



September 2022
Vol. 32 No. 3

The Companion

www.emmauserie.org

**I will become love,
and then I will
be all things.**

Saint Therese of Lisieux

From Sister Mary . . .

Dear Friends,

People come to Emmaus for food...right? Of course, they do, but there's much more to the story.

Last week, for example, I greeted a guest who had just started undergoing cancer treatment. He showed me his chemo port, and told me that he now gets his nutrition through a feeding tube. I said how good it was to see him and I was sorry about his illness, but added "I suspect then that you're not here for our sit-down dinner."

"Oh, I'm not here for dinner, Sister Mary," he said. "I just came by to see everyone!"

A few days later, another regular guest came to the kitchen, covered in scrapes and bruises. She was a transgender woman, and the night before, while sleeping on the street, she had been attacked by two men. She was afraid they would come after her again that evening, and both the men's shelter and women's shelters were filled. So she came to Emmaus and told us what was wrong, and we found her somewhere to spend the night, got her the medical care she needed, and helped her begin to form a plan to stay safe with the help of community partners. "I didn't know where to go," she said. "But I came to you because everyone here is always so kind."

We do serve a delicious, homemade dinner at Emmaus, but that's not always why people come. They really come because they know we care about them. They are loved here.

Saint Therese of Lisieux wrote, "My vocation is love. I will become love, and then I will be all things." It's a challenge, of course, but that's exactly what we're on 11th Street for: to serve meals, to greet friends, to help in a crisis, to become love itself.

In this issue of *The Companion*, you'll read about some of the many ways that Emmaus lives out the calling to be a soup kitchen that is "all things" for our guests.



Sister Mary Miller,
Director of Emmaus,
outside the soup kitchen



In peace,
Sister Mary

About the Cover: On the cover of this issue of *The Companion* are passion flowers growing outside the soup kitchen—a wonderfully fragrant and intricate flower.
Photo by Mary Miller, OSB

A Vocation of Love



Soup kitchen, guest, Cathy receives foot care.

TO COMFORT THE SUFFERING: HARVEST 912 FOOT CLINIC

Imagine you are homeless—walking the streets of inner-city Erie for eight or ten hours each day. Imagine when you arrive at Emmaus Soup Kitchen, that someone sits you down and tenderly removes your socks and shoes, soaks your feet in warm water—full of suds. Imagine then that someone gently massages your feet with healing oil, a blessing of sorts. Then gifts you with a new pair of shoes and socks.

The Harvest 912 team took to heart Jesus’s command to wash one another’s feet at the soup kitchen in early summer. A team of volunteer nurses and medical providers made visible the gospel story, washing and caring for the feet of a dozen soup kitchen guests in a custom-designed footcare bus. Rita Scrimenti, Emmaus Social Worker, worked with Kit

Voos, Harvest 912 co-founder, to identify guests in greatest need of care.

Harvest 912 is an organization that provides accessible, no-cost foot care to those impacted by homelessness or economic disenfranchisement in Northwestern PA. “The work of Harvest 912 is one-of-a-kind, so to partner with them for this clinic was a blessing for our guests,” shared Rita Scrimenti.

TO WELCOME THE STRANGER: AMANDA BOLAÑOS, WRITER-IN-RESIDENCE

Despite her youth—26 years of age—Amanda Bolaños had served at plenty of soup kitchens before the evening in July when she helped out at Emmaus. A doctoral student in theology at Duke Divinity School, Amanda spent a month in Erie as the Joan Chittister Writer-in-Residence, working on a paper about Dorothy Day and learning about the Benedictine charism that influenced the Catholic Worker Movement.

As she folded up her apron to leave at the end of her shift, someone asked Amanda how Emmaus compared to the other soup kitchens she knew. “It’s similar in many ways,” Amanda said, “except that there’s so much chatting with the guests while they wait in line and when they’re having their meal. I think every single person who came in heard someone say, ‘It’s good to see you,’ or ‘I’m glad you came in today.’”



(L-R) Sister Kathy McCarthy, Amanda Bolaños, Sister Susan Doubet, Sister Valerie Luckey, and Sister Jacqueline Sanchez-Small

A Vocation of Love

TO SHELTER THE HOMELESS: SISTER ROSANNE LINDAL-HYNES, WOMEN’S ADVOCATE

“I’m so glad to finally have a place to stay, but I wish I had some furniture— even just a bed,” a woman in her seventies told me. “Do you know where I could find a bed, or a table or chairs? It’s a low-income apartment, but I still don’t have much left over for shopping.”



Sister Rosanne (right) with Emmaus guest, Roberta

We’ve had a few guests over the years in situations like this: relieved to no longer be living on the street or moving from one relative or friend’s home to the next, but all alone in an empty apartment, sleeping on the floor. For a senior citizen, that’s especially hard.

“Oh, I know where you could find those things,” I said. My guest room had a spare bed that no one was using, and for a few months, I had been storing a card table and two folding chairs just in case something like this happened. I called Tom, our volunteer who drives the Emmaus truck and asked him to bring all of it to her. It’s not much, but I hope that these things from my home can make hers more comfortable—a real home, not just a place to stay.

TO FEED THE HUNGRY: CATHERINE SIMON, SOUP KITCHEN AND FOOD PANTRY COORDINATOR

One of the most difficult parts of the pandemic was not seeing our “usual” guests in the “usual” way at the soup kitchen. Many we haven’t seen since 2020—either because they didn’t come for dinner or because we were forced to hand out meals through a window for two years.

So, the other day, when a long-time guest came back for dinner after many months away, Colleen Hammon, a volunteer, and I greeted Stan with such excitement. “Stan, we missed you!” we exclaimed as we threw our arms around him. We told him how worried we had been when he hadn’t been coming for dinner. He seemed confused. “Why were you worried?” he asked. Colleen and I explained that we didn’t know if anything had happened to him, if he was sick, or something else. Stan responded, “I didn’t realize how much you cared.”

It’s so important to keep in mind that Emmaus’s motto has two parts—Bread for the body *AND* care for the soul.



Catherine (left) with Sister Valerie Luckey, Ministry Assistant

Emmaus Welcomes Jane Wagner to the Kids Cafe!

Jane Wagner joined the Emmaus staff as the Kids Cafe coordinator in July. A lifelong educator, Jane has both taught and served as administrator in both parochial and public schools. Most recently, she spent eight years as principal of Blessed Sacrament School. Jane answered questions for ministry assistant, Sister Valerie Luckey about her new role at the Kids Cafe and her time as an educator.



Sister Val: Why, after retiring from parochial school, did you decide to come to the Kids Cafe?

Jane: I have always been a person who loves to teach, to learn, to discover, to share with others, and I am still like that today. I love to take a deep dive into everything I do, and I refer to myself as a lifelong learner. I think that motivates me as a teacher. I hope I can spread that desire to learn to the children at the Kids Cafe.

I have always said to students, "You have your dreams and your goals: wanting to be a nurse or a mechanic. But

don't limit yourself because you never know where your path will lead you. Keep trying new things." I think it makes you a well-rounded person if you don't limit yourself to one thing.

What is the most important value you want to impart to the Kids Cafe children? Why?

I am going to say kindness because that's what I have always worked hard at as a teacher: to impart a desire for kindness. I tell students that you can work hard at being kind. We are human, so we are going to make mistakes, but if we try to be kind, it can make a difference. I try to teach children that their kindness will be passed onto others. I know it can seem like a "pie-in-the-sky" kind of dream, but I do believe in it.



Chalk Art created by Jane and the Kids Cafe staff on display during Celebrate Erie

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.

September 11: The Gospel for today begins with the Pharisees complaining about Jesus, saying, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." Jesus goes on to tell several stories explaining that no matter what the circumstances of a person's life may be, no matter how lost they may be, God's love for them never runs out. Each night, a long line forms outside the doors of the Emmaus soup kitchen, full of people who many would call "sinners." Many of them are men and women with illnesses and addictions, traumatic pasts and few friends to call on, people who are, in one way or another, lost. And those of us who serve at the kitchen can only hope that we'll live up to Jesus' reputation, that we, too, would be known to welcome them in and eat with them.

September 17: Today is the feast of Saint Hildegard of Bingen, a medieval mystic, Benedictine abbess, composer and scientist. She had a keen interest in health and medicine, and many of her recipes can still be read and followed today. In a time when extreme fasting was a common spiritual practice, Hildegard taught her followers to eat in a way that kept their bodies strong and healthy. The Emmaus motto, "Bread for the body, care for the soul," could have been written by her.

(L-R) Common Threads participant, Nora Horihan with program instructor, Bonnie Triola



September 24: On this date in 1993, a local newspaper profiled Common Threads, which was then a new program run by Emmaus Ministries. Intended to help lift women

out of poverty, Common Threads offered training in using knitting machines, as well as education on budgeting and job readiness. The piece notes, "The sisters try to imbue the women with a sense of monastic spirituality. On one of the walls of the shop hangs free verse written by Erie Benedictine Sister Mary Lou Kownacki, 'There isn't anyone you couldn't love once you've heard their story.'" Common Threads operated for ten years and touched the lives of countless families.

SAVE THE DATE!

**GALLERY NIGHT AT SPACE TO CREATE:
THE STUDIO AT ST. MARY'S
SEPTEMBER 17TH, 2022; 6-8PM
310 EAST 10TH STREET**

The Studios at St. Mary's, part of Emmaus Ministries, will be a host of Erie Art Museum's Gallery Night. Visit local artists, tour their studios, and support their work.



**CROP WALK 2022
SEPTEMBER 25TH, 2022
PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK**

If you are interested in supporting Emmaus by donating or joining the walking team, call Rita Scrimenti at 814-459-8754 for more information.

CROP HUNGER WALK
ENDING HUNGER ONE STEP AT A TIME



SISTER COLETTE RETIRES FROM EMMAUS

Sister Colette Korn has retired twice. Retirement number two was from Emmaus where, for the past ten years, she volunteered regularly, assisting the Women's Advocate, Sister Rosanne Lindal-Hynes.

"I was 75 when I retired from my hospice work, but I still wanted to do something. Sister Rosanne heard that and said she could use my help, so I started coming in a few days a week," Sister Colette shared. She said that she most enjoyed her work helping the poor of the city when she was organizing giveaways at the food pantry. Regularly scheduled "garage sales," as Sister Colette called them, where there was only one price: free, allowed her to interact with guests and see just how much need existed in Erie. "We would put out towels, dishes, books, clothing, a little bit of everything. And everything would go within an hour. There would be nothing to take back upstairs. I thought to myself, 'Wow! People really need these things.'"

Though she recently retired from Emmaus, Sister Colette continues to minister. She can now be found as a welcoming presence at Mount Saint Benedict Monastery where she works at the front desk, greeting visitors, guiding guests, and answering the phone.



Sister Colette (left) with Sister Rosanne at the monastery

For the Record . . .



With many helping hands and an irrigation system for easy watering, Emmaus Grove has already harvested over 1,000 pounds of fresh food to give away at the food pantry!

Harvest Time at Emmaus Grove



(L-R): Master gardener and Grove co-coordinator, Ellen DiPlacido weighs produce; Volunteers harvest bountiful herbs.



37th EYC Charity Regatta

SAILING FOR EMMAUS

Congratulations to longtime Emmaus volunteer Debbie Robertson and her husband, Dick, whose crew sailed to victory at the 37th Charity Regatta at the Erie Yacht Club. The proceeds from this year's regatta sponsored Emmaus.



(L-R): Debbie Robertson with Catherine Simon, Soup Kitchen and Food Pantry coordinator displaying the proceeds and the victory flag



THANK YOU!

Yet again, everyone at Emmaus is overwhelmed by the generous outpouring of love and support for local non-profits during Erie Gives Day 2022! With \$109,733 raised, Emmaus ranked 14th in total amount donated and 8th in number of individual donors.

We Give Thanks . . .

Emmaus Ministries gives a big “Thank you” to...**Theresa Anderson and A Hand Up Erie** for donating hundreds of dishes to give away...**Robin Scheppner and American Tinning and Galvanizing** for their regular donations of bottled water...



Neighborhood Art House students help keep Emmaus beautiful.

the **Children at the Neighborhood Art House** for weeding and planting flowers in front of the soup kitchen... **The Breakfast Place** for its donation of eggs and loaves of bread...**Debbie and Mark Woods** for many Kids Cafe donations including clothing, bubbles, chalk, and hula hoops...**Ken Krein** for his donation of garden vegetables throughout the summer...**Gary Caccione** for supporting the Kids Cafe chalk art display at Celebrate Erie...

Janel Potratz-Levin at Potratz for vegetables plants...**Darrell Meyers and the volunteer group from Our Lady of Peace Parish** for working at the soup kitchen during a day of service...**Hungry Howie's** for their donation of cheese and pepperoni...**Cheryl Bough** for a donation of many, many pairs of gloves before the snow begins! **Jack Mehler and MacDonald Illig** for choosing to sponsor Emmaus in the Erie Insurance Charity Challenge golf tournament...

To everyone who makes our work possible, THANK YOU!



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:

Theresa Ann (Santor) Feyas
William Michael Litzinger (volunteer)
Carol Bianchi Tipton
Rose Marie Jaskiewicz

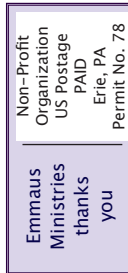
Emmaus also remembers our faithful volunteers who have passed away:

Irene Fendya
Joan Marie (Saluga) Vereb

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

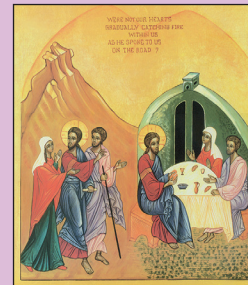


345 East Ninth Street • Erie, PA 16503-1107
(814) 459-8349



www.emmauserie.org

EMMAUS ICON
Icon *Road to Emmaus*
Iconographer: Sister Marie-Paul, OSB
© Monastère des Bénédictines du Mont des Oliviers, Jerusalem
Image provided by The Printery House of Conception Abbey



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

Luke 24:35