christmas, 1943. Tegel prison, Berlin, Germany. Theologian and defender of the faith Dietrich Bonhoeffer, imprisoned by the Nazis, joins with other prisoners singing the hymn "Peace on Earth." His heart, astoundingly, seems full of hope—even joy. Alone, in his cold cell, he writes to his fiancée: "This Christmas will show whether we can be content with what is truly essential. I used to be very fond of thinking up and buying presents, but now that we have nothing to give, the gift God gave us in the birth of Christ will seem all the more glorious...the more clearly we perceive that our hearts should be Christ's home on earth."

Christmas, 2012. Across the globe: In the silence of this holy night, the longing of Advent and the promised joy of Christmas combine. Emmanuel. God with us. Alleluia.

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## A Word of Thanks

First, I would like to take a moment to say thank you to the Board and the Community for allowing me to represent this community as your Chair for this past year. I can't begin to tell you what a blessing this has been. A special thanks to Cindy Bloom for convincing me to say yes to God's calling. Back in the year 2002, (that seems like a long time ago), I sat as a pilgrim and said that I would never ever be able to give a talk, much less be standing in front of a gathering, but God had a different plan and through prayer and support of my wife, friends, my prayer partners, clergy and the Board, I have run the whole gamut. What a blessing. So when God speaks, listen, be obedient, don't say you can't, and be blessed.

And now I have the honor to introduce to you next year's Community Chair. I've just gotten to know her this past year and I believe that she is a true servant of our Lord and will serve this community as God leads her. So as Cindy did to me; God spoke through me to let her know that God was calling **Barb Little** to say yes to be our Community Chair.

A special thanks to those board members who have answered the Lord's calling to serve the community for the past few years. They are: Cindy Bloom, Leadership; Bob and Paula Erwin, Logistics; Denise Greager, Secretary; Jerry and Sandie Quigley, Kitchen Coordinators; and Ramona Smith, Ladies' Good Shepherd.

I would also like to make welcome the new Board Members who have said yes to the Lord's calling to serve on the board for the upcoming years. I would like to welcome Barb Little as our new Community Chair, David Mains has agreed to be the Logistic Chair, Sue Harman will serve as Secretary, Shanna Hahn has agreed to be the Kitchen Coordinator and Joy Gilmore will be the Women's Good Shepherd.

I pray that we will not only support the new class of Board Members but will also keep in prayer the entire Board for the upcoming year, that the board can support the community and the Upper Room as God's hands and feet to reach out to new pilgrims and to function as Emmaus is intended.

*Jim West*

Community Chair 2012



Wilmington Area Walk to Emmaus—WUMC  
 PO Box 191  
 Wilmington, OH 45177

**SEE YOU AT THE GATHERING!  
 11 DEC**

**ALL CHRISTMAS MUSIC  
 GATHERING!!!**

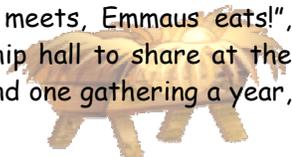
Wear your name tag!  
 Bring a snack to share!



**NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTIONS:** Watch your address label! When your "last issue" date comes close, if you wish your mailed subscription to continue, be sure to send \$6.00 to our Treasurer, Susan Thompson. You can also see her at the monthly Gathering. Remember, you can also read the newsletter online at our web site: [www.wilmingtonemmaus.org](http://www.wilmingtonemmaus.org).

**CHRISTMAS GATHERING**

The Christmas Gathering is always a wonderful celebration of our Savior's birth! A different gathering, this one is mostly music. We'll sing carols together, accompanied by organ and piano, we'll listen as our Emmaus brothers and sisters share a song, play an instrument, read a story, or even share an interpretive dance! (Actually, we've never had an interpretive dance...at least this editor has never seen one! Who knows? This year may bring the first!) Remembering why Jesus was born, we will share communion together. Then, true to the old adage, "When Emmaus meets, Emmaus eats!", we'll then retire to the fellowship hall to share at the bountiful table. If you only attend one gathering a year, this is the one not to be missed!



"I would I had in my best part  
 Fit rooms for Thee! Or that my heart  
 Were so clean as  
 Thy manger was!  
 But I am all filth, and obscene:  
 Yet, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make clean.  
 Sweet Jesu! will then. Let no more  
 This leper haunt and soil thy door!  
 Cure him, ease him,  
 O release him!  
 And let once more, by mystic birth,  
 The Lord of life be born in earth."

—Henry Vaughan

MUSIC FOR GATHERINGS

**MUSIC FOR GATHERINGS**

MONTH	SPECIAL MUSIC	INSTRUMENTALIST	SONG LEADER
Dec	Community	John Glaze/Lynn Lowell	Bronwyn Jones

To volunteer for a monthly Gathering contact JENNIE HARNER at 937-987-2518 or [harnersewing@yahoo.com](mailto:harnersewing@yahoo.com).