

Walk to Emmaus – A Personal Time — by Ed Back

When Diann and I first joined St. Stephen in 1990, Walk to Emmaus was “all the rage”. Everyone was talking about taking the walk, many were going and coming back saying how touched they were by the experience. I considered it, but was tuned into work and family, and always had an excuse for going “next year”.

Then, I retired. And, I started thinking about it again. When I decided to go this year, Diann also was going to take the women’s walk in March. That had to be postponed due to schedule conflicts, and I started making excuses within myself. Christy Stephens wanted to sponsor me and would not take NO for an answer. Thank you, Christy.

Still, I was wondering if I had made a correct decision. At least until Friday morning. Going to breakfast I spoke with Clark Holmes, a cabin-mate and walker. Then, I knew I was in the right place.

During the three-day walk I experienced music (not the style I personally prefer, but very good), talks from clergy and lay persons, group activities to discuss the talk topic and personal quiet time to muse on why I was there and what I was feeling. Closer To Christ was the general theme and the result was remarkable. I have gotten back to practicing some broken habits, become part of a reunion group and started studying again. That is a difference from nearly all “spiritual retreats” I have gone to in the past. I have come back a part of a community. One that cares for its members and continually remembers them in its prayers.

I can only say to anyone who is considering taking the Walk to Emmaus, prepare to be changed.

Ernie Keener

I don't have the words to express how wonderful my weekend was on my walk; but, the closest I can find is to say I think heaven might be a little bit like that. So many people poured so much love into every one there and the lessons I learned will stay with me forever. The very best part though was the singing. I loved it. It was different than any other I've ever been a part of. I just want to thank everyone who had a part in making my weekend so wonderful. I look forward to seeing everyone who was on the weekend with me.

Gary Moore

My father and I were working in the fields on a very hot day in Oklahoma. We stopped underneath an old scrub oak and had a very deep conversation about Jesus and God. Dad, how do we know Jesus is with us? (I was about twelve) Oh son, he is there! Why can't we see God? Can you see the wind? dad asked. No sir, I replied. But, you can feel it? Yes sir. That is how God works, you can't see him but you know he is there.

The Walk To Emmaus is that way to me; even though I cannot see God, I know he is there beside me. Like the explanation of the wind. "Blessed those that cannot see but believe" Jesus said. My experience in the meeting of other believers was so rejoicing and a secure way of loving God and his son. The testimonies were impeccable and rejuvenating. To me there is not another place where you are fulfilled with love and understanding of God and His son.

Susi Robinson

It's extremely hard to quiet our lives and the world in order to fully focus on God. The Walk to Emmaus gave me that opportunity. We had a chance to get away, from our lives, from our phones, from all technology and be in a tranquil space, living in the moment where all our needs were met. What I learned and felt was about God's grace, God's great love, and the power of prayer. It seems so simple but the way the retreat is organized allowed us to learn, experience through others, share and reflect. The Walk to Emmaus truly took my faith to a new level, deeper in my mind, heart, and soul. I have a renewed lens through which I can plan and live each day, in my worship, serving, work, volunteering, and everyday interactions. God first, Love everyone, Grace always.

Linda Wilson

I enjoyed "The Walk to Emmaus." I experienced God's abounding love, grace, mercy and forgiveness. The women that I met were very inspiring and open about their faith journeys. It was a great time of worship, Bible study, self- reflection and prayer. I am thankful and grateful for the time with God and other Christian women and leaders.