

# SONSHINE

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### FROM OUR LAY DIRECTOR

It is with excitement that I look forward to our upcoming tenth year reunion. It seems like only a short time ago when I took my walk on #1. Make sure that you mark your calendars for June 14th. More details will follow. Throughout the Bible, we read about people going through times of drought - when things don't go the way they think that they should and they began to question themselves and to question God. In our community, it appears that we are in a time of drought - when the workers are few and we fail to fill our teams or when there aren't enough pilgrims for the weekends. In these times, we, like the people in the Bible, begin to question what we are doing wrong and why God doesn't bless us with the team or the pilgrims that we need for things to go the way that we think that they should. In times like these we must realize that a founding principle of Emmaus is that everything about the weekends happen in accordance with God's will and not necessarily when we think they should. We must go to God in prayer and ask for His direction. For the people who were obedient to God, He always carried them through their drought to better things. For those people who became fearful and began to act on their own accord, they only created more problems for themselves. Now having said that, the other shoe drops. We have a responsibility to be diligent in our efforts to strengthen

the community. Remember from the Christian Action talk that we are the hands and feet of Christ in our world and it's up to us. Many of us say that we would like to be a part of a team for the weekend, but that's where it ends. Our procrastination becomes an obstacle to grace. If, after praying about the situation, you feel that you are called to team, simply fill out an application and trust that God will clear the way for you to be there - if not for the next walk, then for the one after that or the one after that... God knows when He wants you there. We are beginning now to prepare for the fall walks. If you believe that God is calling you either to team or to sponsor pilgrims, please send in the application now. God has great things in store for our community and many more pilgrims will be blessed on future Sunshine weekends. We simply must PRAY for God to work in our community, and in our hearts and lives and be obedient to His will.

God Bless Each of You,

*Jeff Carty*

Lay Director

The Sunshine Emmaus Community Newsletter is published quarterly. All members of the Community are encouraged to assist with creation and publication by submitting Community news, articles of interest, or creative suggestions to:

Fred Hedgecoth  
2600 Red Wing Lane  
Richmond, VA 23231  
or by e-mail at  
Predestin8@aol.com

Please submit articles early to ensure inclusion in upcoming issues!

THIS MONTH'S INTERVIEWS ARE WITH GREG AND MELANIE STEPHENS, FREDERICKSBURG #35 AND TIDEWATER YOUNG ADULT CHRYSALIS (TYAC) #4. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN BEING INTERVIEWED OR HAVE SUGGESTIONS FOR

THIS COLUMN, CONTACT BOBBY GIBSON AT 550-0813 OR BY E-MAIL AT IBEPRAYZN@HOTMAIL.COM



## Do You Know...?

*Name:* GREG STEPHENS

*Home Church:* GREENWOOD UMC

*Spouse:* MELANIE STEPHENS

*Children and ages:* NONE

*Employment:* FAMILY DOCTOR

*Hobbies/Pastimes:* GOING ON SHORT DAYTRIPS WITH MY WIFE; WORKING OUT IN THE YARD

### INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR WALK:

*Community and Walk #:* FREDERICKSBURG #35

*Date:* MARCH 2000

*Theme:* FISHERS OF MEN

*Table Name:* JOHN

### INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR FOURTH DAY:

*Are you active in a Reunion Group?* NO

*Do you attend the Gathering?* YES

*Have you served on the Board or served as an officer in the Community?* NO

*Have you sponsored any pilgrims?* NO

*Have you served on a Team?* YES (ONE TIME)

*What ministry are you involved with for Jesus Christ (in and/or outside of the local church)?*

I WORK 3 DAYS A WEEK ON A TRAVELING MEDICAL CLINIC (CALLED THE CARE-A-VAN) THAT SERVES PATIENTS WITHOUT INSURANCE. MY WIFE AND I ARE CURRENTLY SEARCHING FOR A NEW CHURCH HOME.

*What does the Walk to Emmaus Ministry mean for you?* IT IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHER CHRISTIANS WHO ARE LOVING AND TRULY EXCITED ABOUT THE LORD.

*What has your walk done for you? Has it made a difference for you? If so, how?* THE MOST LONG TERM EFFECT HAS BEEN GETTING INVOLVED IN THE EMMAUS COMMUNITY AND FORMING A RELATIONSHIP WITH SOME AWESOME CHRISTIANS!

*Name:* MELANIE L. STEPHENS  
*Home Church:* GREENWOOD UMC  
*Spouse:* GREG STEPHENS  
*Children and ages:* NONE YET  
*Employment:* TEACHER  
*Hobbies/Pastimes:* OUTINGS WITH MY HUSBAND(GREG), CROCHETING, READING, DOING AGAPE!

**INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR WALK:**

*Community and Walk #:* TIDEWATER YOUNG ADULT CHRYSALIS (TYAC) #4  
*Date:* SEPT. 1993  
*Theme:* HAVE YOU SEEN JESUS MY LORD?  
*Table Name:* S.E.E.D.S. -- SOWING ETERNAL EVERLASTING DEVOTION TO THE SAVIOR

**INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR FOURTH DAY:**

*Are you active in a Reunion Group?* NOT AT THIS TIME  
*Do you attend the Gathering?* YES  
*Have you served on the Board or served as an officer in the Community?* NO  
*Have you sponsored any pilgrims?* YES  
*Have you served on a Team?* YES -- 8 TIMES IN 4 COMMUNITIES (TIDEWATER, SOUTHSIDE, FREDERICKSBURG, AND SONSHINE)

*What ministry are you involved with for Jesus Christ (in and/or outside of the local church)?* TEACHING PRESCHOOL AT GREENWOOD, AND COORDINATING THE REACH OUT AND READ PROGRAM FOR THE CARE-A-VAN. THIS PROGRAM GIVES AWAY AGE-APPROPRIATE BOOKS FOR UNDERPRIVILEGED CHILDREN FROM 6 MONTHS TO 5 YEARS OLD.

*What does the Walk to Emmaus Ministry mean for you?* FOR ME, IT IS AN "AWAKENING", WHERE I SEE THE BODY OF CHRIST TRULY SERVING.

*What has your walk done for you? Has it made a difference for you? If so, how?*  
MY WALK MADE A TREMENDOUS DIFFERENCE FOR ME. I SAW AND MET CHRIST IN A VERY REAL WAY, AND EXPERIENCED UNCONDITIONAL LOVE OVER AND OVER AGAIN! IT MADE ME WANT TO "PASS IT ON" AND THAT'S WHAT I TRY TO DO!

## **IMPORTANT UPDATES!!**

We cancelled the upcoming women's walk since we only had 11 team, 1 spiritual director, and only about 10-13 possible pilgrims.

The gathering for May will be at Lakeside UMC at 6:30 on *May 17th*

## FROM THE CLERGY

Welcome to SONSHINE'S 10th Anniversary Year. I hope you will join our Birthday Celebration in June. We have a rich history that includes 35 Walks—representing at least 600+ Pilgrims/Community Members. We have birthed The Peninsula Rainbow Community. Your continued personal growth and discipleship have strengthened our local churches and have birthed new ministries. Your discipleship is also evident in the explosion of involvement and support for Missions—local, home, and abroad. You have answered God's CALL in many wonderful ways, some to ordained ministry and most to greater lay leadership and service. Truly SONSHINE has a lot to celebrate! But WE still face the challenge of touching and enriching lives in and for the future. It will take all of us doing our parts to make the greatest impact for Christ, for future Pilgrims/Community Members, our local churches, the Church in the world, and the Kingdom of God. I invite YOU to support SONSHINE'S presence and purpose as we turn our attention to Walk #36 and the future. When I read The Upper Room Devotional for 3/01 entitled "A Persistent Call," I was reminded of the dialogue between God and man throughout biblical history. This "devotional" was based on I Samuel 3:1-10 (The Call of Samuel). The key verse is verse 10: "Now the Lord came and stood and called as at other times, 'Samuel! Samuel!' And Samuel answered, 'Speak, for your servant hears.'" God had called to Samuel three times, but it was only after some instruction (clarification) from Eli that Samuel responded to God on the fourth call. I immediately asked, "How many times does God have to call before we (the church) hear and respond? I can't answer that for you, but I must admit that there have been times that I have not always responded at the first or even the fourth call. My memory went racing to the lingo of CB Radio days when the voice would say, "Got your ears on (are you listening, are you there)?" The current version of this is the cell phone TV commercial that asks "Can you hear me now?" How often does God have to dial our numbers and call our names? How long must God wait for us to clarify The CALL or to recognize His Voice? Or how often do we not answer because we don't want to hear from God? You know, we don't want to face the truth and the challenge of authentic discipleship because (1) it's not politically, socially, economically, etc. popular (2) it's not at all convenient at the moment—too busy with other things, focused on other priorities, etc. (3) I'm not ready to change because authentic discipleship will require change which may cost me more than I am willing to pay at the present. How many messages must God leave on our answer machines and voice mails—in our ears and on our hearts? Truly, how often must God ask, "Can you hear me now" and then wait for our response? Funny, or is it, that we expect God to answer our calls when we dial His Number? Funny, or is it, that when God dials our numbers, we put Him on hold with indifference, misunderstanding, confusion, and even choice? We claim to be so busy and expect God to wait until we are "good and ready" to answer. Let us thank God that His CALL is persistent—that is, He never gives up on us! He never quits dialing our numbers or refuses to be put on hold. Let us be thankful that God is not the great Sergeant Carter of The Gomer Pyle Show running around and screaming, "I can't hear you" when that is exactly what we so often say to Him. Let us ask God to help us to recognize His VOICE and with Samuel say, "Speak, Lord, your servant hears." May we remember that Today is Yesterday's Tomorrow. Therefore, the future is now! Will you support your SONSHINE community with your prayers, attendance, gifts (agape), service, sponsoring, and teaming as we move onward?

Gratefully alive,

*Bob Gibson*

# SonShine Emmaus

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It has been 10 God-filled years since  
the SonShine Community began  
and it's time to celebrate!

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A very special gathering has been planned and everyone  
who has Walked or Teamed with SonShine Emmaus  
is invited to come and share in the celebration!

The date is Saturday June 14th, 2003 beginning at 1:00 P.M.

Providence United Methodist Church will be hosting.

Bring your families and fellowship with friends you made  
on one of the 35 walks SonShine has sponsored.

Of course there will be food. Food assignments will be determined  
by last name and paper products will be provided.

We will also have a very special gathering you will not want to miss!

*More details will follow later. Mark your calendar and plan to attend!*

**Sonshine Emmaus Community**

P.O. Box 55  
Mechanicsville, VA 23111

Non-Profit  
Auto  
US Postage Paid  
JC Designs

Address Service  
Requested



**PRAYER CONCERNS**

Susan Hammond's husband, Joe, had to have part of his foot amputated due to diabetes. We need to keep him in prayer.

On Friday, March 7th, Elmer Wilson, husband of Charlene Beethoven, went home to be with our Lord. Please pray for the family.

Bill Fox needs open heart surgery. He has chosen to have the very risky surgery. He needs lots of prayers.

Please pray for the President of the United States, George W. Bush, and all those in government that they may seek and receive wisdom and guidance from the Lord at this crucial time.

Please pray for wayward children, that they might be brought back into fellowship with the Lord.

Please pray for the Sonshine Emmaus Community as well as all Emmaus and Cursillo communities throughout the world.

**CHANGED YOUR ADDRESS OR PHONE NUMBER?**

Be sure to notify Jerry Cooney at 795-2976 or by e-mail at [JerryCooney@netzero.com](mailto:JerryCooney@netzero.com)