

LA CROSSE COUNTY JAIL MINISTRY
P.O. Box 2675
La Crosse, WI 54602-2675

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Looking for an easier way to donate funds?
Donations to support the La Crosse Jail Ministry can be made online at Lacrossejailministry.org (Support & Donate).

Your gift is greatly needed!

Please cut and mail

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

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



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

BIBLE STUDY VOLUNTEER

I am glad that I said, "Yes" to an invitation to be involved in Jail Ministry! The community gives many options for serving... this seemed to be a fit. I had been working with juvenile delinquents as a contracted employee for La Crosse County (1988) with Coulee Youth Centers. I had heard many testimonies over the years of others serving and had a desire to do the same.



I had graduated from UW-L, attended Capernwray Bible School in England, was involved with Women's Ministry/discipleship at our church... all that to say, the Lord prepares us.

Our team certainly is like-minded and has a heart for those in need of hope, love, light, and life. The door opened for me to be a part of weekly Bible Study and Mom's Prayer Group, and in recent years, one-on-one visits and Sunday worship services. We continue to be blessed to be able to come along side women in jail. When I take a peek at the journal of lessons and prayer requests over the years, I am in awe of God and his goodness. Our team shares the gospel and encourages those in attendance with prayer and scripture. Many have shared what a blessing to have a "time out" in order to understand for the first time or more fully the love of God.

We have been humbled to see God at work in beautiful ways at the La Crosse County Jail. My life has been enriched and I count it a great honor to be on such a wonderful team ... serving the Lord.

Nancy Vandermus

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES

Bible studies during the week have started up again. The men will be having studies at 6:30 and 7:30 on Mondays and the women at 6:30 on Wednesdays. We could use more volunteers for these studies, especially for the women. Please email or call the chaplain for more information.



SUNDAY SERVICES

Sunday services are continuing in the jail. We have over 17 Christian churches providing services. We also have the Sons of Abraham Congregation and some local Buddhists providing services. We are hoping soon to start a Muslim service. If you know of anyone who might be interested, please have them contact the Chaplain.

LA CROSSE JAIL MINISTRY 2022 BOARD MEMBERS

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WHY I VOLUNTEER FOR JAIL MINISTRY



For several years I have served as a jail ministry volunteer. Some work I do is directly in the jail, and some of the work is behind the scenes.

All of us are in the process of becoming, in the process of growing and figuring out how to build our lives. At the most basic level, I believe that everyone deserves access to a spiritual way, a way to become better grounded in life's meaning. The spiritual path guides us in understanding the way to make the best of the blessing of our short time on earth. For real growth to occur, the spiritual message must be heard and be in sharp contrast with the haphazard chattering of culture.

I am pleased that Jail Ministry is making an intentional effort to respect and include many faith traditions in the religious offerings for jail residents. Christianity and Buddhism are two of the world's most sophisticated religious traditions. Both have a tradition of meditation, or silent contemplative prayer. Silent meditation and contemplative prayer allows us to unclutter the busyness of our minds, to quiet our inner voices that catch us up in the web of life demands. To quiet the constant barrage of messages that keep our minds spinning without getting traction, that trouble our souls.

The spiritual message is a message of wholeness, a message of newness as we become more in touch with the truth of our lives. Life is messy. The spiritual path, as sketched out in a variety of the world's great religions, finds its way into the crisis of our lives. It allows us to develop wisdom in day to day decisions.

I cannot say I set out to make jail volunteering a regular practice of my ministry. But the call is here, the need is here. In the community of our pastors and faith leaders in Christianity and Buddhism, and with the heart inspired leadership of the jail chaplain, I hope to make available a few glimpses of a more healthy way of living. A glimpse of inner peace. A glimpse of grace.

"Just to be is a blessing. Just to live is holy" ~ Rabbi Abraham Heschel

Robert Lynn

CIRCLES OF SUPPORT

WE ARE LOOKING FOR MORE VOLUNTEERS

Circles of Support are groups of 3-4 community members who meet weekly for up to six months with someone recently released from jail or prison (called a "core member") to assist them in making a successful transition from incarceration to a stable life in the community. 80 percent of people

booked into La Crosse County Jail have been there before. Statewide, one third of people released into the community after any term in prison re-offend and may return to a correctional facility or prison. Community support during the first months after release is critical to successful reintegration.

We are looking for new circles. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, we would ask you to look for 2 or 3 other people (friends, fellow faith community members, fellow team members, etc.) to also volunteer. We will then train your circle and support you through every step of the way. There are currently four circles and we gather to support each other.

For more information or to indicate your interest, please email: scircles2021@gmail.com.

AMAZONSMILE

If you shop on Amazon for those items you can't get locally, they'll donate .5% of the price of eligible purchases to our organization at no cost to you.

You can sign up for Amazon smile with our unique charity link: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/39-1455213>. This will enable you to skip the process of searching for us among over a million charities.

If you would like to shop for the jail ministry, email the chaplain for a list of Amazon products currently used.

THE MOST REQUESTED ITEM IN THE JAIL LIBRARY

The item that I am asked for the most when inmates come to the library is the Daily Bread. The Daily Bread Ministries sends our jail free booklets that contain devotionals for every day of the month. Their mission is to connect people to God. If you would ever want to donate to them on behalf of the La Crosse Jail Ministry, it would be appreciated by both our organizations. To find out more

information go to ourdailybread.org.

If you should know of other faith organizations that provide devotional booklets to inmates for free, please email the chaplain. The only other ones we currently receive are Catholic and Mennonites.



WHY I SERVE LA CROSSE JAIL MINISTRY



Currently I serve on the La Crosse County Board and also served as past Vice-President on the La Crosse Jail Ministry Board. I am in my 5th year on Jail Ministry which is an honor as well as a humbling and eye-opening experience.

While serving on Jail Ministry I have come to understand the struggles of depression, addiction, and low self-esteem of those incarcerated. There are some heart-wrenching stories of those who live without hope. These individuals have a heart, soul, and feelings but unfortunately the demons are powerful. I have worked with some of these folks when they are in the general population and realize the uphill battle they have as a consequence of poor decisions. These people are moms, dads, daughters, and sons in our community. When you introduce the jail population to faith, they realize they have hope – if they have hope, they have tomorrow.

The real Kudos go to the people who work in the jail setting, including Chaplain Ann, numerous churches, some board members, and volunteers who serve the jail population on a consistent basis. I encourage the community to get involved with Jail Ministry in some form whether it be serving on the board, sharing what jail ministry does to assist the incarcerated, donate to help fund this much needed program in our jail, or continue to pray for those who are in need of spiritual guidance.

Dan Ferries

JAILMINISTRY NEEDS

MAGAZINES – Sports Illustrated, Popular Mechanics, Men's Health, Weight Lifting, Men's Journal, People, Entertainment Weekly, The Week, In

Touch, Car, Hunting, Fishing, and Nature are the favorites.

BOOKS – Thrillers, Fantasy, Apocalyptic, Non-Fiction, Urban Fiction, Famous People Biographies, Spiritual, and Self-Help are favorites among the inmates. We are still looking to increase our selection of books that would appeal to all populations.

CHAPLAINS' CORNER JANUARY 2022



I was reading a Guidepost magazine article written by a hospital chaplain that quoted a Jewish Proverb. I looked it up online and it comes from a collection of interpretations called Devarim Rabbah and states the following: "Rabbi Joshua ben Levi said, 'A procession of angels walk before a person wherever he goes, blowing the shofar and announcing, "Make way for the image of the Holy One."'"

It has been a year since I started working as a chaplain for the La Crosse Jail Ministry. I have met quite a few inmates. I have heard denials of guilt and even pride in crimes committed. I have heard admissions of guilt and shame. I have heard some only wanting to escape accountability and others accepting of their sentence as they did commit the crime. I have heard vile words and words of disrespect toward others. I have heard words of remorse, regret and even apologies for bad behavior. I have seen selfish and mean actions towards staff and other inmates. I have also seen generous and kind actions. I have seen inmates in complete mental breakdown due to illness. I have also seen them restored once on medication and in a safe place. I have been lied to and deceived. I have been thanked and appreciated. In all of this, God has blessed me with the ability to see the image of God in them all, so I continue to serve and feel blessed to be able to serve in this role.

Is it hard to at times, yes. But I have found encouragement as many of you serve with me. You give donations of clothes, boots, shoes, games, puzzles, books, magazines and funds. You serve on the La Crosse Jail Ministry Board and with Circles of Support. You volunteer in the jail providing services and studies on Sundays and soon on Mondays and Wednesdays.

Do some seem beyond change? Yes. But I spoke to a friend the other day who hasn't been back to jail or prison for 12 years. I have met two people that are now working to serve other people getting out of jail and prison through organizations in our community. I have met some that are now a part of a local faith community, actively serving. Our board has had members that were formerly incarcerated and one has been helpful in restarting our Circles of Support program.

Will they all change? Probably not but some will. Our efforts though aren't about what they do. Our efforts are about honoring our faith and our beliefs about people. For me, it is that they are the image of the Holy One and we have the blessing of ministering to these particular images.

Thankfully,
Ann Wales, Chaplain

DICTIONARIES – Another popular item often requested is dictionaries, thesauruses, and Scrabble dictionaries.

PUZZLES – They need to be made out of cardboard and in a cardboard box.

If you have used magazines, books or puzzles to donate or would like to buy any for us, please email or call the chaplain.