

“Proclaiming Freedom for Prisoners”

GENEROSITY IN ACTION

By Nelson W. Martin



I met someone at our 34th annual Benefit Auction that said he attended the sale every year, except he may have missed one when he was sick. Contrast that with the young man who helped us set up the auction that was released from Lancaster County Prison only the day before. He is now in one of the aftercare houses that we support through the auction.



The Support For Prison Ministries Benefit Auction broke all sales records to date. We closed with \$134,670, after expenses, to share with six prison ministry groups. This was \$22,000 or 20% above the 2016 totals. Again this year we had an abundance of high quality items to sell. Two 3-D pictures, an Abner Zook and Lorraine Reiff, sold for a total of \$12,200. Quilts, tools, and hand-made wooden items brought good prices. Food stands, with Big Johns Chicken dinner, other homemade hot foods and baked goods, totaled over \$21,000.

During the fast moving auction, we stopped three times to reflect on God’s faithfulness to those in prison and aftercare ministries. Agencies shared brief testimonies of God at work. Attendees were invited to hold up their bidder cards to donate money to buy Bibles and inspirational books. The response was overwhelming. 82 donors gave a total of \$6,750.



When this exciting week-end was finished, all those involved were weary from hard work. But we again marveled at the generosity of God’s people. Several years ago, we started using this phrase on our auction advertising: “Your dollars make a difference”. That was true again this year in a record setting way, but I also became aware that the auction is much more than dollars. It is gracious, loving people, many hard working volunteers, generous businesses

who donated quality items. . . . all part of generosity in action to help those in prison.

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Youth Intervention Center Spotlight: Chaplain Rachel Bernard



Lately I have been in awe of God’s power! I truly stand in amazement as I see the Almighty God reveal himself in my own life as He continues to bring freedom in specific areas of my heart. Experiencing anew the freedom that God desires in my life has renewed my passion for those around me. Having the opportunity to walk alongside of the girls at the Youth Intervention Center is very similar to the ministry that each one of you is doing in your own corner of the world. Whether we are ministering to our neighbors, coworkers, peers, or the cashier at the grocery store; the tools and heart of ministry remain consistent. We seek to see Jesus’ kingdom come here on this earth through His redemption! We, as sons and daughters of Christ, strive daily to live life in the freedom that He has lavished upon us with His unconditional love and redemptive power! When we are fully reminded of God’s power in our lives we are set free to radiate Him and Him alone!

As 2 Corinthians 4:6-8 says; *For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness”, made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down but not destroyed.*

God has equipped us to be faithful to His calling, regardless of the circumstances, regardless of where our field of ministry is, because he is God and He is all-powerful and desires to reveal himself through us. When people see our hearts ablaze with genuine redemption and hope they will know it is CHRIST in us. We are simply called to be faithful as jars of clay to reflect our Savior’s POWER. May God bless you as you continue to live in Christ’s redemption and freedom.



Tyler Bernard has joined our Chaplain staff at the Youth Intervention Center. Tyler is married to Rachel and they live in Honey Brook. They attend House of Blessings house church in Ephrata.

Tyler says, “I believe that God has been revealing to me that we are all in need of Jesus Christ to work in our own lives. No matter who we are or where we have come, God wants to work. We first need to open up our lives and surrender everything to him. Also I believe that I have a lot to learn from those being placed at the Youth Intervention Center. They are just as important in speaking into my life and telling me about their own journeys as I am in speaking into their lives and sharing Jesus Christ love with them.”

Welcome, Tyler, to the team at the Youth Intervention Center!



Prison Ministry Seminar

Saturday, March 3, 2018
8am - 3pm at Hinkletown Mennonite Church
Breakfast and lunch provided

Learn more about prison ministry with seminars by chaplains and prison evangelists.

Presented by Support For Prison Ministries, We Care, Outward Focus, and others.

Featuring Jim Newsom, Del Burkholder, We Care, Chaplains, and many more fulltime prison workers.

For more information or to register please email sfpm@dejazzd.com



Chaplain's Corner

Katie Harnish, Chaplaincy Coordinator



I was so blessed to be at the auction this year and see the many supporters and individuals who came out to support prison ministries. I hear many times, when talking one-one with female inmates, that they feel like no one cares about them or supports them. And that *may* be true, that the people they have surrounded themselves with on the outside are not real friends, who truly have their best interest in mind. But I wish I could capture the energy, excitement, the hundreds of people that came to the auction, the amount of items donated, the businesses that donated items, and the volunteers that gave hours organizing, and somehow share this expression of support with the inmates. They are loved and cared about by a larger community!

One tangible way this support is expressed at the auction is through the opportunity to donate money toward Bibles to distribute to inmates. I was so touched by watching numerous hands rise when given the chance to donate money to purchase Bibles. Many times when handing out those Bibles at prison I am asked, "So I can keep this? This is my own?" and I am glad to be able to say, "Yes, that is for you to read and keep. It is yours." They are so blessed to have their own Bible.

As Isaiah 55:11 says, "*We trust that God's word will not return empty, but will accomplish what God desires and achieve the purposes for which he sent it.*" Thank you for your expressions of support and care for inmates and prison ministries through prayer, giving, and walking alongside broken people. We trust that God's Word will bring hope, joy, and peace this Christmas season.

New staff at Lancaster County Prison



Shawn Weaver lives in Lancaster with his wife, Tammi, and their four children, Andre, Micah, Caleb, and Shiloh. Shawn is the pastor at Acts Covenant Fellowship. He has also been involved with The Potter's House, a prison aftercare program.

Shawn says, "Ministry to inmates is about giving away what has been given so freely and abundantly to me."

Seth Crouse lives in Lancaster with his wife, Liz, and their daughter, Estella. He attends The Way of Jesus Church in Lancaster.

Seth says, "As I began to walk with the men in prison, God has quickly shown me a greater reality of caring for the poor in spirit. I pray that each encounter I have, the presence of the Spirit would change hearts and their stories for God's glory!"



WELCOME, SHAWN AND SETH, TO THE CHAPLAIN STAFF!



The lights during the Christmas season are beautiful. It might be the twinkle of stars in a dark sky, the colored lights around a room or on an outdoor fence, or glowing candles on a window sill. These all remind us of Jesus, the light of the world. He alone can bring the true light and hope of this season and every season into our lives. That should cause us to rejoice and be glad.

The prophet Isaiah, hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus, foretold of a Lord coming with “light for the way” and “to be an everlasting light.” Inmates in our prisons have much darkness, hopelessness, and despair. But many are finding new guidance and direction as they learn about God, who loves them and has a plan for their lives. This Christmas we want to be like the wise men in Matthew 2:10, “*When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.*”

The staff and board of directors would like to wish all of you a Merry Christmas and thank you for supporting us this year. And we'd like to invite you to join us in rejoicing and giving thanks for Jesus, the light of the world! Merry Christmas!

Check out our website for updated photos and information: www.supportforprisonministries.org

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STREAMS OF LIFE MERGES INTO SUPPORT FOR PRISON MINISTRIES

By Del Burkholder, SFPM Director

As of 2018, Streams of Life prison ministry, which I have directed for about 15 years, will merge into Support For Prison Ministries. In January, 2015, I also became director of Support For Prison Ministries. This dual role created some confusion for the respective supporters of the two nonprofit ministries. It became obvious to me that directing two separate prison ministries could not continue for a long period of time and that merging both ministries into one was the logical and best move.

There will be no changes in the way Streams of Life Ministry operates in state prisons, either in Pennsylvania or nationally. I will continue to be the primary evangelist, traveling and preaching in many different prisons. Streams of Life teachers who hold Bible studies in prisons also plan to carry on as they have been, as will the writers of their printed materials, which will continue to go into prisons as usual. The SFPM board will now be providing guidance for Streams of Life going forward and everyone involved with SFPM and Streams of Life anticipate God's continued blessings as we continue to minister to the incarcerated in their respective ways.

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.

I Corinthians 12:12