

**March
2023**

Billings
Walk
To
Emmaus

W2E Times

**Important
Dates!**

MEN's W2E, #82
January 18-21, 2024

WOMEN's W2E, #83
January 25-28, 2024

RETREAT
January 13, 2024
9:00 am

POTLUCK
February 3, 2024
5:00 pm

CHRISTMAS SING
December 24, 2023

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How to Keep That Lovin' Feeling



I can hear in my imagination the melodious voices of Dave, Tim, and Clark singing "You've lost that Emmaus feeling. Whoa, that Emmaus feeling; now it's gone, gone, gone, whoa, whoa, whoa. Can you relate?"

My name is Sally and the title of this article is "How to Keep That Lovin' Feeling". It has been six weeks since we spent three days immersed in, and consumed by the glorious love of Christ. Breathing deeply the agape we felt from our beautiful teams of believers, we experienced what can only be felt in our magnificent weekend sequestered from the world of social media, phones, and obligations. Unfortunately, we had to sever that umbilical cord of grace, love, and comfort food and step back into the reality of a fallen world. Ouch.

So begs the question: how do we keep that Emmaus feeling alive now that we are 4th Dayers? I sometimes feel that beautiful Emmaus feeling waning; shrinking into the horizon of the past. I do not want that; I want to cultivate and enrich that beautiful elation that was felt on the weekend.

Fortunately, we can keep that flame alive. We are all 4th Dayers on our journey now, and with that new title comes the opportunity to meet as a 4th day group. Have you joined a 4th day group yet? If you have not yet started with a 4th day group and do not know how, then please reach out to your table leader, or lay director from your walk. These are the brothers and sisters in Christ who are always there for you. Joining a 4th day group will reignite that Emmaus flame, keep you engaged in the W2E family, and propel you on your discipleship journey.

During the year we have W2E events to attend and feel again the love from the weekend. The potluck following the walk weekends was a beautiful success and a time for food, song, fellowship, and communion. The W2E family also has gatherings during the year including a summer picnic at Riverfront Park, a Fall Kick-Off and a Christmas Sing. These events also have food, song, fellowship, and communion. At these events I have enjoyed meeting men and women who have been involved in the Walk for decades. Just like the angelic group that surrounded the pilgrims and sang "Silent Night" on the path to Christmas Dinner, these other events are a gathering of 4th Dayers from the past 2,800 people who attended the Walk over the years. Make these events a priority.

Additional opportunities to keep the Emmaus flame alive are available through serving. Naturally serving at the Walk weekend is a blessing both to you and the pilgrims and teams. It does not have to be a huge commitment of the entire weekend. Hourly and daily gifts of your time are graciously accepted. The Walk to Emmaus is governed by a Board, and this Board will be filling open terms as several positions are at term completion. I serve on the Board and it is enjoyable. It is so lovely to be among the brothers and sisters in Christ, and feel the Emmaus love and grace again.

The best way to keep that lovin' feeling is to stay involved and in touch.

And now I hear Dave, Tim, and Clark singing "Don't Stop Believing. You've got that Emmaus Feeling".

Sally Birkele

SPIRITUAL THOUGHTS

If you don't learn to be happy where you are, you will never be happy where you want to be.

PBPGINFWMY – Please be patient. God is not finished with me yet.

The best thing about getting old is that all those things you couldn't have when you were young you no longer want.

Our story is not about the cause of sorrow but a response to sorrow.

You can do more than pray after you have prayed; but you can never do more than pray until you have prayed.

We refuse to be like Christ when we don't see Christ in each other.

Faith is rarely learned in comfortable places.

Failure is not an event, but rather a judgement about an event.

There are times in our life when we try filling our emptiness with things that could never satisfy our heart.

What's down in the well comes up in the pail.

When people bring up the past tell them "Jesus dropped the charges."

A Perspective About Old Barns

Only years of standing in the weather, bearing the storms and scorching sun, only that can produce beautiful barn wood.

A stranger came by the other day with an offer that set me to thinking. He wanted to buy the old barn that sits out by the highway. I told him right off he was crazy. He said he was driving by and saw that beautiful barn sitting out in the tall grass and wanted to know if it was for sale. I told him he had a funny idea of beauty.

Sure, it was a handsome building in its day. But then, there's been a lot of winters pass with their snow and ice and howling wind. The summer sun's beat down on that old barn till all the paint's gone, and the wood has turned silver gray. Now the old building leans a good deal, looking kind of tired. Yet, that fellow called it beautiful.

That set me to thinking. I walked out to the field and just stood there, gazing at that old barn. The stranger said he planned to use the lumber to line the walls of his den in a new country home he's building down the road. He said you couldn't get paint that beautiful.

It came to me then. We're a lot like that, you and I. Only it's on the inside that the beauty grows with us. Sure, we turn silver gray, too and lean a bit more than we did when we were young and full of sap.

But the good Lord knows what He's doing. And as the years pass, He's busy using the hard weather of our lives, the dry spells and the stormy seasons to do a job of beautifying our souls that nothing else can produce. And to think how often folks holler because they want life easy!

They took the old barn down today and hauled it away to beautify a rich man's house. And I reckon someday you and I'll be hauled off to Heaven to take whatever chores the Good Lord has for us on the Great Sky Ranch. And I suspect we'll be more beautiful then for the seasons we've been through here...and just maybe even a bit of beauty to our Father's house. May there be peace within you today.



A Thermometer or A Thermostat?

"I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am in." Philipians 4:11

Would you say that you are reasonably happy? If so, then obviously you are not aware of some very alarming statistics. For example, have you ever eaten a pickle before? Then consider this: 99.9 % of cancer victims have eaten a pickle sometime in their life. Not only that, 98.3 % of people involved in car and air fatalities have also eaten a pickle. Most alarming of all: 100% of people born in 1839 who ate a pickle are now dead.

The fact is, if you tie happiness to circumstances, you are always going to find something to be unhappy about. People who tie their joy to circumstances will always find something to rob them of their joy in life. That something may be a dysfunctional relationship. It may be pressure at work. It may be a problem of finances. It might be a concern about health or health of a loved one.

Warren Wiersbe wrote that when it comes to joy, there are thermometers and thermostats. Do you know what the difference is? A thermometer is controlled by the environment. There are a lot of people today who are thermometers—they are up, they are down, depending on what happened at work that day, what happened in their family, or the balance in the checkbook. But there is another group of people who have learned how to live above their circumstances. They are like a thermostat, which regulates its surroundings. It has an internal mechanism that determines whether everything else is hot or cold. People like that do not allow their environment to regulate their sense of well-being; instead, they have this internal relationship with God that allows them to experience joy no matter what is happening around them.

WHICH ONE ARE YOU?



ONE SENTENCE PRAYERS

Gracious God, help me to encourage others who feel weighed down, lost, or forgotten. Amen.

Thank you, Jesus, for preparing a place for me in heaven with You. Amen.

Dear Jesus, remind me of who You are and of what You've done in my life. Amen.

Loving God, thank You for rejoicing over me in love. Amen.

Dear Father, please bring revival to our land, starting with me. Amen.

Loving God, thank You for the gift of Scripture and how it helps me learn about Jesus. Amen.

Dear Jesus, I welcome You into my heart and life. Amen.

Dear God, when the noise of the world around me threatens to make me wander from You, please help me recognize and obey Your voice. Amen.

Jesus, I wait for you, trusting in Your perfect timing and plan. Amen

Everything that happens to you is for your own good. If the waves roll against you, it only speeds your ship toward the port. If lightning and thunder comes, it clears the atmosphere and promotes your soul's health. You gain by loss, you grow healthy in sickness, you live by dying, and you are made rich in losses.

Could you ask for a better promise? It is better that all things should work for my good than all things should be as I would wish to have them. All things might work for my pleasure and yet might all work my ruin. If all things do not always please me, they will always benefit me. This is the best promise of this life!

Charles Haddon Spurgeon on Romans 8:28

THE BILLINGS WALK TO EMMAUS SYMPHONY

By Nadeen Kovanda



When I was Vice Lay Director in 1994, I wrote this. I was seated between Joan Matz, Lay Director, and Eva VanArsdale, Assistant Vice Lay Director, for the Billings Women's Walk to Emmaus. Until this 2023 Walk to Emmaus, I haven't had the courage to share this with anyone. But I felt nudged to share it with Karen Poling, our recent Lay Director who is a musician by trade.

Karen and John are the conductors - preparing the orchestra for the concert months ahead of time. They practice with the many sections, meeting with them individually off and on for several months before the concert.

Angie and Jim are the 1st violins – They help the conductors get the orchestra in order, advising the conductors on the overall sound of the music, keeping the orchestra in tune and on time.

Sherry and Glen are the 2nd violins – They also assist the conductors in getting the orchestra tuned up with quiet encouragement.

The **inside team** is the rest of the violin section, adding the solid, melodic sound throughout the concert, often times getting more recognition than the other sections.

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The **kitchen** is the brass section. They come across in a louder way, jumping right out in front of the audience off and on, a sound that is very evident – you can't miss them.

Decorations are the woodwinds. They add such beauty but in such a subtle way that they are only quietly acknowledged. They are giving such fullness and mood to the sound. They fit in to the overall melody so well, giving their music in a selfless way.

Agape, registration, rise-and-shine, lay coordinating, picnic, snacks, prayer vigil, candlelight and more are the violas, cellos and the bass. They are essential parts but they too get little recognition as they beautifully complete the music behind the brass and the violins.

Our **musicians** are the harpists. They find just the right time to come in and change the mood with their strings, soothing the audience.

The **clergy** are the percussionists. In the flow of things, they seem to also fit right in. But quite often they are adding such resounding touches that they set the audience upright and cause them to pay close attention.

The **community** is the stage hands. They jump into the action whenever they are needed. They help prepare ahead of time doing many different tasks, selling tickets, putting up the set. They then give the concert special recognition by wearing their Sunday best to the concert.

But before all these roles are even filled, the **board of directors** remains vigilant and passionate about keeping the musicians and the eventual upcoming concerts alive and well.

And the **pilgrims** are the audience. They are not there to be entertained but instead to interpret the production through their own ears, finding the meaning in the music that is meant just for them.

SO.... The stage is set and the orchestra is ready. The members of the audience are in their seats waiting in anticipation. Each conductor, who has worked long and hard for months with this musical community, moves aside. And the **Guest Conductor** steps up to the podium, picks up **HIS** baton and directs **HIS** symphony in **HIS** style, touching not only the audience but all the musicians and all the stagehands in **HIS** own special way.

TO GOD THE GLORY!

~~~~~Nadeen Kovanda, written in 1994

