



The Companion

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www.emmauserie.org

How far that little candle throws its beams!



So shines a good deed in a weary world.

—Shakespeare

From Sister Mary . . .

Dear Friends,

The Easter Vigil at the monastery was especially meaningful to me this year. Like the chapel at dusk, the entire world seemed enclosed in darkness during this year of the pandemic. And when the Paschal Candle was blessed, lighted, and carried in procession to the front of the chapel, I felt a surging hope that darkness would not have the last word. Most meaningful to me was when a half dozen sisters circled the candle and from its flame lit the tapers they were carrying, then went from pew to pew to light the candle that each sister was holding. Soon the chapel was ablaze in light.

This is how hope is kindled, I thought to myself—not in one brilliant gesture but in many small



Sister Rosanne Lindal-Hynes, left, and Margaret Kloecker with her handmade hats and scarves

acts of goodness. And I was reminded of all the single candles of kindness that I've been privileged to experience this year at Emmaus. Many of these stories don't get told but they are there, shining in the darkness. Take the efforts of Margaret Kloecker who, for over 20 years, has served as my right hand at Emmaus—doing countless tasks for which she gets little spotlight, but without them Emmaus could not function.

You'd think that decades of dedication would suffice for good deeds rendered. But Margaret keeps lighting candles, even in her free time. For the past three years, for example, she spent hours knitting scarves and hats for our soup kitchen guests. This year she had added motivation: "There was such limited space for people to gather indoors due to the pandemic," she explained, "so I wanted to do what I could to keep our guests warm through the cold winter months."

A small thing? Maybe. But it is these tapers of light being passed from one person to another that will bring, I believe, light to our weary world.

In Peace,


Sister Mary



Sister Mary

Light a Candle

Have you ever experienced a time when, like a candle, a good deed sheds its light in a weary world?




I got a phone call at the office that someone wanted to see me and when I went downstairs a man introduced himself as James Williams. He told me that many years ago (probably 20 years), I had been kind to him at the soup kitchen. James told me that I had asked him to do some repair work at the kitchen but at the time he was unable to do it because of many personal problems. “It’s always bothered me that I didn’t do that work,” James said, “but I was able to turn my life around and now I want to give you this.” James handed me an envelope with \$900.


He was insistent that I keep it and adamant that the donation was God’s intent. I’ve put the money aside to be used to help someone who might be hurting like James was 20 years ago. Then I will write James and tell him how his good deed shed a ray of light in someone’s weary world. —Sister Mary Miller



Beth Sammartino



I went to Dominick’s Diner the other day to buy a few gift cards so staff could hand them out to soup kitchen guests when needed. Tony Ferraro, the owner, was his usual generous self and threw in two “on the house” cards. As we talked, I thanked him for his kindness to Emmaus over the years and for treating our guests who came to his restaurant with respect and dignity. Tony pointed over to a man sitting alone at a table and said, “I’ve been friends with him since I was a boy. We did everything together when we were kids. Some Fridays, after school, my mom would say to us, ‘Guys, get cleaned up. We’re going out for supper tonight.’ And what that meant was we were going to the soup kitchen for a fish dinner.” Then Tony smiled and said, “For me, it’s come full circle. I’m glad that I can give back.” —Beth Sammartino, Emmaus donor



We recently learned that hundreds of migrant children would be coming to Erie from the US/Mexico border as they connect with family in this country. A few of our sisters went to help prepare beds and clothing and other areas of the facility for the children’s arrival. There was great need for clothing since the children would only come with what they were wearing. As soon as people started hearing these needs, they called Emmaus to find out how they could help.

Light a Candle



Sister Rosanne

When I said that I had gone shopping to buy clothing, one donor said she and her husband would send a check to cover the cost. Another called wanting to do whatever she could. The phone calls keep coming. Light after light being lit for some of the most vulnerable among us.

—Sister Rosanne Lindal-Hynes, Emmaus Women’s Advocate



There is a man who comes into the food pantry each week, but he hadn’t been in for a while. He’s not well-dressed, but he is refined—a nice, gentle man. Since we hadn’t seen him for a number of weeks, when he did finally return, I said, “Hey Eric, it’s great to see you again! Come on down!” as he walked toward me to check in. I called him by name, and he replied, “You’ll never know how much it means to me to be recognized and appreciated.” It touched me to hear him say that. You can so easily make or break someone’s day with your words—I was lucky that day. —Pam Eckberg, Food Pantry volunteer



Pam Eckberg



I watch candles being lit each day as I interact with the volunteers who come to Emmaus. Take Darrell Meyers for instance. For over 20 years he has volunteered each month at the soup kitchen, bringing with him students from Our Lady of Peace parish who are preparing to be confirmed. Darrell told me that when the confirmation class talks to the bishop they inevitably end up saying that it was their experience at the soup kitchen that impacted them the most—seeing the faces of the satisfied guests after a shared meal and recognizing the importance of a making a commitment to the needs of the community. Darrell’s light becomes visible as he teaches these students to light their own candles for others. —Sister Valerie Luckey, ministry assistant



Darrell (right) with his grandson, Corey, and wife, Nancy, at the soup kitchen

To read a volunteer profile of Darrell Meyers, visit www.emmauserie.org.

New Coordinator at the Kids Cafe

In March, after eight years of service as the coordinator of the Kids Cafe, Stephanie Gear moved onto a new position in the Department of Corrections. Emmaus welcomed staff member Breanna Mekuly as its new coordinator. The Kids Cafe reopened to children under Covid guidelines in March as well. Stephanie Gear offered reflections on her time as coordinator, while Breanna shared some of her background and hopes for the program.

STEPHANIE

• **Q:** What are some things that you learned during your time as Kids Cafe coordinator?

• **A:** Wow! I learned so many things. First, that respect is reciprocal and it is earned, so we must grow in respect through relationship. I also learned patience—I didn't realize how much patience I needed for the role and how little I had! Working with children, I quickly had to learn to laugh at myself and to not sweat the small things. And what better teachers than the children? They tell the truth!

• **Q:** What is a piece (or two, or three) of wisdom that you learned from the kids in the program?

• **A:** One: Start where the child is, not where you want them to be...Two: Even the toughest child desires to be accepted, and it's probably the toughest ones who need it the most... Three: Never assume a child's circumstance, but rather talk to a child to understand what is causing their behavior.

• **Q:** What makes the Kids Cafe special?

• **A:** I could go on and on and on! But the Kids Cafe is special because it remains a safe place for children in a very complicated world. Also, the staff is wonderful, and they are a huge part of what makes the place great.



Stephanie and Kids Cafe children

BREANNA

• **Q:** What experiences have you had that helped prepare you to be the Kids Cafe coordinator?

• **A:** For the past four years, I've interacted with and gotten to know the families who regularly dine at the soup kitchen. I've also collaborated with St. Benedict Education Center, studying the barriers that stand in the way of self-sufficiency for neighborhood families. Prior to working with the Benedictines, I oversaw a collegiate campus ministry department where I engaged students in meaningful conversations, events and activities.

• **Q:** What is the most important thing to impart to children? Why?

• **A:** The Kids Cafe offers children a safe, stable space where they are respected as individuals. I hope this will allow the children's self-confidence to grow. Food is necessary for survival. But our health and well-being depend on more than that. Every child deserves to be a child—to laugh and run and be goofy and play—especially when the outside world is overwhelming.



Breanna and Willow

To read Breanna's full interview, visit the Emmaus website: www.emmauserie.org.

About Breanna: Breanna has been with Emmaus Ministries for four and a half years and is a Benedictine Oblate. She has a Masters degree from Vanderbilt University and a Bachelors degree from St. Norbert College.

Food for the Soul



I believe there are angels among us,
sent down to us from somewhere up above.
They come to you and me in our darkest hours,
to show us how to live, to teach us how to give,
to guide us with a light of love.

Helen Keller

For the Record

SISTER MARY CELEBRATED DURING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Sister Mary was interviewed by the mayor's office in March for Women's History Month. As an effort to highlight women who have made a difference in the city of Erie and beyond, Sister Mary was chosen for her contributions to the community at Emmaus. In the interview Sister Mary shared, "Women's voices, women's insights, women's gifts, need to be in the center of things. For the world to be whole, we need to have both men and women in leadership."

Sister Mary was also highlighted again by the Mercy Center for Women as they adapted their annual "Women Making History" honors for COVID-19, choosing to feature women previously named to the list each day during the month of March. She was named to the list in 1995.

EASTER AT EMMAUS

Alleluia! The Easter season at Emmaus was filled with special meals and heartfelt messages for guests. From its annual Holy Thursday dinner adapted for COVID meal service to homemade greeting cards from the students at St. Luke's School that were delivered with to-go bags, many contributed touches to the joyful season.



The Knights of Columbus at Our Lady of Peace parish serve the Easter meal.



A guest receives his Easter candy from volunteer Colleen Hammon.



VISIT EMMAUS ON FACEBOOK

Emmaus has a new Facebook page! Visit at <https://www.facebook.com/EmmausSoupKitchenErie>.



For the Record

EMMAUS MINISTRIES JOINS THE BENEDICTINE COALITION FOR RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT



Emmaus Ministries recently became a member of the Benedictine Coalition for Responsible Investment. BCRI is a group of Benedictine communities who work to influence corporate practices of publicly-held companies through shareholder actions. These actions relate to issues of basic human rights. Some examples of these actions include access to Covid-19 products, analysis of environmental justice, and equity for starting pay. "BCRI and Emmaus Ministries share the same core mission—to uphold the dignity of each human. Joining in shareholder actions has been an effective tool for enflashing these values and advocating at the societal level," said Sister Anne McCarthy, OSB, an Emmaus board member and BCRI representative.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

CROP Walk 2021

Emmaus recently received \$1,000 from the 2020 CROP Walk. Jim Haas, the coordinator for Erie County, delivered the check to Sister Mary. In an accompanying letter, Jim wrote: "We are grateful to you for the important work your organization does and for all the ways you make life better in the Erie area." The CROP Walk is an annual walk that raises funds for organizations, like Emmaus, that work to fight hunger. This year's walk will take place on Sunday, September 26th. For more details, visit: <https://events.crophungerwalk.org/2021/event/eriepa>.



(L-R) Sister Valerie Luckey, Sister Mary Miller, and Jim Haas with the CROP Walk check



Erie Gives 2021

Emmaus Ministries is a recipient of Erie Gives donations. This year's event will be held on August 10th. The annual fundraiser supports non-profits in Erie and is organized by the Erie Community Foundation. To learn more visit: <https://www.eriegives.org/>.

We Give Thanks . . .

We give thanks for **Dr. Mark Bloomstine** for choosing to support Emmaus Ministries with his Doctors' Day donation...For Gannon University student, **Lauren Letizio and her leadership class group** for coordinating a food drive for the soup kitchen...for **Susan Casella** who continues to make facemasks for guests...for **Nancy and Fred Bird** who made 200 Easter goodie bags for the soup kitchen...for **Tony Stefanelli and Romolo Chocolates** who donated lots of Easter chocolate to give away...for **the students at St. Luke's School** who baked cookies, made Easter cards, and prepared peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for soup kitchen guests—especially the third-grade class for organizing the project...for **Caitlin Kinnane** for baking and delivering gourmet cookies for soup kitchen guests...for **Melanie Shufan and Ralph Edes** for bringing Kleenex, jump ropes, chalk, shoes, and other items for the children at the Kids Cafe...for **Dave Piotrowicz** who donated a portion of the proceeds from his Lenten walk fundraiser.



Fred and Nancy Bird drop off Easter bags.



Caitlin Kinnane delivers hand-decorated cookies.

We Remember...

We are grateful to family members who asked that memorials be made to Emmaus in the names of their deceased loved ones:

Earl William Brieger, Jr.
Mary Carol Brown
David G. Chivers
Corinne V. (Adams) Farina
William J. "Bill" Flaherty, Jr.
James V. Gray, Jr.
Lillian (Lilly) E. Laukaitis

Regina Marie Luschini
Donald L. Metzger
Charlotte R. (Wonner McDivitt) Rosenberg
Mary Ann Schneider
Janet A. Shatto
Joseph E. Sierota
Constance M. "Connie" (Cielinski) Zygai

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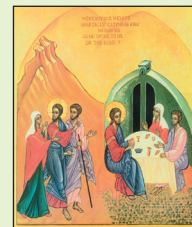


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EMMAUS ICON
Emmaus Icon *Road to Emmaus*
Iconographer: Sister Marie-Paul, OSB
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They came
to know Christ
in the breaking
of the bread.
Luke 24:35

FOOD FOR THE SOUL ART:

St. Gabriel Archangel,
Brother Mickey McGrath

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