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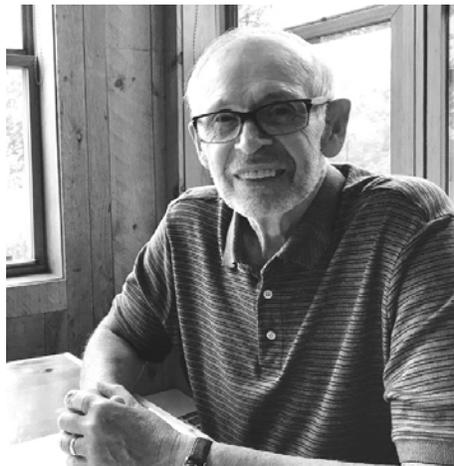
CHAPLAIN HIRED!

I am delighted to announce that the Jail Ministry Board has hired Ann Wales to be the Jail Chaplain. She began work full-time on January 16, 2021.

For two decades Ann has had a passion for jail ministry. She has helped lead women's Bible studies and Sunday evening worship services in the Jail and has served several terms on the Jail Ministry Board and Executive Committee. She has also befriended newly-released inmates seeking to develop a new life.

Recently Ann completed a Master of Arts degree in Christian Studies. She also has a Master of Arts in Communications and has taken coursework in the Clinical Pastoral Education program offered through Gundersen Health System. In addition she has worked as a church planter and missionary.

Jail Ministry Board members are genuinely excited about Ann's hiring, and Jail staff members are as well.



We look forward to continuing our partnership with La Crosse County.

Don Campbell, Past President
Jail Ministry Board



LA CROSSE COUNTY JAIL MINISTRY BOARD MEMBERS

Harvey Witzenburg
President

Amy Jo Van Arsdall
Vice President

Marilyn Arndt, Secretary

Scott Curtis, Treasurer

Don Campbell, Past-President

Maureen Freedland
Past-President

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CONGRATULATIONS

to the new and returning La Crosse Jail Ministry Board Leadership:

■ **Harvey Witzenburg, President**
Harvey is a retired educator who was the principal of Jefferson Elementary, Roosevelt Elementary and Coulee Montessori. He attends Onalaska United Methodist Church and served as Vice President on the board as well as chair of the search committee last year.

■ **Amy Jo Van Arsdall, Vice President**
Amy Jo is the founding Executive Director and current campus minister for JC's Village Christian Campus Ministries serving students of all three campuses with a focus on spiritual growth and discipleship. She is a member of Cornerstone Community Church.

■ **Marilyn Arndt, Secretary** is a retired educator who taught in the La Crosse School District for 37 years and she attends Onalaska United Methodist Church.

■ **Scott Curtis, Treasurer** - Scott is an attorney and a member of O'Flaherty, Heim, & Curtis, Ltd. and he attends Cathedral Catholic Church.

■ **Maureen Freedland** - Maureen is a past president of La Crosse Jail Ministry and a County Board Supervisor. She is a member of Congregation Sons of Abraham Synagogue.

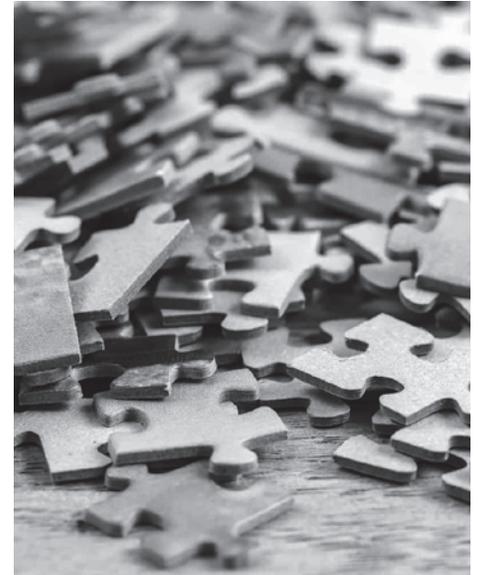
■ **Don Campbell, Past President** who we also want to thank for serving these last three years as our board president. He has seen the board through the devoted service of our chaplains and many projects to support this ministry. He has been a faithful servant to this board serving with dedication and consistency. He has certainly worked hard these last few years to keep this ministry going for the sake of people in our community that have been and are incarcerated. Don is a member of First Presbyterian Church.

INMATE NEEDS

Part of our ministry is helping to take care of some of the basic human needs of inmates, which is important in the extremely stressful environment they live in. Right now our greatest need is magazine subscriptions. Magazines help because they get the inmates reading, a great skill to improve. Because of COVID, the best way to help is by signing up for a subscription to a magazine on behalf of our ministry. Then every month we will receive the latest issue.

If you would be interested in providing a magazine subscription, please have the subscription sent directly to the jail in care of La Crosse Jail Ministry at 333 Vine Street, La Crosse, WI 54601. We are most in need of magazines for men (*health, sports, hunting, fishing, car, truck, technology, mechanical, etc.*) and magazines like People or National Geographic are also popular.

Another current need we have is for new puzzles. If you would like to purchase a puzzle for the ministry, please have it sent directly to the jail in care of the La Crosse Jail Ministry, 333 Vine Street, La Crosse, WI 54601.



If you have questions, please email Chaplain Ann at Lacrossejailministry.chaplain@gmail.com or call 608-785-9772.



COVID-19 CHANGES



Just as COVID-19 has changed our lives, it has also changed the ministry in the jail. The jail leadership has worked hard to keep the inmates and jail staff healthy. Masks and attestations of health are required. Also only paid staff are currently allowed in the jail to limit exposure.

There is also a limit on the amount of contact inmates have with each other. The inmates in one block are never in contact with inmates from other blocks. This means for any meetings, they are done with one block at a time and then everything is sanitized.

Reading material, games and puzzles that are returned from the inmates must be left untouched and quarantined before they are returned to use. Lastly, supplies are purchased and delivered directly from sellers to the jail.

MY JOURNEY

I began my career in ministry after college with my first husband starting a church in Cloquet, Minnesota.

We then served as missionaries in the country of Lebanon. Our plan was to be



career missionaries. Then Steve was diagnosed with malignant melanoma and died on Christmas day. I'm sharing this story because, while it was awful and so very painful, God used this time in my life in many ways.

He used it to help me develop a heart of empathy and an understanding of pain. He also used it to inspire me through the actions of a close friend. My friend, Kathi Parpala, left her young children and husband on Christmas day to drive three hours to be by my side and help me through those initial days. Because of that and the many others that showed up for me, I learned how important it is to show up for others during the most painful times in their lives.

When I met my current husband here in Onalaska, he introduced me to his passion for serving in jail ministry. I have served in jail ministry now for over 18 years, showing up for people and developing a heart for this population. In the jail, I have provided services and Bible studies. I have also served on the La Crosse Jail Ministry Board for many years.

After working many years in human resources at Gundersen Health System, I decided, once again, to pursue a career in ministry, where I could show up for others. It started with an extended unit of Clinical Pastoral Education at Gundersen, which is basically chaplain training. My placement site was actually in the jail with Chaplain Tom Skemp as my mentor. I then spent seven years taking two classes a year to complete a Masters Degree in Christian Studies from Crown College with the support of Gundersen's tuition investment program, the Ruth chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star and Pastor Travis Becknell of New Hope Fellowship who ordained me.

I recently came across an article that I had written after working with Chaplain Tom in the jail after being assigned to complete visits with women one on one. I decided to share some excerpts:

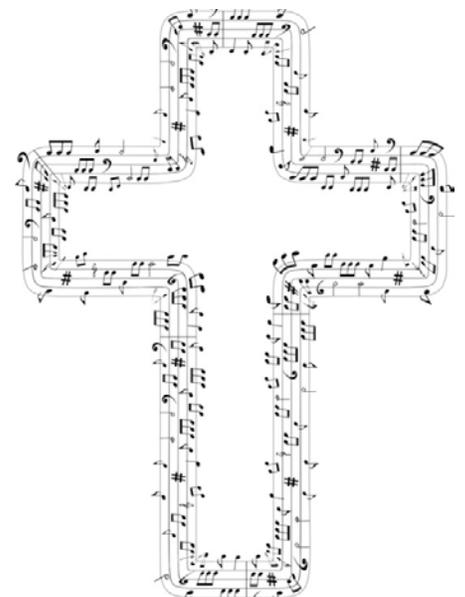
I wasn't sure what exactly to expect when I started. I knew I would be visiting with women at one of the lowest times in their life. It was a challenge to think how I could best minister to them. I was there because I believe God loves them and I wanted to bring that love to them through me. So what is the best way to do that? After some trial and error and then through my training and Tom's guidance I began to figure it out. I learned they didn't need someone to come in with all the answers, telling them what to do, think and believe. They needed someone to listen to them with compassion and without judgment. They needed someone to help them process. They needed someone to respect their choice of faith and their preferred faith tradition.. They almost all wanted prayer; it was a way for them to hear I heard them and was bringing their requests, their pain,

their needs and wants to God. There were a few that didn't want me to pray for them during our meetings. I never prayed without asking their permission, respecting their wishes.

Even though I wasn't sure what to expect, I would never have expected that I would be so blessed by these women. I was humbled by the fact that they would trust me with the hardest parts of their life as well as sharing their relationship with God. I would come to encourage them and they would encourage me. My faith has grown in leaps and bounds as I've seen God show up in their lives. This ministry has truly been life changing for me and I am so grateful for the opportunity to serve in this way.

I wasn't sure where I would end up serving after completing my formal training. I knew I wanted it to be an opportunity to show up for others. I am so grateful God has led me to this door as the chaplain in the jail. It is an honor and I am again so grateful. I have a lot to learn and will be dependent on the jail staff and many of you. I would appreciate any and all prayers.

Thankfully,
Ann Wales



LA CROSSE COUNTY JAIL MINISTRY

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