

BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL GREAT BANQUET COMMUNITY NEWS



December 2007
B/N Great Banquet Community
P.O. Box 3043
Bloomington, IL 61701

Great Banquet Training Event

Saturday, February 2, 2008
9 am to Lunch
Calvary United Methodist Church
Normal, IL

Letter from the Community Lay Director

After much prayer and consideration the Bloomington-Normal Emmaus Board voted unanimously at the October 2007 meeting to begin hosting Great Banquet weekends. This change will take place effective December 1, 2007, we will host Men's Banquet #82, March 13-16, and Women's Banquet #83, March 27-30, at East Bay Camp.

In November, I was blessed to experience Lost Bridge Great Banquet #47 in Decatur. And, folks, I can tell you that it is very similar to the Walk to Emmaus experience. Yes, there will be changes we will need to adjust to, but I'm sure in time the traditions of this new movement will become the traditions of our existing community.

One of our goals during this transition time is to keep you all informed. This newsletter should act as a resource guide for weekend events, ways to get involved and other community news. Beginning December 1st our new web-site bngreatbanquet.org will be available for resources and up to date information.

This is an exciting time for all of us and I firmly believe that God has some amazing plans for our community's future. My prayer is that each of us will extend a spirit of cooperation and charity, as we make this transition ... I'm sure not everything will go smoothly, change rarely does. But as we share grace with each other during this time, I know God will show us the blessings He has in store for us through this Great Banquet movement.

DeColores!
Shelly Hanover
Community Lay Director

P.S. ... Yes, they still sing DeColores ... however, they sing it in English ... for this gal who has the Spanish version memorized it was quite a funny challenge!



"...Come, for all is now ready."

Luke 14:17

Letter from the Community Spiritual Director ...

Dear Community,

Have you ever noticed that the Book of Acts has an introduction but no conclusion? It could be that there is no end to the many acts of God's agape. The Spirit continues to breathe new life into Christ's followers. And so it is that the breath of God is breathing new life into our fourth day community as well.

There is an exciting spirit of renewal among us as we begin to prepare for the upcoming Great Banquet weekends. The Lord has set a wonderful table before us with many new and meaningful opportunities to serve. We have been chosen by Christ to hold these feasts of love and invite those who will come to be His honored guests.

There are always those who for one reason or another will not come, but with enthusiasm and joyful expectation our vision is not diminished and into the highways and byways we will go to find those whom Christ is calling to dine with Him.

Our mission has not changed. As we have so many times made that Walk to Emmaus and have seen the eyes of blinded pilgrims opened to new life as their hearts were warmed by Christ's presence, so now we will invite guests to the Great Banquet to dine with the Master and feast on the riches of His Grace. We are one body and one message!

Please begin now to pray and ask the Spirit to lead you to the honored guest he would have you invite to this first Great Banquet weekend. Let's continue, as a blessed fourth day community, to walk in God's love and grace, offering to others the chance to find God's blessing for their life as well.

See you at the feast,
Mark Wallace
Community Spiritual Director

Community Training Session/ Mini Gathering

**Saturday, February 2, 2008
9 am to Lunch
At Calvary UMC in Normal**

The entire community is invited to find out more about the Great Banquet. Join us as we host Great Banquet founder, Rev. Jack Pitzer, for a time of worship & communion, an overview of the Great Banquet weekend and a question and answer session.

This will be a first opportunity to ask questions, sign-up to participate in upcoming weekends and more! **Lunch and fellowship will follow. Please bring a dish to share, drinks and table service will be provided.**

Spring Weekend Teams

Our Spring weekends at East Bay will consist of a blended team of experienced Great Banquet and Bloomington/Normal people. Teams will meet together in Decatur and Bloomington/Normal as we prepare to host our first Great Banquet weekends.

Our Lay Directors will be Bob Hauskins and Donna Whitsett. Both have traveled the country serving on first time weekends. Please keep this group in your prayers as plans are being made.

Our Logan Lay Director will be Marty Thornton. His team will also be blend of experienced folks from both the Bloomington/Normal and Lost Bridge Great Banquet communities. Logan # 42 will be held April 11-13, please mark your calendars now and plan to attend the candlelight and closing.

Don't forget to check out bngreatbanquet.com for updated team lists, clearance information and more!

Our Relationship with Chrysalis

Many have asked recently about the relationship of SonRise Chrysalis and B/N Great Banquet Community. The B/N Great Banquet respects the fact that Chrysalis now has a new sponsoring community in Heartland Emmaus and understands that they will be looking to them for direction, support and advice as needs arise.

We encourage our community to support SonRise Chrysalis through prayers, sponsorship, weekend events, team service and financial contributions. Please contact Jeff Moss at (309)531-9161 to be added to the SonRise Chrysalis Newsletter mailing list. Information is also available on their website at www.SonRiseChrysalis.org

The Image of the Great Banquet

The Gospel of Luke presents the parable of the Great Banquet. Jesus tells of a master who prepared a great banquet and invited many guests, saying, "Come, for everything is now ready." After so many excuses for not attending by his invited guests, the master became angry and ordered his servants: "Go quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame."

After this had been done and still room remained, the master told his servant: "Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in so that my house will be full." Then, as additional invitations were given, the banquet was presented to his guests. The result of the master's invitation was to feast and fellowship at a banquet given by God." (Luke 14:15-24).

Purpose of the Great Banquet

The focus of the Great Banquet is to know Jesus as Lord and Savior and to make Him known. The objective of the Great Banquet is to continue the 3-day weekend by serving Christ in local churches, homes and work places. To live a life of grace and to respond to higher levels of Christian discipleship becomes the purpose of the Great Banquet.

Who Should Attend the Great Banquet

This weekend experience is for anyone who: 1) Wishes to strengthen his/her spiritual life; 2) wants to have a better understanding of prayer, the sacraments, study and Christian action; 3) strives to live a Christian life that bears fruit for God; 4) seeks to know Jesus as Lord and Savior and to make Him known.

You Are Invited

You're invited to be a guest at the Great Banquet given by God, and to feast in His goodness and love.

Spring Great Banquet
Weekend Dates:

Men: March 13-16
Women: March 27-30



Weekend Outline

Thursday

7:00-7:30 pm Registration
7:30 pm Send Off/Sponsor Hour

Friday

8:00 am Breakfast
9:15 am Discovering Priorities
11:15 am God's Gift of Grace
12:30 pm Lunch
1:45 pm Ministry of All Believers
3:00 pm Our Response to God's Grace
5:30 pm Dinner
6:30 pm The Way of Relationship

Saturday

7:30 am Breakfast
8:15 am Truth Through Study
10:00 am Sacramental Grace
12:30 pm Lunch
3:00 pm The Life of Christian Action
4:30 pm Obstacles to Grace
5:45 pm Dinner
7:15 pm Disciples
8:30 pm Candlelight Worship
10:00 pm Candlelight

Sunday

8:00 am Breakfast
8:50 am Changing Our Environment
10:00 am A Life of Grace
11:00 am Body of Christ
12:00 pm Lunch
1:30 pm Staying Power
2:30 pm Establishing Priorities

Stay Informed ...
B/N Great Banquet Website:
bngreatbanquet.org

Thank You for Your Financial Support

The entire Board would like to extend a note of thanks for the generosity shown during our Fall weekends. As many of you know, we started out our weekends with about \$600 in our bank account ... It costs around \$15,000 to host a set of weekends, so as you can imagine, we were concerned.

Many individuals in our community made contributions to help cover the costs and we are happy to report after paying all our bills for the Fall Walks we now have around \$2,000 in our account. This money will help cover the cost of this newsletter mailing, and will begin purchasing supplies for our Spring weekends.

It has always been the spirit of our community that money is never an obstacle for someone who wishes to attend. We are currently making plans for our Spring weekends and financial gifts can now be made to:

B/N Great Banquet
P.O. Box 3043
Bloomington, IL 61702

Important Dates for Your Calendar ...

Community Training Event—February 2 (9 am to Lunch)
Calvary UMC

Men's Great Banquet #82—March 13-16—East Bay Camp

Women's Great Banquet #83—March 27-30—East Bay Camp

Logan Correctional Center Great Banquet #41—April 11-13
Logan Correctional Center—Lincoln, IL

*Anointing Service Times and Locations will be
published in an upcoming newsletter.*



“...Come, for all is now ready.”

Luke 14:17

BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL EMMAUS COMMUNITY
P.O. BOX 3043
BLOOMINGTON, IL 61702-3043

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Inside ...

Great Banquet Information and
upcoming events and weekends.



“...Come, for all is now ready.”

Luke 14:17

We Need You!

It was expressed to me recently that we need to get more of our community involved in weekend and community events "keep everybody connected and excited"; I think is how the advice went ... I couldn't agree more! Here is a list of ways we need you to be involved:

72 hour prayer Vigil—The backbone of the weekend! Contact Iris Sonkin at 309-661-4630 to participate in this meaningful experience.

Set-up/Clean Up—People, this is where we need the most help from our community! Contact Alan Bruehl at 309-662-1930 or Scott Riddle at 309-962-2447

Agape letters—There is nothing better than receiving a personal handwritten letter. General conference room letters are wonderful too!

Candlelight Worship—8:30 PM, Saturday night. You know... pray, sing, message, communion & fellowship. Contact Jim Pitzer at 309-725-3363 to help with setting up chairs & luminaries or passing out & collecting the flashlight candles.

Closing—5:00 PM, Sunday afternoon. Hear and see how God has changed lives in 72 hours!

Banners—In the Great Banquet community, banners are a big deal! We are expected to send our banners on to other communities after every set of weekends; in return new banners will be sent us. This is a great project for reunion groups!

Weekend Snack Table—Community, let's shower our weekends with great homemade snacks. It's time to give the team a break! Look for the sign up sheet at upcoming events.

Agape Gifts— All those little gifts can make a big difference.

Sponsorship—It is a true joy to share a weekend with someone else. Contact Carol Smithson, Community Registrar at 309-663-4870 for information.

Meal Servers - It is called a Great Banquet – see related article. Contact Lynn Fletcher at 309-378-4602

Why it is called the Great Banquet!

The central theme scripture of the weekend is about inviting people to a feast, a celebration. Due to this picture we are asking our meal servers to get a little creative and make meal time a little more festive. Please bring simple table decorations. It could be as simple as kid's toys, fresh flowers or fun placemats, tablecloths and candles. Whatever you come up with will be great. To sign up for a meal server time contact: Lynn Fletcher at 309- 378-4602

HISTORY OF THE GREAT BANQUET

To become familiar with the Great Banquet, let's look first at the history of its counterparts, the Cursillo and the Walk to Emmaus. The Cursillo began in Spain in the 1940's in the Catholic Church. It spread to the United States and evolved for Protestants into the Walk to Emmaus under the auspices of the Upper Room and the United Methodist Church. An Emmaus movement was started by the First Presbyterian Church in Madisonville, Kentucky in 1982. After a 10 year history of the Walk to Emmaus in Madisonville, the Great Banquet was formed. Governed by an ecumenical board of directors and using the "Cursillo model", but with a different image, the Great Banquet continues to emphasize personal Christian discipleship. Institutionally sponsored by the Madisonville, Kentucky First Presbyterian Church, the Madisonville Great Banquet Movement started in October 1991. Lampstand Ministries was formed as a covering corporation for the National Great Banquet Movement in 1992, and to help equip communities begin the Great Banquet in different locations.

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE GREAT BANQUET?

The Great Banquet is a 72-hour experience, beginning on Thursday evening and ending Sunday evening. For three days, guests live and study together in a worshipful time of singing, prayer and discussion. During each of the fifteen talks given by laity and clergy, the theme of God's grace is presented. Through a combined effort of laity and clergy, the Great Banquet focuses on the renewal of the church. Guests participate in the daily celebration of Holy Communion and examine more fully the presence of Christ in His body of believers. They personally experience His grace through the prayers and acts of a loving, Christian support community.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE GREAT BANQUET?

One of the most important parts of the Great Banquet is follow-up. After attending the Great Banquet, guests are challenged to strengthen their own spiritual life through study and active congregational participation and strive to become active disciples of Jesus Christ in the world through their church. Guests are encouraged to form reunion groups of three to five people which meet weekly to encourage one another to a life of discipleship. There are lots of opportunities to assist in future Great Banquet weekends through prayer, support and team involvement.



“... Come, for all is now ready.”

Luke 14:17

Bloomington/Normal Great Banquet Community † PO Box 3043 † Bloomington, IL 61702-3043

Guest Reservation Request

The Great Banquet is a three-day experience of renewal, learning and sharing in the atmosphere of a Christian community. It is a different experience for each individual. It does not provide a climate for the solution of deep-seated problems, but is designed to help mature people work toward a Christian way of life with community support. Husband and wife are invited to attend on separate weekends; usually, the husband first. Each person must submit a separate application. However, married couples are requested to turn in both applications at the same time, if possible.

Please return the completed form and a check for \$25.00 to the B/N Great Banquet Registrar. Make checks payable to B/N Great Banquet Community. Please note that the total cost per candidate is \$150. If you can help with the cost, please do.

The B/N Great Banquet Registrar is: Carol Smithson
53 Brookshire Green
Bloomington, IL 61704

Please make all checks payable to B/N Great Banquet Community

Please note that this form is an application and its submittal does not guarantee acceptance. You may be placed on a waiting list since we only have a certain number of spaces available. Early applicants will be notified of acceptance by letter several weeks before the Great Banquet.

From Carol Smithson—Community Registrar ...

As Thanksgiving approaches, I am once again aware of all the gifts God has blessed me with. One of the greatest of these is the fourth day experience we (Rod and I together) have been involved in for the last eighteen years. Walk to Emmaus has changed my life and because it has been such a blessing; I have been very diligent in seeking information and ultimately supporting this change to Great Banquet. With the beginning of something new, I am hopeful that we will have to add weekends due to increased registrations!!!!

The registration procedure is the same as before; however, the Great Banquet movement puts no regulations on couples attending together and attendees being active church members. All are invited to the banquet! It would be my hope, that responsible sponsoring will continue and that you will continue to talk to husband and wife together and offer to register both. We all know that God will determine the right time and who we are to sponsor. The new registration form will be available online December 1st @ bngreatbanquet.org and is also included in this newsletter. May His blessings continue to flow in your lives and over this wonderful Great Banquet Community of faithful believers.



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GUEST: Please print & complete all blanks, then return to your sponsor. All information is necessary for your proper placement for the weekend.

Name: _____ Name on Name Tag: _____

Address: _____ City-State-Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Weekend Dates: _____

Gender: Male Female Age: _____ Marital Status: Sng. Mar. Wid. Div. Sep.

Occupation: _____ Spouse's Name: _____

Your Sponsor's Name & Phone: _____ (____) _____ - _____

Your Church & Its Address: _____

Denomination: _____ Pastor's Name: _____

In what religious or community organizations are you active? _____

Has Great Banquet been explained to you? Yes No Has the follow-up program been explained? Yes No

State briefly why you wish to attend and what you expect from it: _____

SPECIAL NEEDS

Medication: _____

Diet modifications: _____

Health issues: _____

Other needs: _____

In an emergency, how best can we help you? _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____



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Luke 14:17

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SPONSOR: Please print & complete all blanks, then return to the registrar. All information is necessary for proper placement in the weekend.

Guest Name: _____ Weekend Dates: _____

If married, name of your Guest's Spouse: _____

If married, have you discussed the Great Banquet with your Guest's Spouse? Yes No

Will your Guest's Spouse be attending a weekend? Yes No Spouse Weekend Dates: _____

Sponsor's Name: _____ (_____) - _____

Sponsor's Address / City / State / Zip: _____

Sponsor's Phone: (_____) _____ - _____ Sponsor's Cell / Other Phone: (_____) _____ - _____

Sponsor's original 4th weekend type (Great Banquet, Emmaus, Cursillo, etc.): _____

Where? _____ When & Number? _____

State briefly why you believe your Guest should attend a Great Banquet: _____

Describe any special health, diet, sleeping, or other needs of your Guest: _____

Emergency contact name, phone and relationship to your Guest: _____

Sponsor, are you praying for your Guest? Yes No Bringing your Guest to East Bay? Yes No

Are you planning to attend Sponsor's Hour? Yes No Candlelight? Yes No Closing? Yes No

Are you caring for your Guest's home needs during the weekend, including support of their immediate family? Yes No

Have you explained the post-weekend meeting? Yes No

Will you help your Guest get established in a Reunion Group? Yes No