

## WELCOMING STRANGERS

### An Emmaus Community Story

By Sue Rambow, Emmaus CLC Community, Comox BC

*Sue Rambow has just completed a book documenting the history of the Emmaus CLC community.*

We have lived for the past 30 years in an intentional covenanted Christian Life Community called Emmaus. Some time ago it became clear to me that just like the disciples who wrote their stories of life with Jesus, we as a community also have a story to document for future generations.

I have presented living in community from Ralph`s and my own personal perspective as each member has their own unique experience of living in Emmaus We are made up of professional, middle class Christians who became increasingly aware of the social; and economic injustices within our society and consequently have chosen to live a gospel that calls us to live a preferential option for the poor and marginalized in our society .

In living this option, we have built a centre with an extra suite or gathering place that now has its own remarkable story of use (documented in the book). Instead of simple living which requires a huge investment of energy, we decided to live a gospel alternative within a North American context. So we opted to build a centre, with an extra suite for service, and to be satisfied with our level of affluence and instead to dedicate all our professional training and resources to serve those marginalized within our society or those who are sent to our door. In living our shared family lives, models of Christian values have been given to our cherished children and grandchildren

Fr John English SJ discovered us when he visited Vancouver Island in the mid 80s. He told us we were at about stage 3 of Christian Life Community formation and invited us to join the movement. Our gratitude and love for Christian Life Community and all the skills and spiritual nurturing we have received is overwhelming.

Since then we have navigated multiple sponsorships of refugees from Vietnam, El Salvador, Bosnia , Kosovo and now Syria. We live the social Gospel and have navigated the rocky provincial politics of 1980s in BC and have embraced all the changes in the Church from Vatican 2. In our dark history we are survivors of abuse from within our church and with the help of our Ecclesial advisors and group guides we have dealt with many personal challenges of individual members. Most of our community later became involved in further outreach with the foundation of a L`Arche Community here in the Comox Alley.

Ralph and I remained active in sponsorships and in work supporting our three elderly parents. This Emmaus story, I believe, is a story of celebration and of joy. A story of how the power of community has supported and allowed for a consistent and compassionate response to the world. It is a story of hope and possibility.

For those interested in ordering a book it is \$10 and \$4 shipping .Contact email is [Rambow.susan@gmail.com](mailto:Rambow.susan@gmail.com). Cheques can be made out to Sue Rambow and sent to: 1225 England Ave., Courtenay BC, V9N 2P1.