

# Rule of Life

## Of The Emmaus Community



Revised 2020

# **The Rule of Life of the Emmaus Community**

**The Emmaus Community  
is a Neo-Monastic community  
whose recognition of Christ in our midst  
leads us to walk the Way of love  
through prayer, simplicity and presence with  
each other and in our neighbourhood.**

## **Prayer**

*When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?” —Luke 24:30–32*

*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. —1 Thess. 5:16–18*

As a community, before all else, we are called to root ourselves in a life of prayer. Jesus modelled a life of prayer, and his followers have been instructed to pray without ceasing. The Emmaus Community thus commits to being immersed in prayer which is both personal and collective, active and contemplative.

Our vow calls us to have regular personal prayer, which includes times of silence and scripture study—as well as to join with the community in times of common prayer.

Our hope is that our times of prayer will cause our hearts to burn as we encounter Christ in the breaking open of scripture, in prayer (including confession, intercession and gratitude), and in the breaking of bread through the celebration of the Eucharist / Communion.

We recognize that our life of common prayer engages tradition and innovation, creativity and ongoing study. We also recognize that these times of prayer will guide us in seeking reconciliation with God, each other, the neighbourhood, the stranger, and all of creation.

### **Simplicity**

*All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. —Acts 4:32*

*“Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” So he [Jesus] went in to stay with them. —Luke 24:29b*

Anyone who chooses to walk in the way of Jesus must consider that Jesus asks us to trust him for our daily bread, to care for the poor, the orphan and the widow, and to find joy and contentment in a life of simplicity. A life defined by simplicity can hear and respond quickly to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Our vow of simplicity means having all we need for a healthy life, but seeking to remain free from the bondage of unhealthy attachments. We choose an

attitude inclined away from accumulation. We desire to be mindful of wastefulness, to care for God's creation, and to be concerned for how we use what we own.

Together we desire to support each other in creating a sharing economy with our possessions and to help each other—and others—with material needs, as well as to practice hospitality. We define life not by what we have, but by who we are and who's we are, what we do with our life, and by the relationships that we have.

Accordingly, we choose individually and collectively to step towards a life simpler in possessions, time, and technology.

In our call to simplicity, we trust in God's providence and provision. We desire to respect God's creation and to live into the reality that each person is made in the image of God. We recognize that simplicity is a grace from God that we receive—and that simplicity is found in seeking the reign of God.

### **Presence**

*The word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighbourhood. —John 1:14 (The Message)*

*Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus... While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them. —Luke 24:13–14*

Our vow of presence is taken in response to the radical presence offered to us by God.

We recognize that God has become present to us throughout time, whether in a pillar of cloud, a prophetic word, or in the radical act of the Incarnation, life, death and resurrection of Jesus. We believe that God continues to be present to us through the Holy Spirit drawing us deeper into relationship with God and all of God's creation.

As a community, we respond to our call to presence as we incarnate the Gospel in our daily lives, work, and relationships. A vow of presence requires the hard work of walking with each other through our pain and disillusionment, as well as in our celebration and thanksgiving. It is a commitment to authenticity and availability, knowing that as we journey together, Jesus joins us on the road, widening our view and changing our hearts.

A vow of presence invites us into active relationships of accountability and reconciliation with one another and with the land and the neighborhood where we have been placed. Through our commitment to stability, hospitality and presence, we become witnesses to what God is doing in our neighborhoods and in the world, and we become signs and symbols of that in-breaking reign of peace, justice and love.

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*In order to make these commitments more concrete, each community member of the Emmaus Community will create an individual and/or family plan which takes life circumstances into account. This will be shared, reviewed, and updated annually, reflecting the individual and collective ways in which each covenanted member is prayerfully called to move toward the embodiment of the Rule.*

*All these signs are practiced by the power of the Holy Spirit. As a community, we aim to live each moment with grace, celebration (including joyful laughter!) and generosity both to self and others. We seek to live prayerfully and creatively according to the spirit of these commitments, rather than limiting ourselves to the words in which they are written. In living out this call, we affirm that it is a call to abundant life, freedom, celebration and joy, as we grow in the loving discipline of a faithful community.*

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*NOTE: This is a shorter rule than earlier versions that we have published.*

*In 2020, the Emmaus Community decided to simplify our main rule, and, instead, create a "Customary" for Covenanted Members which describes our common practices for that coming year.*

*This Customary might include things like a hope for members to be present at prayer a certain number of times a week, or to fast on Fridays during Lent, to be present in our neighbourhood by serving a meal, or to go waste-free or recycle soft plastic together.*

*This Customary is agreed to, by consensus, and revised yearly and contains many elements that were contained in the longer version of the Rule and Rhythm of Life of the Emmaus Community.*

*The Cover photo is the "Road to Emmaus: by Daniel Bonnell – gifted for use by the artist to the Emmaus Community*

## Forms of Connection with Emmaus

**Covenanted Members** of the Emmaus Community are baptised Christians who are 16 years or older and who take *vows* of prayer, presence and simplicity. They have mutually discerned, with the Emmaus Community Chapter (our decision-making body) to make a commitment to each other to live the Rule of Life and the Chapter Customary *together* in intentional community. The Customary sets commonly held practices and is revised yearly by consensus. To become a Covenanted Member, one first explores our common life (including meals, prayer, craft industry, eucharist/communion & incarnational ministry) and then becomes a Discerner. Discerners undergo the 9-month process of formation called *With Burning Hearts* with a cohort. After the Discerner process is complete, a person can apply to become a Novice. If accepted, the Discerner enters the Novice period and is clothed with the hooded habit. The Novice period is a minimum of one year in duration. After the year is completed, the Novice may be invited to become a Covenanted Member of the community and is clothed with the silver medallion habit of the community.

**Companions** of the Emmaus Community are those who resonate with the values of the community and make *promises* of prayer, presence and simplicity. Companions participate in elements of our community life from nearby or a distance; but are not bound to the Customary. Most often, Companions live the Rule of Life in their own contexts and/or communities. They have undergone a process of formation approved by the Formation Director and Chapter, which can be the *With Burning Hearts* process.

**Friends** of the Emmaus Community are those who chose not to formally affiliate, but who participate in our common life; perhaps through our ministries such as the beverage collective, meals, prayer times and/or The AbbeyChurch.

[www.emmauscommunity.ca](http://www.emmauscommunity.ca)



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