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LA CROSSE COUNTY
JAIL MINISTRY



Volume 13 • Number 2 • Fall 2019

Celebrating the Lives of Remarkable Men

Jeff Stolz *Saint Elias Antiochian Orthodox Church*



Jeff Stolz reposed in the Lord on September 16, 2019. Jeff was a regular pastoral visitor who visited every week with multiple people in our jail for a decade, and he kept in touch with people in prison or treatment. He expressed that his greatest concern was that he did not want his passing to dishearten the people here that he supported. At news of his passing, our Jail Chaplain held a group to give notification to current inmates whom Jeff had visited and to form a prayer circle with them.

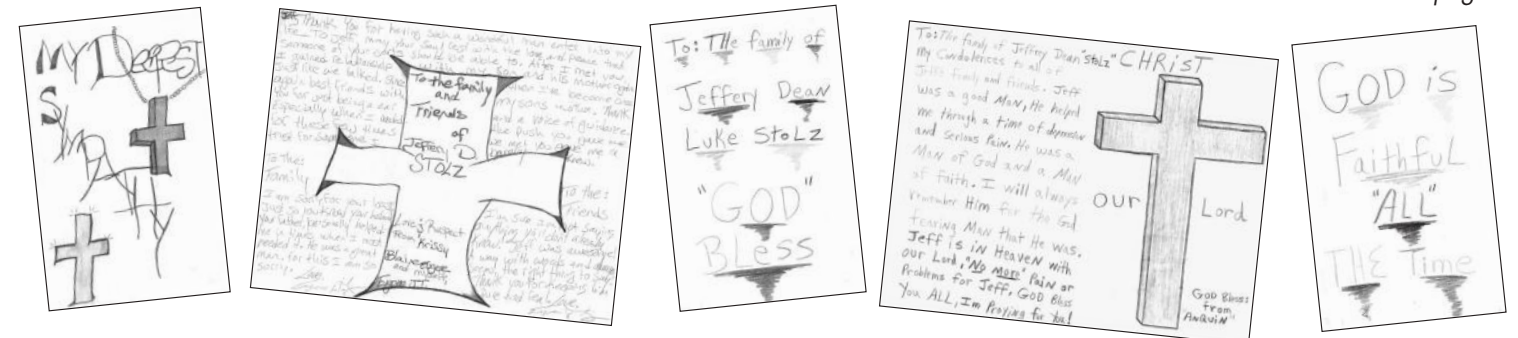
Jail Ministry was a great passion in his life. At his visitation, we heard from grateful families of the people whom Jeff supported, both visiting and writing during incarceration or treatment, and following up with people after incarceration. People from both his church and Viterbo University, where Jeff served as Professor of Theater, have inquired about how they too might serve in jail ministry. Dozens of donations to La Crosse Jail Ministry have been received in loving memory of Jeff. All of the stories and memories from our inmates and from his family, friends, co-workers, and students repeat: Jeff is remembered as a force—always willing to love and give of himself.

“Jeff, may your soul rest in love and peace like someone of your sorts should be able to. After I met you, I gained relationship with my son and his mother again just like we talked. Since then I’ve once again become best friends with my son’s mother. Thank you for just being an ear and a voice of guidance, especially when I needed the push that you gave me.”
—Eugene S.

“Jeff was a good man. He helped me through a time of depression and serious pain. He was a man of God and a man of faith. I will always remember him for the God fearing man he was. Jeff is in heaven with our Lord, no more pain or problems for Jeff. God bless you all, I’m praying for you!”
—AnQuin S.J.

“Jeff is a blessing to my life and ministry, and his earthly passing is a difficult loss. In our conversations and by his example, Jeff taught me how to love better and to be more present to Christ manifested in each incarcerated person I see. Remembering Jeff’s ministry helps bring me back to the commandment of this moment and to the first message of Love, when I would too quickly look downriver to future plans. We have a mission of hope despite circumstances, and our God does not leave us. We are blessed, and Jeff said that it is amazing how many incarcerated people don’t know or feel that God loves them. I see this and I will never forget it.”
—Jail Chaplain John David

Continued on next page



Cards made by Eugene S. and AnQuin S.J. in loving memory of Jeff Stolz

Your gift is greatly needed!

La Crosse County Jail Ministry Gift Form—Your Support is Welcome!



Please cut and mail. Donations may also be made through our website:
<http://www.lacrossejailministry.org/>

Please consider helping Jail Ministry with a tax-deductible donation.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
Phone (_____) _____
Email _____

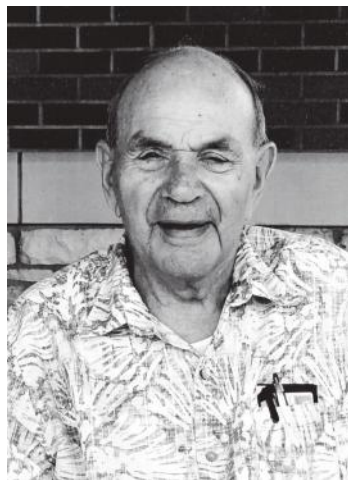
YES, I would like to make a donation to Jail Ministry in the amount of:
_____ \$100 _____ \$75 _____ \$50 _____ \$25 _____ Other \$ _____

This gift is “in memory of” _____
This gift is “in honor of” _____

Plases make checks payable to:
Jail Ministry
P.O. Box 2675
La Crosse, WI 54602-2675

Dick Geiwitz
Bethany Evangelical
Free Church

Dick Geiwitz dedicated his life to serving the Lord and passed away peacefully to join the Lord on September 26, 2019. Dick is distinguished as the longest serving Jail Ministry volunteer of 51 years—nearly 17 years before La Crosse Jail Ministry was organized and formally established in 1985! There is a popular story retold by his many loving friends and family that when Dick joined the Gideons, he was then told that he had to go to the jail for the Bible study that week, without any notice or further preparation. And he did, and he kept coming back for Bible study in our jail for 51 years.



So many Jail Ministry volunteers from our different congregations have met Dick during his ministry and our volunteer trainings, and all have marveled at his remarkable time in service. A fellow volunteer Jim Rouse once reported back to Dick and his wife Lois in jest: “We only had 2 men tonight in Bible Study because they all knew you weren’t going to be there!”

Some connections made in these Bible studies continued after incarceration into church. One grateful young artist met with Dick after incarceration and made pictures for his youngest daughter. Sometimes grateful former inmates with whom he had worked for a long time would spot him in Riverside Park, at the Radisson and elsewhere around town. Calls of “Mr. Geiwitz! Mr. Geiwitz!” would ring, and excited people would report on how they were doing and thank him for his jail ministry. His family thanks everyone in La Crosse Jail Ministry for our needed ministry and these beautiful memories of people whose lives he touched.

La Crosse County Jail Ministry
Mission Statement

“To provide an opportunity and create an environment for inmates that awakens, renews and stimulates their spiritual life, thereby promoting behavioral change, social reintegration and personal well-being.”

Seeking Donations of
Warm Clothes

Have any warm clothes you could donate? We are looking for warm clothes (socks, hats, gloves and mittens too) of all sizes to give men and women when they are released. When people are arrested in the summer months and get out in the winter months, they often don’t have warm clothes to wear as they take their first steps towards a new life.

If you have clean clothes to donate, especially coats, bring them to the Jail Reception Window on weekdays Monday through Friday 1:30 to 4:30 P.M., entering the southwest corner at 3rd Street and Vine Street, at 333 Vine Street in La Crosse.



La Crosse County Jail
Ministry Board Members

- President Don Campbell
- Past President Maureen Freedland
- Vice President Harvey Witzenburg
- Treasurer Scott Curtis
- Secretary Marilyn Arndt

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Dan Ferries | Angie Paul |
| Sr. Karen Flottmeier | Sandra Romagnoli-Thompson |
| Sandra Hooser | Amy Jo Van Arsdall |
| Carla La Point | Ann Ostergren Wales |
| Al Louis | |

If you would like to serve on the La Crosse Jail Ministry Board, email chaplain@lacrossejailministry.org and ask for more information.

Why I Serve Jail Ministry

When people ask me why I am involved in jail ministry, I have many reasons. In today’s society many people end up in jail because they struggle with mental health issues, family issues, and societal issues. These people are also friends, parents, siblings, relatives, and neighbors. As our nation moves further away from God, people tend to lose respect for others, their families, and our communities. Prior to entering the system, most inmates have learned negative thought processes and tend to say statements like, “I’m such a screw up, there’s no hope for me, I’m a loser.” That may be why there is so much recidivism.

Jail Ministry provides them with positive outlets, how to turn it over to God or a higher power, how to become a productive citizen, and where there is faith there is hope for today, tomorrow, and their future. There is hope for them through faith and salvation. If you have ever spoken with a person in successful recovery, they continue to say “You can’t do it alone, you need to turn it over to God. When you have faith, you have hope, and you have tomorrow.”

Dan Ferries
Jail Ministry board member



Ben G. (2019)

La Crosse County Jail
Ministry Donation Needs

In order of need

1. Jigsaw puzzles
2. Forever stamped envelopes (#10 business size)—these can also be used in prison
3. Paperback Bibles—especially “The Life Recovery Bible” (Tyndale publisher, New Living Translation), or any paperback large print New Living Translation Bible
4. *NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC magazines (any issues)
5. *People magazines (less than a month old)
6. *TIME and THE WEEK magazines (less than a month old)
7. *Men’s Health and Sports Illustrated magazines (current)
8. Decks of playing cards
9. Word search books
10. Pencils

Please drop off donations only at the Jail Reception Window on weekdays Monday through Friday 1:30 to 4:30 p.m., entering the southwest corner at 3rd Street and Vine Street, at 333 Vine Street in La Crosse.

* Gently used and current magazines are appreciated, or magazine subscriptions can be mailed directly to the jail addressed to:

Chaplain John David
 La Crosse County Jail
 333 Vine Street
 La Crosse, WI 54601

Donated money to purchase items

(Donations of these items cannot be accepted and must be purchased by jail staff)

1. Deodorant
2. Conditioner
3. Lotion
4. Soap
5. Shampoo
6. Brush
7. Comb
8. Toothpaste
9. Toothbrush
10. Cup



Mary Powell
Living Word Christian Church

“Born and raised in the La Crosse area, I have attended Living Word Christian Church with my husband and family for more than 30 years. The mission of my church is to impact this region with the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. As part of that mission, I worked with Crossfire and the La Crosse County Juvenile Detention Center in 1995 to start Bible Studies and church services for the youth in detention. After a few years of ministry in Juvenile Detention, we expanded our ministry to the La Crosse County Jail and have been volunteering in multiple different areas of service ever since.”



Robert Lynn
English Lutheran Church

“I enjoy good coffee in the morning, and playing Frisbee with my collie. The time I can spend with my sister and brothers is always rewarding. They each have taught me a lot that has enriched my life. I believe in the mission of La Crosse Jail Ministry. The church has been there for me in times of discouragement, and I like to think the doors of the church are always open to help renew our life story and bring peace to our spirit. The Sunday evening worship at the jail is an ecumenical project that brings together a variety of denominations and other churches, acting together as Christ’s one Church.”



Sandra Hoesser
Saint Rose Convent, Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration

“I am a proud affiliate of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, lived on Guam for 4 years traveling all over the South Pacific, was a SCUBA diver there, and lived and taught in Japan. I also went to Hong Kong, the Philippines, South Korea, and Taiwan. I have been a teacher, an executive secretary, tax and abstract assistant, investigator with the police department in the auto theft division, computer systems analyst, unemployment specialist and investigator, NAFTA specialist, and before retiring, a career counselor for state parolees for over 18 years, all while living in Fort Worth, Texas for 37 years. Being happily retired, I am called to be of service in various places and in with a variety of opportunities, and continue to travel around the United States as well as overseas.

Having served in various capacities with those who have been incarcerated and with those after their time has been served, I have increased my knowledge and understanding of their reasons as to why they are where they are and have been taught more about myself and become a better person because of these experiences. My service in La Crosse Jail Ministry continues to help fulfill my desire to assist those who are or were imprisoned. I am called to be of service to help, “to provide an opportunity and create an environment for inmates that awakens, renews and stimulates their spiritual life, thereby promoting behavioral change, social reintegration and personal well-being,” to those whom I encounter. Most people in our La Crosse County Jail will return to our community. I want to help these people to become the best person, the best citizen possible. My Jail Ministry service makes me realize that “there, but for the Grace of God, am I.” I may be only one person, but I am one person who, along with others, are trying to improve our society, do make a difference even if we are able to help just one person who made the wrong decision.”

Conductor Wannabee Raises over \$17,000 for Jail Ministry and the Symphony

“Music is powerful. As people listen to it, they can be affected. They respond.”
— Ray Charles

“Can a mere song change a person’s mind? I doubt that is so. But a song can infiltrate your heart and the heart may change your mind.”
— Elvis Costello

The message I shared as a Conductor Wannabe contestant for the La Crosse Symphony this past spring as I raised funds to be split between the Symphony and La Crosse Jail Ministry was that Jail Ministry, like music, can elevate, strengthen and heal in a powerful way. It offers hope, and opportunities for personal change. It is about spiritual and human recovery, and second chances.

I was the highest fundraiser bringing in over \$17,000.

I loved my career! It was brief: the shorter version of Schubert’s Marche Militaire. A neighbor musical professional cheerfully held Neighborhood Conductor Boot Camp for me. I survived between the sage advice of “imagine swatting a fly” or that given to recent music retirees of “wave the baton until the music stops, then turn around and bow.” The musicians were kind, expressing appreciation for fundraising to support the La Crosse Symphony.

What stands out in my memory is the number of people who contributed after being introduced to Jail Ministry’s important work for the first time. Most people know very little about the jail process, or haven’t had the occasion to consider what happens after someone is released. They may not know, for example, that our jail sometimes functions as our county’s largest mental health facility, or they may not consider how the



From left to right: Maestro Alexander Platt, Maureen Freedland, and Chaplain John David

public benefits where the high tax cost of incarceration is avoided.

I know it mattered a lot to tell about Jail Ministry and how it can make a difference for some people.

We can’t repeat a Conductor Wannabe contest so I hope we’ve made an impression that will encourage people to remember in the future the needs of those in jail who can benefit from Jail Ministry.

I tried to interplay music and ministry into my theme of “Second Chance for Change” so I’ll close with a couple of other music quotes I ran across.

David Bowie said, “I wanted to prove the sustaining power of music.” Does Jail Ministry have all the answers to turning lives around? Well, it can be an important piece of the puzzle for some. Also consider the Scottish author Sir J. M. Barrie, creator of Peter Pan, who wrote, “If you cannot teach me to fly, teach me to sing.”

With music, with the La Crosse Symphony, and with Jail Ministry, we try to teach, we sing, we care. Thank you for your support.

*Maureen Freedland,
La Crosse Symphony Conductor Wannabe
and Past President, Jail Ministry*

We’ve updated our website!

Please go to <http://www.lacrossejailministry.org/> to view the updates and a special video from Channel 19 on the La Crosse Jail Ministry.

We are going electronic and need help from you!

If you would prefer receiving this newsletter and other news from La Crosse Jail Ministry electronically, send your email address to chaplain@lacrossejailministry.org Help us save money on postage and paper.



English Lutheran Church volunteers gear up for another rousing Sunday evening of worship services in the jail.

(From left to right: Eddie Kim, Kara Larson, David Seiffert, Pastor Mark Solyst, Irene Ten Eyck)

Chaplain's Corner: Behind the Scenes Volunteers



“Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?”

—Matthew 25:44

In our previous newsletter, I shared that in less than a year, 11 new congregations had scheduled to lead our weekly Sunday worship in jail, with separate services for women and men. Thanks to our existing and new volunteers, we know that well over 100 people have visited a congregation after their release from jail, showing that we make connections here in jail and that our Sunday worship, Bible studies, prayer groups, and pastoral visits make a difference. The impact of our mission is owed to these many La Crosse Jail Ministry volunteers who provide these opportunities. Their volunteer service is vital to extend our reach beyond the work of the full-time Jail Chaplain in order to create an environment where spiritual lives are awakened and renewed.

Important work is also happening behind the scenes, with some special volunteers who started helping and organizing

the Forever stamped envelopes, Bibles, magazines, jigsaw puzzles, playing cards, Word Find books, coloring pencils, relaxation coloring books, greeting cards, and pencils. Jane Powell, Arlene Smith, and Harvey Witzenburg began coming into jail every week to tackle the tasks of matching the requests of inmates who have no funds with the supplies of donated items that we give to keep our inmates connected with loved ones and to help lift their spirits. (These days about 115 people are on the list of indigent inmate accounts.) For many years, Mary Powell has been organizing the schedules of the Evangelical Christian churches who lead the women's Bible studies and the women's and men's worship services on Sundays. Robert Lynn has been organizing the schedules of the mainline Protestant Christian churches who lead the women's and men's worship services on Sundays, and he will begin to organize the pastoral visitation volunteers in the jail. Sandra Hoesser has begun organizing the donations of paperback books, magazines, and jigsaw puzzles and tending to the needs of our Jail Library.

I'm pleased that our behind-the-sceners also represent some of the great ecumenical collaborations that we have.

As always, be blessed, and thank you for everything you do for Jail Ministry!

*John David
Jail Chaplain
chaplain@lacrossejailministry.org*

In Their Own Words:

Jane Powell *Bridges United Methodist Church*

“Serving others and thereby serving God has always been a central foundation of decision making in my life. I was fortunate to have a great career in nursing and marry a wonderful fellow who shared this philosophy. So, now as a ‘retired’ person, the opportunity to find a new and fresh way of serving was appealing when my sister, Willa, jail educator, suggested it. I appreciate the mission statement of La Crosse Jail Ministry, and John, Arlene and Harvey are super folks with which to serve. ‘Don’t Stop Believin’,’ the motto of the 2019 CEA forum, reminds us that God never gave up on anyone and we shouldn’t either.”

Arlene Smith *Saint Patrick Catholic Church*

“I retired from teaching math at Western and knew I wanted to volunteer. I volunteered to help my friend and former colleague teach classes at the jail. Her schedule changed and allowed me to help with La Crosse Jail Ministry in the morning and be in the classroom in the afternoon. I enjoy helping and hope that I can help someone enough to make a difference in their future.

When I am not in jail, I enjoy time with my grandchildren, reading, bowling and playing a variety of card games.”



From left to right: Jane Powell, Arlene Smith, Harvey Witzenburg

Harvey Witzenburg *Onalaska United Methodist Church*

“It seems to me that the young people who are inmates have had a tough life. Anything I can do to make their life in jail a little brighter is certainly worth some of my time.

My wife and I both enjoy volunteering for good causes, biking and traveling to Florida for part of the winter.”

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