

Fellowship Focus

Signs of New Life in Christ

Sherry Elliott, Executive Director of Administration, Interpretation, and Development

Easter greetings from The Upper Room. The living Christ is with us today and always. He has risen indeed!



Decorating eggs has long been a springtime tradition and a creative way to celebrate Easter. I remember dipping hard-boiled eggs into cups of blue and purple dye at the

kitchen table and waiting for them to dry. We would hide them along with plastic eggs filled with candy for our family egg hunt after Easter Sunday dinner. I doubt that I recognized this as a child, but the egg is a perfect symbol to represent new life and Jesus' release from the tomb.

I recently found The Upper Room's collection of Ukrainian eggs, which were acquired by our museum in the 1980s. The Ukrainian egg is not your typical Easter egg, but more like an exquisite piece of art. The fragile egg is carefully decorated with great purpose and precision with multiple layers of wax and colorful dyes. The decorated egg is called a pysanka, which means "to write or inscribe" in Ukrainian, and is created by freehand with a kitska, a tiny tool that holds melted beeswax. Each design and geometrical detail is added layer by layer and dipped repeatedly into various shades of dye. It could take days to complete one egg. The designs often feature signs of spring or themes from the Christian life representing rebirth and new beginnings. The pysanka is a cherished treasure and is given as a gift to

neighbors and friends to offer blessings of good health, happiness, love, or spiritual protection.

As I write this article, I'm mindful that four million Ukrainian people are now refugees due to the Russian invasion. They are leaving their beloved friends and homes to find safety in neighboring countries. The Ukrainian eggs have served as reminders to pray for peace and protection for those in peril.

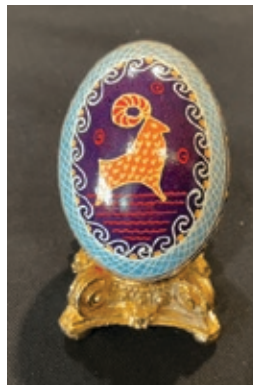
The Upper Room publisher, Rev. Kimberly Orr, and Peter Velander, Executive Director of International Engagement, are currently in eastern Europe, working with publishing coordinators to help translate prayers and meditations for Ukrainian refugees and those who are helping them. Our

aim is to provide spiritual care and support to our siblings in Christ during this difficult time. We plan to share more about this initiative when they return to the States.

I encourage you to take a few minutes to read through the newsletter. You will see hopeful signs of rebirth in our updates on *The Upper Room* international language editions and on The Academy for Spiritual Formation and Emmaus Ministries. Our global ministry of helping people create daily life with God continues to take shape and expand with your help.

Thank you for being our advocate and partner in ministry. Your constant, faithful giving inspires and blesses us.

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live." —John 11:25, NRSV



Ukrainian eggs from The Upper Room collection.

Updates from Around the World

The Upper Room daily devotional helps people create daily life with God and brings together a worldwide community of prayer. Because of YOU, our generous donors who support the international editions of *The Upper Room*, the daily devotional continues to offer hope and a sense of connection for the global body of Christ.

Initiatives in Europe

As shared in the opening article, members of The Upper Room leadership team are currently in eastern Europe, helping our publishing partners develop resources for Ukrainian refugees. Other initiatives from Europe include recent website launches of the Bulgarian, Estonian, Greek, Hungarian, and Russian editions of *The Upper Room*. Copies of the Bulgarian, Estonian, Hungarian, Italian, and Norwegian editions are shared with people in prisons.



Bulgarian and Greek editions of *The Upper Room* daily devotional guide.

Chapel Services in Argentina

To reach more people during the pandemic, our partners in Argentina started an online chapel service on the first and third Wednesday of the month, featuring *El Aposento Alto*, the Spanish version of *The Upper Room*. These services attract people from various Latin American countries and give a sense of community that "this is our magazine."

A Testimony from India

My name is Mrs. Manasi Mohanty, and I'm the editor of *Dhyana Kothari*, the Odia edition in India. Our readers often share their stories of how *Dhyana Kothari* has inspired them and changed their lives. Their testimonies are an inspiration and strengthen us in our work. Here is a testimony from a reader that I want to share with you.

Mr. Sudhir Kumar Barik is a leader of a church. He visited our office in September to pay his subscription. He told us that while the pandemic was at its peak, he and his entire family were affected by the virus. In those difficult times, they could not get proper food as no one could go outside, and their neighbors and relatives were too afraid to come near them. Mr. Barik told me that even though they could not get food properly, *Dhyana Kothari* was like "manna" to them, giving them spiritual nourishment.

Tragedy struck when he lost his only son to COVID-19. His son was married and had a two-year-old daughter, and Mr. Barik's wife could not accept the loss of her son. But by reading *Dhyana Kothari*, it helped her to accept slowly the loss and gave her the strength to cope. He said that every meditation felt like it was written for them, providing a light for them in the darkness.

Let us hold in prayer Mr. Barik and his family and all the families around the world who have lost loved ones to COVID-19.

Print-on-Demand Language Editions Available to U.S. Readers

For years, there have been requests to have language editions other than English and Spanish available in the States; but the logistics to make this happen were too costly and cumbersome. Due to advances in printing technology, we are now experimenting with print-on-demand, which enables us to print and sell language editions locally in the States. Whether an immigrant grandparent or a new U.S. resident, having a moment with God in their heart language is priceless. For more details, please contact Marilyn Beaty at mlbeaty@UpperRoom.org.

We look forward to reporting more on this new initiative. Learn more about our international editions and ministry at www.UpperRoom.org/international.



Mrs. Manasi Mohanty (center, second to the right and bottom, left) with readers of the Odia edition of *The Upper Room*.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Emmaus Ministries

Day Four Restore, a one-day retreat designed to refresh the spirit and renew the commitment of those who have attended an Emmaus Ministries event or another Fourth Day retreat, launched on January 29. One hundred thirty people attended online, and another 60 participated in person in Georgia. Feedback about this new retreat has been encouraging. More retreats are scheduled for 2022. To find out more or to register, please visit www.upperroom.org/dayfourrestore.

“Well done, good and faithful servants! Thanks to all who followed God’s stirring to put on Day Four Restore. It has been a blessing to share this time with other communities. DeColores!”

—Carol BeVille, SWVA Emmaus Walk #28

Emmaus Ministries



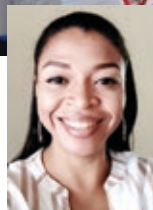
The international Emmaus Ministries team continues to work on another virtual offering in the Emmaus family, which will take place over three consecutive weekends (Friday evenings and Saturday mornings). This event is currently in the beta testing stage.

The Academy for Spiritual Formation

Because of last year’s success of their one-year online model, the Academy launched another yearlong retreat earlier this year.

Spiritual Formation in Today’s World: A One-Year Online Offering from The Academy for Spiritual Formation started in February and will run through October. This online retreat consists of four, three-day sessions. There are 29 participants with 18 being new to the Academy.

Because of the generosity of donors, more people, now more than ever, can experience the unforced rhythms of grace that the Academy offers. Sofia Liendo from Venezuela is a recent Academy graduate who was able to attend the first-ever **Spirituality of Resilience in the Latinx and Hispanic Communities**, thanks to donor funds.



“The training I received from the Academy was excellent. I am a missionary, and I travel to nearby cities. I am constantly on the go, staying in one, two, or three different places in a week. The Bible and kit that the Academy sent me were wonderful gifts. I use them every day to make a portable altar (pictured above) for my daily time with God. God bless you, beloved brothers and sisters.”

—Sofia Liendo

We are currently conducting a survey to strengthen our relationship with donors and other friends of The Upper Room. Here is a glimpse of how some of our donors connect with The Upper Room.

I read *The Upper Room* every day. I have it on my phone, so it is with me wherever I go.

I started reading the daily devotional as a teen. It was hard to come by during my military service; but now as a decorated disabled American, it has become part of my daily routine.

The Upper Room Chapel is where I felt called to ministry at age 19.

I have used Upper Room Books for personal spiritual formation as well as teaching in the local church.

Attending The Academy for Spiritual Formation changed my life.

I’ve attended an Emmaus walk and have worked with Chrysalis flights in the past. I am grateful for what The Upper Room does and want to support these efforts.

If you haven’t already done so, please take a moment to fill out our donor survey by scanning this QR code.

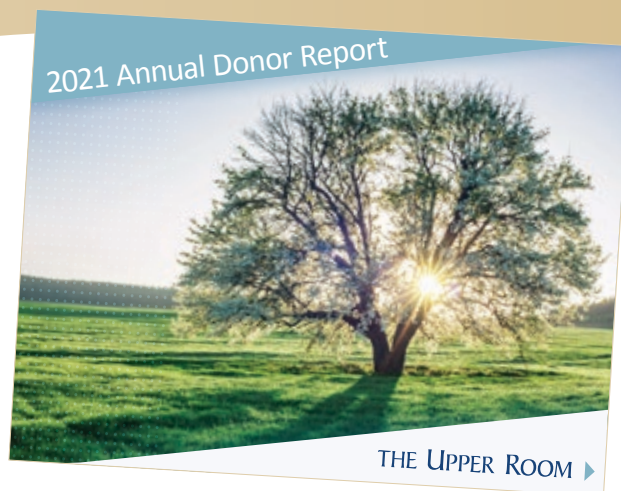


Thank you!

We are grateful for your amazing generosity!

In 2021, **9,620** donors gave **\$1,455,471** to support the ministries of The Upper Room.

For more detail, including a breakdown of individual funds, please read the 2021 Annual Donor Report at www.UpperRoom.org/donor.



The Fellowship Circle

Have you made a one-time gift or regular donations to The Upper Room? Consider joining the Fellowship Circle, our giving circle of friends who support the ministries of The Upper Room by donating monthly. Designate your gift to your favorite Upper Room ministry.

To join, visit www.UpperRoom.org/fellowship or call 1-877-899-2781, ext. 7212.

Everyday Contemplative

What does it mean to be a contemplative or to live a contemplative life? Does it mean sitting around thinking about God all day? Does it require living a simple or even austere life, like a monk or a nun?

In his new book, *Everyday Contemplative*, Roger Owens challenges us to expand our view of what it means to be contemplative, describing a lifestyle that seeks to be more open, available, and responsive to God. Each chapter explores a characteristic of contemplative living: longing, attention, patience, playfulness, vulnerability, nonjudgement, and freedom. *Everyday Contemplative* is an invitation to discover the joys of contemplative living.

Order *Everyday Contemplative* at www.UpperRoom.org/store. Use promo code **DNS20** to get 20% off your order.



The Upper Room covers all its ministry expenses from product sales, participants' fees, interest income, and the generous support of donors. We do not receive any apportionment funds from The United Methodist Church or any other group. Donations are needed to help sustain and expand the reach of our ministries so others may experience God more fully.