

**July
2024**

Billings
Walk
To
Emmaus

W2E Times

Important Dates!

FALL "KICK-OFF"
September 22, 2024
5:00 pm at FUMC

CHRISTMAS SING
December 12, 2024

TEAM RETREAT
January 11, 2025
9:00 am

MEN's W2E, #84
January 16-19, 2025

WOMEN's W2E, #85
January 23-26, 2025

POTLUCK
February 1, 2025
5:00 pm

Contact us...

WEBSITE:
billingsemmaus.com

EMAIL:
info@billingsemmaus.com

FACEBOOK:
Billings "Walk to
Emmaus"

MAILING ADDRESS:
P.O. Box 1975
Billings, MT 59103

PRECIOUS MEMORIES



In previous newsletters, we have enjoyed reading about the experiences of the participants of the first Walk to Emmaus weekends that were held at First United Methodist Church in Billings, MT, in the 1980's. This month we are delighted to share the memories of Grover and Joni Peterson. We are grateful for their faithful efforts in the early years of Billings Walk to Emmaus and for the legacy they helped to create.

GROVER & JONI PETERSON

The Billings Walk to Emmaus exists because of the loving dedication of many good people who stepped up in the 1980's and answered God's call to start a Walk to Emmaus community. Two of those fine people are Grover and Joni Peterson.

In 1979, Grover & Joni attended an Anglican Cursillo at St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Laurel. They became active in the Anglican community and served on numerous teams for those weekends. They sponsored Rev. Jim and Rosemary Fitzhugh to an Anglican Cursillo and Pastor Jim was overjoyed with the experience. Jim was adamant that First United Methodist should become the home for a Walk to Emmaus community. So, Petersons and other folks who had attended a Cursillo began the process of making Pastor Jim's dream come true. In 1983 the first Walk to Emmaus weekends were held at First United Methodist Church. Joni served as the first Women's Lay Director and George Schuyler was the first Men's Lay Director. In a few years, Grover became the Men's Lay Director.

In 1995 there were nearly 100 women registered to attend the Walk, so there were two women's weekends that year. Joni was asked to serve as Lay Director for that second women's weekend and Rosemary Fitzhugh led the music from the piano.

The Billings Walk to Emmaus was one of the first W2E communities that was founded in any of the western United States and was considered to be a model for new communities. Billings Walk to Emmaus was the second community in the nation to start Chrysalis weekends for teenagers in their community. Grover Peterson was instrumental in the start-up of the Billings Chrysalis.

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

Joni served on the team for the first Homeward Bound weekend that was held at the Women's Prison in Billings. Janice Hunter was the 1st director. The following year, Joni served as director for the 2nd Homeward Bound weekend. After the 3rd successful weekend, the prison asked that the Homeward weekends be held twice every year. The weekends continue to be held twice annually and are filled to capacity. Lives are blessed and changed.

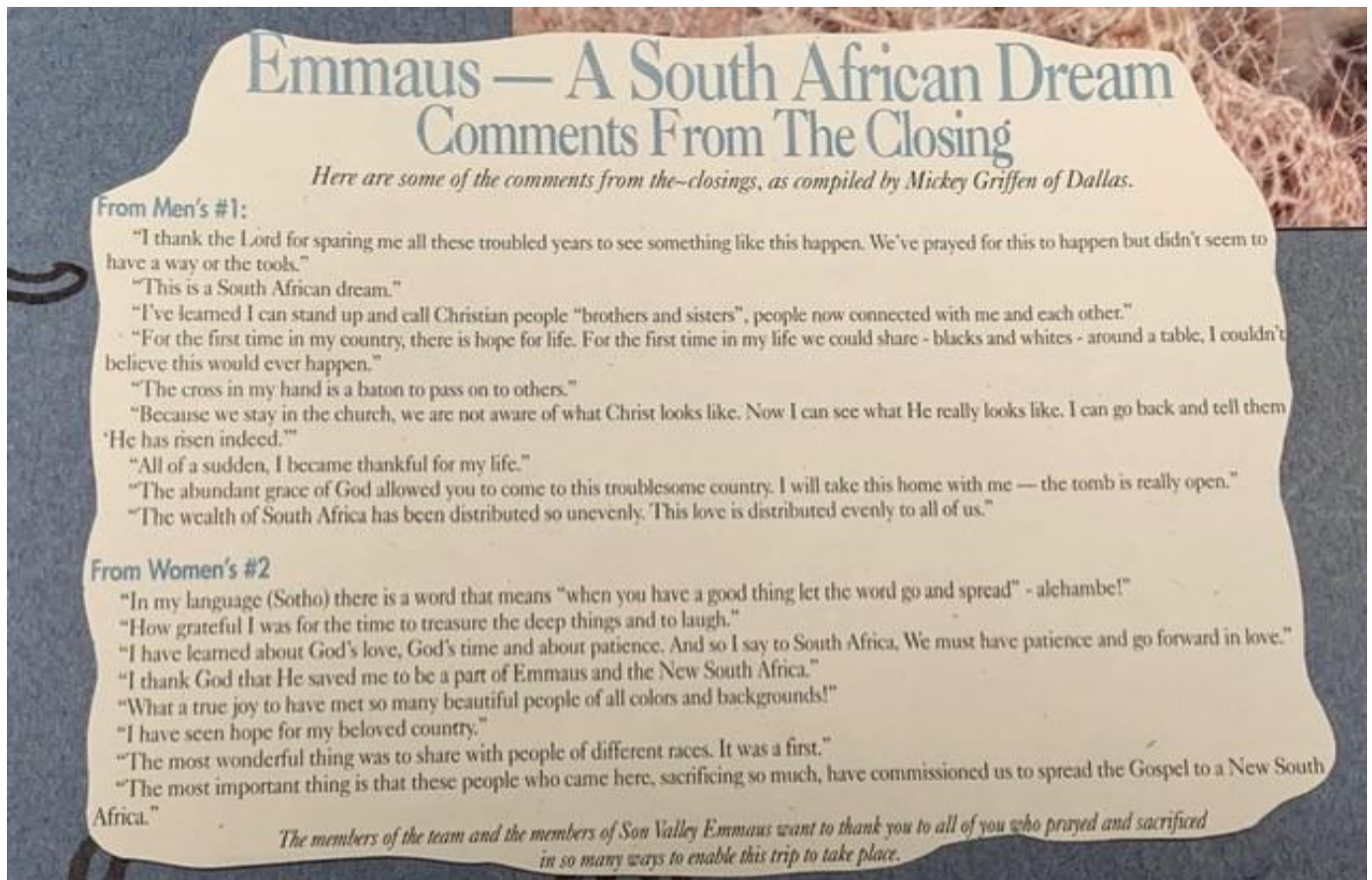
Grover and Joni Peterson were certainly instrumental in establishing the Walk, Chrysalis and Homeward Bound in Billings. But God had more plans for them. In 1984 they received a request from the Upper Room to join a group of Americans who would start the Walk to Emmaus in Australia. The experience was extraordinary and the Walk to Emmaus movement in Australia has now grown to 23 communities nationwide.

In 1990, Petersons were called by the Upper Room to bring the Walk to Emmaus to South Africa. At first, they were very reluctant to be a part of that trip because of the rampant anger and violence associated with Apartheid at that time. But God's call was insistent and they again said "Yes!" to the call. There are now 23 W2E communities in 9 countries of the South African region.

Thank you, Grover and Joni Peterson, for your loving response to God's call in your lives. Your ministry has touched countless lives and the ripple effect will continue to bless lives around the world.

We bless you in the name of the Lord.

COMMENTS FROM THE PILGRIMS WHO ATTENDED THE 1ST WALK TO EMMAUS IN SOUTH AFRICA IN 1990



EVERY SUMMER HAS A STORY

As I look back at past summers, I see a trail of beautiful and bittersweet memories. There have been summers that overflowed with joy and summers filled with deep sadness and pain. The common thread is that every summer was unique and had its own tale to tell.

Just as every *natural* summer has a story, so does every *spiritual* summer. We will each walk through the spiritual seasons many times. Autumn is a time of change. Winter is a time of barrenness and preparation. Spring is a time of rebirth. And summer is a time for bearing fruit and embracing the abundant life that surrounds us.


The key to embracing our spiritual summer, no matter what time of year it is in the natural, is to remember to seize the joy of the season. This is a time to feel the heavenly warmth on our face and revel in the beauty that surrounds us. Relax, have fun, celebrate, and abide in gratitude for the blessings that surround. Fall and winter will come, but don't let thoughts of the unknown rob you of the joy of the moment.



Summer is a season known for cultivating and bearing good fruit. Oh goodness, there is just nothing like a sweet, sun-ripened, summer strawberry. It is like a taste of heaven on earth! Our spiritual fruit of love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control must also be cultivated and ripened so it can taste even sweeter than the best summer strawberry. There is one sure way to do this, and that is to remember *who* our spiritual gardener is and to remain in him always.

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:5 NIV)

Lord, thank you for the gift of summer. Thank you for ice cream cones, backyard barbecues, and sun-drenched memories. May we seize each moment of joy and remember that you are the true cultivator of our harvest and author of our stories. Amen.



Mark your calendars for the
WALK TO EMMAUS
FALL “KICK-OFF” POTLUCK
September 22, 5:00 pm
First United Methodist Church



*Fall
Kick Off*
IT'S TIME TO CELEBRATE!