

This Newsletter sponsored by:
Our Sunday Visitor

REMINDER!

Spots still open in 2017

- June 4-10 (High school week)
- July 23-29 (Adult Week)
- July 30-Aug 5 (Family Week)
- Aug 30-Sept 4 (All-Comers)
- Sep 23-28 (Masters Week)
- October 15-21 (College week)
- October 22-28 (College week)

Don't miss your chance to serve with the Farm this year!

If you have questions, email Carley at volunteer@bethlehemfarm.net

NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS!

Caretaker applications available on our website!
www.bethlehemfarm.net

Encountering Christ in Communion and Community

by Shannon, Caretaker

This past March, we at the Farm hosted a trifecta of group weeks – three college groups back-to-back, an unusual occurrence for Bethlehem Farm. While exhausting, the weeks were filled with many joys. One such joy was that, after a few Caretakers became trained as Eucharistic ministers, our local priest gave us permission to do a simple exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in our chapel. And so, during the March group weeks, we began offering Eucharistic Adoration on Tuesday nights. For our current Caretaker community, having Adoration here at the Farm, our home, is a new and exciting experience. On the Tuesday of the second group week, I was happy to be able to find the time to attend Adoration, and it gave me so much life to see the college kids flowing in and out of our tiny chapel, some staying for the whole time and some only peeking in for a moment to kneel and whisper a short prayer. That week in particular was especially exhausting, and I

know that personally those precious moments with Jesus in prayer gave me much-needed strength. The Tuesday of the third group week, however, I was not able to attend Adoration, even though I had been looking forward to doing so. On Tuesday nights we usually host our community night supper, and on that Tuesday I had picked up a friend of ours named Greg. ...

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This article is part of the *Our Sunday Visitor* catechetical series

Practicing Resurrection (in the Place Where It All Began)

by Sarah, Executive Director of Emmaus Farm

My name is Sarah George, and I am the founder and Executive Director of the “newest” of the four Farms. Emmaus Farm was founded in 2015 to carry on the work started by the Glenmary Home Missioners in Lewis County, Kentucky in the 1970s. Glenmary bought a 45-acre farm in 1971 to use for vocational discernment and mission work, and from there, the Glenmary Farm evolved into an active volunteer program hosting more than 400 high school and college volunteers each year. I volunteered as a Farm Manager at the Glenmary Farm in 2014, the year the Glenmary Missioners decided to discontinue their mission work in Lewis County. However, the program was still viable, and Lewis County is still in great need of service.

That summer I decided I wanted to try to take on the dream that the Farm could continue service in Lewis County and host volunteers to experience a radical way of living the Gospel here in Appalachia.

After about two years of research, planning, and fundraising, Emmaus Farm purchased the “Farm” retreat center from the Glenmary Home Missioners in September 2016, and we began the work of renovating and refurbishing to get the property group-ready for our first volunteers in March 2017. Shortly after occupying the property, I got a call from Jordan of Jerusalem Farm in Kansas City, MO, and he offered to gather at Emmaus Farm with his community members as well as with Nazareth Farm staff and Bethlehem Farm caretakers for a few days of work and fellowship. I was amazed and thrilled that these people I hadn't even met would rally around me and Emmaus Farm because they care so deeply about the mission we all share. ...

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Encountering Christ (continued)

Greg lives way up on the mountain outside of Talcott, and the drive to his home, while a bit out of the way, offers spectacular views. Back in January, Carley and I led a group in fixing his floor: new carpet in the living room and bedrooms and new plywood and linoleum in the kitchen. One day, Greg palmed us twenty bucks to buy the college volunteers surprise pizza for lunch, which just shows what kind of guy he is. A few years back, Greg had a stroke, and it's very difficult for him to get around. After he expressed to us that he rarely gets to see people, Carley and I extended an invitation to the next community night. And so, two months later, I found myself leaving my work site early and taking volunteers up up up the mountain to Greg's house to pick him up and squeeze his walker into their van. Once at the Farm, Greg sat with a cup of coffee, some volunteers, and a plate of delicious lasagna. He hung out in the prayerea well after dinner was over, and although I kept offering to take him home, he said he wanted to stay, and stay he did – all the way through evening prayer. When the announcement about Adoration was made, I looked at my watch and thought, "Dang it" – I would be gone for over an hour, meaning I would miss the whole thing. I loaded Greg and his walker into the car and off we went, winding through the mountain roads and chatting. During a lull in the conversation, I stared ahead at the dark road and thought to

myself, "I'm really sad I'm missing Adoration – I wanted to see Jesus tonight." Then I realized – how could I possibly be so blind? Jesus was sitting right next to me in the passenger's seat, in this lonely man who needed a ride home. I greatly enjoyed the rest of the ride home with Greg, and I even lingered at his house for a few minutes before heading back to the Farm.

During faith sharing on Thursday night, I brought up this story as a big way that I had seen God that week. Arguably the most awesome thing about the Catholic Church is the sacraments, and one of the best things about Bethlehem Farm is its vibrant community. These two things are not mutually exclusive – in fact, they are made perfectly for each other. After all, Communion and community stem from the same root word. It's like Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati said when asked why he constantly went to visit the marginalized: "Jesus comes every day to visit me in the Eucharist; I return the visit by going to find him among the poor." While Adoration during group weeks is a special opportunity for volunteers to encounter Christ, it is not meant to be the only place we see Jesus. Rather, through the sacraments we are given the grace to go out into the broader community – the body of Christ, the Church – and see and serve Christ in all of our neighbors.

Practicing Resurrection (continued)

In early February during a cold week, the four Farms gathered at the place where it all began, the site of the original Glenmary Farm in Kentucky, where we worked to rebuild and renovate the property. Together the twenty-one of us accomplished projects that included cleaning and painting the kitchen and dining area, cleaning and painting the bathhouse, building eight benches, organizing and building shelves in the woodshed, building compost bins, rescreening doors, and cleaning gutters, among many other repairs and improvements.

The work we accomplished was immeasurably helpful and would have taken me months to accomplish on my own, but the property renovations were only a portion of what we created during those five days. The real achievement of that time together was building a community of people – a network of support – bound by our shared call to live the Gospel in this unique way and by our choice to live the cornerstones of simplicity, service, community, and prayer. I learned so much from the three Farms, from how to incorporate sustainable practices into daily life and their daily prayer and work rhythm, to their challenges and successes in fundraising and administrative tasks. I've already come back to this network with questions and requests for advice.

It was important for us all to gather at the site that inspired the conception of the existing Farms and to practice resurrection, participating in the bringing forth of new life. I am honored and humbled to have hosted this powerful group of people in Lewis County, and I am so grateful that Emmaus has been graciously welcomed into the "Family."



"On the Road to Emmaus": Members of our four communities gathered at Emmaus Farm to share in prayer, simplicity, service, and community.

Work Site Updates

By Tim, Caretaker

As the warm weather rolls in, our home repair program has begun to hit its stride with all of the volunteers providing that extra spark to get things rolling. Caretakers do work on projects a few days each week during the winter months, but we are really able to make our largest impact in the community with the help of volunteers and a little cooperation from Mother Nature. This March marked the initiation of one of our largest projects ever, a 20'x24' addition to the Carr family's small home. After weeks of planning, estimating, and ordering, ground was broken on the new addition on our first March week. Since then, Eric, Shannon, and myself have been leading volunteers in creating a cinderblock foundation, framing out and installing a floor system, laying subflooring, and even starting to raise some exterior walls in our second April group week. This project will be on the docket for the foreseeable future as we work to give the Carrs a better living space. Also back in March, Jarusha and Carley led volunteers in adding a new metal roof to Debra Cole's house. In just three short weeks they were

able to transform a leaky shingled roof into a beautiful clay-colored metal roof that Debra loves and admires. As those projects were going on, Audrey and I were leading volunteers at the Shafran's. The Shafrans are an amazing family who experienced a lot of damage and loss from last year's summer floods. Audrey and I worked on ripping out the bedroom floor, removing water and muck from the crawl space, and adding new floor joists; we then installed beautiful oak laminate flooring. Finally, in April, Audrey and Jarusha started to help out a Pence Springs neighbor, Frances, in getting her house up to fire code. They repaired and reinforced a second story porch, built a bannister and railing for her indoor staircase, and will eventually be installing a fire escape staircase down from the second story. As you can tell, we have been pretty busy in making a huge impact in our community. None of this would be possible without our donors, the determination of our site leaders, and the strength, energy, and passion brought by each and every volunteer who has graced our presence!



Awesome progress being made on the Carrs' addition



A peek inside our hoop house, where fresh greens grow all winter

Farmer Tim's Kale Bake Recipe

Ingredients

- 1 lb of kale
- 1.5 cups of milk
- 3-4 eggs
- 16 oz. ricotta cheese
- 1 cup parmesan cheese
- 1 cup white cheddar cheese
- A pinch of all of the following:
 - Salt
 - Black pepper
 - Garlic powder
 - Celery salt
 - Basil

Directions

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Sautee kale with garlic and olive oil for 5 minutes or less. Beat together 1.5 cups of milk and 3-4 eggs. Fold the kale and the cheese into the egg and milk mixture. Add pinches of seasoning: salt, black pepper, garlic powder, celery salt, and basil. Pour together in an oiled 9x13 baking pan and bake in the oven for 45 minutes at 400 degrees. Enjoy the cheesy goodness!

MISSION STATEMENT:

Bethlehem Farm is a Catholic community in Appalachia that transforms lives through service with the local community and the teaching of sustainable practices.

We invite volunteers to join us in living the Gospel cornerstones of community, prayer, service, and simplicity.

OUR COMMUNITY:

- Carly Ann Braun
- Colleen Fitts
- Eric Fitts
- Carley Knapp
- Audrey Kolde
- Jarusha Lang
- Shannon O'Toole
- Katherine Peregoy
- Tim Peregoy
- Tim Shovlin

BOARD MEMBERS:

- Paul Daugherty
- John Hannagan
- Molly Linehan
- Scott McNelis
- Caitlin Morneau
- Jennie Motto Mesterharm
- Kat O'Laughlin
- Sharyl Pels
- Moira Reilly
- Kathryn Moran
- Jake Teitgen

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By our friends at Canfield & Tack

Tribute to Tool Tuesday Donors

A big thank you to all who donated to our tool fund!

In late February, we started a campaign called "Tool Tuesday" in order to purchase new tools for our low-income home repair program. So far, we have raised over \$2,200 and received several awesome tools, including a brand-new Dewalt miter saw. We extend our deepest gratitude to all those who donated; we couldn't continue our ministry without you!

If you would still like to purchase a tool or donate to our fund, please visit <https://www.myregistry.com/wishlist/Bethlehem-Farm-Alderson-Wv/>

Eric & Colleen Celebrate 10 years as Caretakers!

As the nascent Bethlehem Farm group developed over the course of 2004, the question often came: "Who will be there...and for how long?" There were many commitments made that year and the list of names and promises kept is a long one. One promise that stood out was Eric & Colleen Fitts' commitment of 5-10 years to establish Bethlehem Farm as a viable community. In May, we mark the tenth anniversary of Eric & Colleen's arrival as Caretakers, still going strong, and now with three beautiful children. Eric & Colleen would like to thank all of the Caretakers, Board Members, Summer Servants, donors, family, and friends who have made this ministry and lifestyle possible for them to share with over 3,000 participants who have graced this Farm during their tenure.

Sustainable Upgrade Fund is Born!

by Eric, Director

The core of our mission involves transforming lives through serving with the local community and teaching sustainable practices. Our Service-Retreat Experience; Repairing Homes, Renewing Communities; and Sustainability in Action programs all come together in a beautiful way through our newest effort: the Sustainable Upgrade Fund.

Our Values

As stewards of creation and co-creators with God in its care and cultivation, we have a responsibility to consider the effect of our actions on the environment and adopt practices that sustain and promote environmental health, rather than degrade it. These Christian values have been clearly outlined in both the Appalachian pastoral letter At Home in the Web of Life and Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato Si'.

The Opportunity

As we have been learning more about sustainable building techniques, it has become clear that using such methods can be more costly than a low-income homeowner is capable of paying, even if it saves them on maintenance and utility bills in the long run or makes for a healthier home.

The Sustainable Upgrade Fund will be used as a cost share for the sustainable materials above and beyond the cost that the conventional (standard, lower quality, more toxic) materials would have been. Sustainable materials will include nontoxic, super-insulating, durable, or sustainably-harvested products.

We are excited for the potential of this new fund to improve the health and resilience of our local community, while also cultivating care for creation. Please consider joining this effort with a gift of any amount. Our goal for this year is to invest \$5,000 in the Sustainable Upgrade Fund—with your help we can reach and perhaps even surpass this goal.

Examples of how your gift could support the Sustainable Upgrade Fund:

- \$20 adds a sheet of foam board for super-insulation
- \$50 upgrades 2 gallons of paint to nontoxic and zero VOC paint
- \$100 doubles attic insulation
- \$300 upgrades two bedrooms to nontoxic, durable ceramic tile

Check us out online!
www.bethlehemfarm.net

Questions or Comments regarding this publication and/or article submissions can be sent to the editor, Shannon, at bethlehemfarm@gmail.com. Photos welcome!