

Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Lake Cumberland Area Emmaus and Chrysalis Community.

I hope this letter finds you all doing well. The Lord has abundantly blessed our community for many, many years and I would like to start by thanking Him for every walk and every flight we've been able to have over the years. There are endless testimonies by pilgrims, caterpillars, and workers alike of how God has used Emmaus and Chrysalis as tools to grow closer to Jesus and ultimately change lives. We give Him all the glory and praise His name for every good work He has done in us. We thank each of you for your willingness, obedience, and sacrifices to be the hands and feet of Jesus over the years. Our community is made up of two things: Jesus and each other, and without those two things working together, our community cannot stand.

Many of you already know that our walks have come to a halt at the moment. There has been much concern with the direction that the Upper Room (the corporation that governs the Emmaus Walks and Chrysalis Flights) is going and our board is split on which direction we should go. After much, much prayer the majority of the board members and both Chrysalis co-chairs feel that the Upper Room has strayed from the Word of God and biblical truths, and we are no longer comfortable partnering with them and supporting them financially. It is very unfortunate, but it is a serious enough concern that we must now reach out to you, the community, for you to vote whether or not to remain under the Upper Room. If it is decided to leave the Upper Room, some of the board members will be looking into other options for continuing our "walks". We do not wish for our community to stop serving the Lord as we have for many years.

Attached is a link to a Chrysalis Advisory Team video. The video discusses the recent changes for Chrysalis weekends, including removing the Single Life and Marriage Talks and replacing them with a Faithful Love talk. One of our primary concerns is expressed during one of the “Questions and Answers” segments of the video. It appears at approximately the 31 minute mark. The representative states, “We have removed the specific line that says that marriage is between a man and a woman” and continues to give their explanation on why they chose to do so. Please watch the video for yourself if at all possible. A transcript of that specific section of the video is also attached.

Another concern we have is the Upper Room’s choice of pronoun use, especially when they refer to God as Father/Mother/Parent in the newest clergy training videos. Many board members are also uncomfortable with the guidelines in the Emmaus Ministries Community Manual regarding speaking in tongues, healing, and certain other spiritual experiences. In conversations with senior Upper Room leadership, they have informed us that this is to be interpreted to mean that there is no place where it is appropriate for such actions to occur on Emmaus weekends or at any Emmaus function. That section of the manual found on pages 116-117 is also attached at the end of this letter.

Please feel free to reach out to us with any questions you may have regarding this information or any other concern with our community. We understand this is not a light decision. Please take your time to pray, study God’s word, and pray some more before casting your vote. You may vote to “Stay with the Upper Room” or “Leave the Upper Room” in one of three ways:

- Online at www.lcemmaus.org : click on the VOTE HERE link and follow the directions. **Must be done by Saturday, August 5.**
- By mailing a letter to Fred Piercy, 9987 Hwy 1275 N, Monticello, KY 42633. Please include your name, phone number, address, and email and specify “Stay with the Upper Room” or “Leave the Upper Room”. **Must be postmarked by Saturday, August 5.**
- In person at the August Community Meeting on **Saturday, August 12.**

Our next monthly gathering will be on August 12 at Steubenville Baptist Church in Monticello, KY. The board meeting will start at 3:30 EST, followed by the meal at 6:00 and service at 7:00. The board meetings are always open to the community and we will be available for questions that evening as well. Please join us for community fellowship!

Philippians 2:1-2 Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then may my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one is spirit and of one mind.

Chrysalis Advisory Team Video:

https://youtu.be/qE_sfGj7w7I

Video Segment Transcript:

This is the transcript from an official Chrysalis Advisory Team for the Upper Room.

Date: March 5, 2021

Media source: YouTube video chat live stream.

Speakers: Matthew Smith and Chelsea Spires (representatives of the Upper Room)

Approximately 30 minutes into the video a question and answer session has begun.

Question: "Does the content of the faithful love talk still conform to the social principles regarding marriage as stated in the current book of discipline?"

Answer: (by Chelsea Spires) "We have removed the specific line that says that marriage is between a man and a woman. We are not saying that your community needs to promote same-sex marriage, but we know that some communities already are."

We know that the United Methodist Church... it is at a very difficult point, and that the United Methodist Church will likely split over the next few years over that line. Our hope was to remove that one line to allow communities to decide their teaching.

You know your people. You know your teams. You know your area. There is still language in there of the covenant of marriage and marriage is between two individuals, but we have removed the specific line of marriage between a man and a woman."

(Matthew Smith speaks) "If I could just tag on to that... I will specify that the marriage outline has never included that. It has only been included in passing in a paragraph before the outline."

As well, um, Chrysalis, and all Emmaus ministries are not United Methodist ministries specifically. We are meant to be interdenominational in our Chrysalis and Emmaus Ministries.... And, as well, Chrysalis is not the place for us to necessarily answer those specific questions which may or may not contradict what a youth home faith community is teaching them. And when I say, faith community, I'm talking about their local church as well as their parents.

It is not the job of Chrysalis... um, It is our job to bring them in, you know, teach them these foundations, and love them, and help them find the right people in their faith community to answer those specific questions for them.

It is, however, important... And, Jeff Parker, who was formerly the Director for youth and young adult formation ministries for the upper room... I had a conversation with him one time when he was saying it - that when Chrysalis or Emmaus talks are given, that they are given by 15, well, in this case, it will be 14 now, very different people, right?

And they're sharing their beliefs, their belief system with everybody and so it's OK to answer a question and say, you know, this is how I believe, but there is a difference, of course between us sharing how we believe and us emphatically saying it is the way to believe...

Again, so that we are not contradicting the faith communities that these youth are coming from. Because they could be coming from numerous places. I think about just denominations around here. They could be Episcopalian, Lutheran, Methodist... They could be coming from Southern Baptist, you just never know.

And so we want to make sure we're not confusing anyone, any of these use when they come. It's a big task, right? It's a big task for us, but I just want to make that clarification."

Emmaus Ministries Community Manual pages 116-117

BEING SLAIN IN THE SPIRIT AND OTHER PHENOMENA

Emmaus Ministries programs focus on foundational features of Christian faith with the goal of living life in grace. Being "slain in the Spirit" and other extraordinary occurrences are not essential to what The Upper Room Emmaus Ministries programs consider foundational to faith and life in Christ.

This stance does not mean that being slain in the Spirit is not meaningful, valuable, or real in some people's Christian experience. It is simply not foundational, either in scripture, tradition, or the mainstream experience of the church. Many other experiences and expressions of faith are meaningful to some but not foundational: mysticism, intentional Christian communities, speaking in tongues, casting out evil spirits, and specific stances on social issues such as abortion or nuclear war. These important concerns do find expression in the church through appropriate means. But an

Emmaus Ministries event is not one of those means. These expressions of faith belong to other programs, times, and places.

Emmaus does not equip its team members to provide support to those who are slain the Spirit. Nor can most pastors and churches provide support for persons after the fact. The only support comes from the persons who guided them into this experience to begin with, persons who do not represent Emmaus in doing so. In some groups and churches such experiences are common, and teaching accompanies these experiences; these are supportive places for being slain in the Spirit. But Emmaus offers no teaching, no context, no follow-up for this experience. Guiding individuals into these experiences on an Emmaus event is irresponsible and a disservice to the participants, Emmaus, and the church.

When team leaders agree to serve, they serve within the structures and guidelines of The Upper Room Emmaus Ministries programs. This is not their event to shape as they please. The team leaders also ensure that team members agree to serve within those boundaries. Those who do not honor this commitment need not be asked to serve again or at least not until

Emmaus Community leaders feel confident about their commitment

If people begin to identify Emmaus Ministries with a narrow religious agenda and segment of the church, that identification weakens the support of the mainstream church community and threatens the viability of the local program. When respected local church leaders communicate to The Upper Room Emmaus Ministries Office that they cannot support the quality and theological bent of a local Emmaus ministry, then The Upper Room Emmaus Ministries Office will require improvement as a condition for Emmaus to continue in that locale. The Upper Room allows use of Emmaus Ministries programs in a locale assuming the local churches and their leaders support the programs' general value for their members and their churches' ministries to them.

LCAECC Board