



June 2022
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The Companion

www.emmauserie.org



Share with God's people who are in need.
Practice hospitality. Romans 12:13

From Sister Mary . . .

Dear Friends,

One of my favorite gospel passages is the story of Jesus' visit to Mary and Martha of Bethany. At Emmaus, we try to live like both sisters: busy in the kitchen, like Martha, of course, but also, like Mary, able to spend time and give our full attention to our guests.

The pandemic has shown us the importance of both roles: during the two years that we served dinner to-go style every single night, our "Martha side" came to the forefront, as our diligent, practical staff and volunteers took care of all the logistics of ensuring that the hungry people of Erie could safely get good food. Since we reopened indoor dining for guests in March, we are rejoicing in showing our "Mary side" again.

Our volunteers and guests alike will tell you, even the briefest human interactions can make a difference. After so much isolation a simple gesture, a kind word, a smile or eye contact can make one feel not so alone. There's just no substitute for presence, for being able to sit with someone and listen to their story. There's nothing more important than being able to see someone's smile or notice their tears. There's nothing more sacred than watching someone enjoy a hot meal that you prepared in the company of people who care for them.

People think Emmaus is about food. Really, Emmaus is about people: our guests, our staff, our volunteers, and our many friends and supporters throughout the community. I learned that lesson years ago, when one of the Sisters told a frequent guest, "I'll be right with you, John," and he was stunned. "No one ever uses my name," he said. "Thank you for knowing me enough to remember my name."

In this issue of *The Companion*, you'll read more stories about hospitality and presence, about the effect that the simple act of being together has on our guests and on our workers. You'll understand why our motto is "Bread for the body, Care for the soul." And, you'll be as glad as we are that it's safe for us to serve as both Martha and Mary once again.



Sister Mary Miller, Director of Emmaus, offers a prayer on the day the soup kitchen re-opened to guests.

In peace,
Sister Mary

Offering Presence at Emmaus



Emmaus staff members Rita Scrimentri (above left) and Sister Rosanne Lindal-Hynes (above right) welcomed in the first guest, Cathy. While guests who prefer to not eat inside are still able to come in and take their meal “to-go,” they know that for however long they are inside the soup kitchen they will be welcomed. As one guest remarked, “I ride the bus half an hour each way to get dinner here because I know I can count on Emmaus.” (Right: Sam enjoys his first meal inside.)

On March 9th, Emmaus Soup Kitchen re-opened its dining room to guests, almost two years to the day that it closed due to Covid-19. Sister Mary Miller, Director, led the staff and volunteers in prayer before the first guests walked inside, offering gratitude for the opportunity to be together once more.



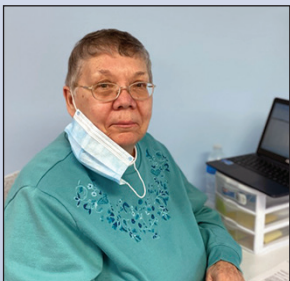
REFLECTIONS FROM VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF

Jeanne Metzler Food Pantry Volunteer

“I love this place. Being at the food pantry gives me a reason to get out of bed in the morning.” To greet a guest by name, with open arms and a smile, is love. Food Pantry volunteer Jeanne Metzler does just that each morning when she sees a guest come through the pantry doors. Her presence becomes love.

When asked why she finds purpose at Emmaus, Jeanne says that the presence she offers is received in equal doses, “Some of the people who come are so nice that they feel like my family. I love being able to be here and help.”

And it’s in the smallest of tasks that Jeanne feels joy, “I register new people for the food pantry to receive food; I say ‘Good morning.’ It’s simple things, and I wish I could do more. I cannot stand for a long time to serve a meal at the soup kitchen, but I can do this.” At Emmaus, the little things make a big difference.



Offering Presence at Emmaus

Emily Ingram Soup Kitchen Volunteer

“It’s always better to see people in person,” Soup Kitchen volunteer, Emily Ingram, shared. “And there are so many who have no place to go. It’s important to be able to offer our guests a place to sit down and rest again.” Having guests inside brings Emily joy when she comes to the kitchen on a Tuesday afternoon, “It’s a gift coming here each month, and I love seeing the people who I’ve missed for two years. There are quite a few characters who entertain us with jokes or funny stories. I pray that my presence here, offering a warm meal, makes a difference, but the presence of the guests impacts me, too.”



Sister Valerie Luckey Ministry Coordinator

In my role at Emmaus, each day I find myself being both the “Mary” and the “Martha” that we encounter in the gospel story, a story with which I easily connect. Yes, there is food prep when I work at the soup kitchen, packing bags with desserts and utensils and cleaning counters. But when people start coming through the door, I try my best to leave the “doing” behind. I try to become

like Mary and sit down with our guests, doing “the one thing necessary” as Jesus says—being present to Christ in our midst.

In my work at the Emmaus office, “Martha” quickly and often emerges. I do paperwork; I organize schedules; I pay bills. So, the other day when the phone rang and a woman asked me, “Do you have any food available today?” I had to stop and switch gears. I put down my pen and told her the hours we serve a meal at the soup kitchen. I added, “I hope we see you this evening.” I could hear the gratitude in her voice: “I love you so much.” I could hear the relief when she added herself: “You are saving my life today.”



An Emmaus Almanac

Almanacs are annual guides that help orient us to what is important in our daily lives. The Emmaus Almanac gives short glimpses and reflections of the mission and work of feeding those in need. To read the June Almanac entries, visit www.emmauserie.org.

June 2: “Certainly it is true,” Norman Cousins wrote, “that behind every human being who cries out for help there may be a million more, equally entitled to attention. ... How to determine which one of a million sounds surrounding you is more deserving than the rest? You will never know. And you never need to know. Reach out and take hold of the one who happens to be nearest.”



June 8: Last week, a single mother of four, dining at the soup kitchen, mentioned how much she loves art. She said that her habit of drawing as she receives dialysis makes the treatments easier to bear. A staff member quickly made arrangements for the woman to enroll in one of the adult art classes now being offered through the Inner City Neighborhood Art House (another ministry of the Benedictine Sisters of Erie, which has provided children with free classes in painting, drawing, music, and dance for almost thirty years). Everything was taken care of for her, down to a new set of colored pencils. “Whenever you are creating beauty around you, you are restoring your own soul,” said writer Alice Walker.

June 13: This is the feast of Saint Anthony, the Franciscan friar who preached the Gospel and worked miracles all over the town of Padua in the thirteenth century. In his time, he was revered for his homilies, his understanding of complex doctrines, his ability to convert people who had rejected Christianity and even the ability to communicate with animals. But today, he is perhaps best remembered as the inspiration for “Saint Anthony’s bread”—food or money collected in parishes and schools around the world and given to those in need. More so than his powers of intellect or persuasion, Anthony’s mercy and generosity are the source of his legacy. Those of us who sit and talk with the poor of Erie each evening can only hope that this will be our legacy, too.

An Emmaus Almanac



June 19: The Sunday Gospel today is Luke’s version of the feeding of the five thousand, when Jesus asks his disciples to offer just a few loaves and fishes to an enormous hungry crowd. Everyone takes from the food until “all were full,” and at the end of the story, there are twelve wicker baskets’ worth of leftovers. It’s important for us to remember that Jesus didn’t multiply the loaves and fishes so that there was just enough, the perfect amount to satisfy the crowd. This is a story about abundance, and plenty, and even a bit of excess. It’s the kind of story that is lived out today when soup kitchen guests leave after their meal with brown paper bags full of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and fresh-made desserts.

June 28: On this day in 1987, the Erie Times-News ran a short profile of Sister Mary Miller. Sister Mary was then in her seventh year as Director of Emmaus Ministries. Below are a few of her responses in the piece, which was titled, “Between the Lines: She’s the keeper of kitchen and pantry for the needy.” *Proudest Accomplishment:* Being able to see beauty and goodness in the midst of suffering and human failure. *Things You Can Do Without:* Nuclear weapons and male chauvinists (not necessarily in that order). *Things You Can’t Do Without:* An awareness of the presence of God; love; friends. *Ambition:* To close the soup kitchen and food pantry because social and economic systems change so much that people no longer have to stand in line for their daily food.



Opposite Page: A family comes to the soup kitchen for dinner.
Top: Jim, a regular guest, with his meal
Bottom: Sister Mary at Emmaus Soup Kitchen in 1974

FOOD FOR THE SOUL:

Hospitality should
have no other
nature than love.

Henrietta Mears

Photo: Tulips in bloom
at Emmaus Grove

For the Record . . .

BLUE COATS ORGANIZATION RECEIVES PROPHET OF PEACE AWARD

The Benedictine Sisters of Erie granted the Blue Coats Nonviolence Initiative their 2021 Prophet of Peace Award, at a ceremony held on May 11th, in recognition of their work promoting nonviolence at many locations around the city, including Emmaus Soup Kitchen. The ceremony was re-scheduled due to the pandemic.

Blue Coats member, Bruce Wayne, has been a faithful presence at the kitchen for over four years, coming each evening to do what the organization does: act as a peaceful presence, de-escalating tense situations and encouraging people to communicate in constructive ways. During the height of the pandemic, Bruce was also the face that guests saw at the window, distributing meals. Many other Blue Coats serve at local schools, and have been a presence in the city of Erie since they were established by Brother Daryl Craig in 2006. "It's an honor for us to be recognized," Bruce said. "We believe in nonviolence and see our work as a ministry."



Top (L-R): Sisters Rosanne Lindal-Hynes, Mary Miller, and Valerie Luckey with (Bottom L-R) Daryl Craig and Bruce Wayne

EMMAUS RECEIVES ANNUAL CROP WALK GRANT

"The mission of the CROP Walk is to ensure that our sisters and brothers have good food to eat. We are guided by our faith in this mission." Jim Haas, the Erie County CROP Walk coordinator and former pastor of Wayside Presbyterian Church, said while offering reflections at the annual CROP Walk luncheon on April 26th. Each year Emmaus Ministries participates as food distribution and other charitable organizations gather to receive donations from the fundraiser event created by Church World Service. The twenty organizations who were grant recipients each received a portion of the 2021 proceeds for their work. Donations raised in Erie County totaled \$61,400, ranking #11 out of 700 walks across the country and #1 in the state. The 48th Erie CROP Walk will take place on September 26th at Presque Isle State Park. If you would like to participate as part of the Emmaus walking team, contact the office at 814-459-8349.



Emmaus staff (L-R): Rita Scrimenti, Sister Mary Miller, Margaret Kloecker, Sister Valerie Luckey, with Barb Roseborough (second from left) (Not pictured: Co-coordinator Sheila Causgrove)

Emmaus Ministries would also like to extend its gratitude to Barb Roseborough and Sheila Causgrove for their years of service as Emmaus team co-coordinators. They will retire from their positions this year.

We Give Thanks . . .

Emmaus Ministries thanks **Fulton Athletic Club** for its donation toward the soup kitchen's Easter meal...the **Student Council at Mercyhurst Preparatory School** for organizing a canned food drive for National "Soup It Forward" Day...**Jean and Dick Crowley** for donating hand-knitted hats, scarves, and winter items...**Ann Carmichael** for collecting extra juice and snacks at school to give away to guests...**Claire, Ellen, Julia and Anne Dieterman** for baking desserts and making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for the soup kitchen...**Robin Scheppner and American Tinning and Galvanizing** for donating cases of water to the soup kitchen...**The Knights of Columbus Holy Trinity Council #4123** for organizing a Lenten collection to benefit Emmaus...the **Eighth Grade class at St. Luke's School** for participating in a day of service at the soup kitchen and Emmaus Grove...and **to all who continually support the work** at Emmaus... Thank You!



Mercyhurst Prep students, Conor and Sarah, unload canned goods at the food pantry.

Save the Date!
August 9, 2022



For more info:
www.eriegives.org

EMMAUS MINISTRIES REMEMBERS

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

- Edward A. Bellucci
- Kenneth G. Hardner (volunteer)
- Frank Victor Kneidinger, Jr.
- Rita E. (Zukowski) Pilarski
- Edward John Selleny
- Mary Pat Sullivan (volunteer)
- Marian M. Wisniewski

STAFF: Mary Miller, OSB; Margaret Kloecker; Rosanne Lindal-Hynes, OSB; Rita Scrimenti; Valerie Luckey, OSB; Catherine Simon; Companion Staff: Valerie Luckey, OSB; Jacqueline Sanchez-Small, OSB; Companion Consultant: Mary Lou Kownacki, OSB



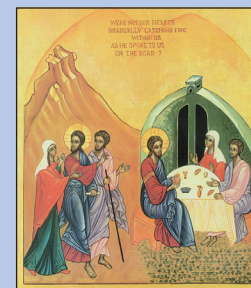
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Iconographer: Sister Marie-Paul, OSB
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Image provided by The Printery House of Conception Abbey



They came to know Christ in the breaking of the bread.

Luke 24:35

Cover Photo: Sister Rosanne Lindal-Hynes, Emmaus Women's Advocate, sits with soup kitchen guests inside the dining room. Photo by Valerie Luckey, OSB