

## Walk to Bethlehem

Your church members are invited to take part in a multi-church walking challenge called Walk to Bethlehem. From August 1 to December 1, several churches will be logging our physical activity to traverse 6,252 miles on a virtual trip from Marion to Bethlehem. We will combine prayers and scriptures with our physical activity and make them priorities on our schedules this fall. We will move closer to Bethlehem and draw together as a closer community -within our church and with others in the community- as we move closer and closer to the Christmas season. Each week, we'll check in on our progress, and there will be multiple opportunities throughout the fall for our churches to connect and fellowship with one another, as well as with the broader community.

All of us will log our mileage for 18 weeks. Adding our efforts together, we can complete the distance to Bethlehem. Logging our efforts will be important because there will be opportunities for friendly competitions between the participating churches, and we'll be keeping track of which church reaches Bethlehem first! Any aerobic/ physical activity that you do is able to do can be counted. More information about how to log activity is described below. We will provide resources to help you with:

- Prayer and scriptures
- Logging charts, apps, or websites
- Physical activity tips and opportunities

Contact {person at your church leading effort} at {his/her email address} or {his/her phone number} if you would like to help, are interested in taking part, or need more information.

### Travel plan

We are leaving from downtown Marion on our journey to Bethlehem. We will head east toward the coast of North Carolina to begin our trek. From there, we're heading across the Atlantic Ocean, then to northern Africa, and on to Bethlehem.

### Walking (or other physical activity)

Aerobic or cardiovascular activity is any type of exercise that helps us increase our breathing and heart rates. The activity can be something that is done continuously at a certain pace for a certain amount of time in which the exerciser can keep a steady breathing rate. Typical aerobic activities are:

- Walking
- Jogging/ Running
- Biking
- Rowing
- Swimming
- Dancing
- Cardiovascular equipment – treadmill, elliptical/ stepper, bike, rower, etc.

Since we want to encourage many people and all ages and abilities to participate, we will take a broader view of physical activity and recognize other exercise, like:

- Ping pong
- Gardening
- Playing on the playground
- Badminton
- Others.... What do you like to do?

### Tracking mileage

- If the distance is known, record in miles (half or whole miles only, please)
- If the distance is not known, use this conversion: 20 minutes = 1 mile
- If using a step counter, you can estimate 2,000 steps = 1 mile

### Logging

Participants will need to log their physical activity and report it weekly. There are a few different ways you can do this:

- Pick up a log chart at church (located { where at church })
- Use your family calendar

- Jot down notes in a journal
- Use an app on your phone (map my walk, map my fitness, map my run) or electronic calendar

### **Weekly Reporting of Mileage**

Please report your mileage weekly. Choose one method that works best for you. If you are away or forget to report one week, it's OK! Please just report on two weeks the next time.

- Write mileage on a small card and put it { shoe box/ folder/ etc. & where} at church
- Record on {tracker sheet/ bulletin board/ etc.} at church
- Email miles to { person at your church responsible for entering miles }
- Use this link: { Google Form tracker link }

### **Prayers/ Scriptures**

{Each church can decide what to put here/ how they will incorporate prayers and scriptures into the challenge}

### **Getting Started**

If you have not exercised in a while, or if you have a condition or joint issue that limits your ability to exercise, please talk with your doctor before you begin so you can arrange to do something that will be appropriate and of most benefit to you.

### **Be Safe**

- If you have any problems while exercising, such as shortness of breath or feeling light headed, stop immediately. Check with your doctor.
- Know the signs of a heart attack – pressure in the chest, neck or arms; or sign of a stroke – paralysis on one side, difficulty with speech. If you or your exercise partners experience these symptoms, call 911 immediately.
- Be aware of your surroundings and time of day that you plan to exercise, and walk/ exercise with an exercise partner to increase safety.

### **Watch the Weather**

The weather has the potential to change drastically over the course of the 18 weeks of the challenge, from very warm in August to fairly cool in late November. Avoid exercising in inclement weather and be mindful of your attire if you choose to exercise outside. Look for indoor options if the weather isn't cooperating: go to a mall, check out a fitness center, create a safe walking path in your home, etc. **Also, be on the lookout for indoor group exercise churches that will be offered from a few of the churches participating in this challenge!**

### **Be Nice to your Feet!**

Wear shoes that provide good support for your feet.

### **Get a Buddy**

To increase success, ask a buddy to check in with you for accountability, walk/ exercise with you, or just ask how you are doing! You are looking for someone who will be supportive, helpful, and encouraging! **Watch for opportunities to go on group walks with other churches, as well as to participate in group exercise classes hosted by a few of the participating churches!** Get to know your neighbors!

### **Sign Up**

When you are ready – this week, next week, or next month – sign up at { registration link }, at { your church }, or email {someone at your church willing to enter registrations}.