

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

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).

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Our Mission:
La Crosse Jail Ministry offers inmates spiritual direction,
rehabilitative support, and connections to faith communities.



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 **COOKIES & PIZZAS** 

The board and the Chaplain
would like to thank the Franciscan
Sisters of Perpetual Adoration
affiliate group that made dozens

and dozens and dozens of cookies
for our correctional officers. We
would also like to thank Connect
Church and the Houdyshells for
helping to provide
a pizza meal for our
correctional officers
on December 24. We
are also so grateful
to Erik Burton, the
owner of Dominos
for his generosity.
When there was an
order mix-up, he
covered the cost of an
additional 12 pizzas
and a couple of sides.
The correctional staff
invited the dispatch
staff and offered it to
officers who were out
and about that night.



Correctional Officer Jeff Nicksic

**LA CROSSE JAIL MINISTRY
2023 BOARD MEMBERS**

Harvey Witzenburg
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Onalaska United Methodist Church

Rabbi Brian Serle
Vice-President
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Salley Kelsall
Circles of Support

Charles Hall
First Evangelical Free Church

William Pretasky
Hope Community Church

Karilyn Parrott
Bridges United Methodist Church

Krysta Deede
Onalaska United Methodist Church

Your gift is greatly needed!

Donations to our ministry can be made online at lacrossejailministry.org (Support & Donate)

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 _____

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" _____

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

CHANGING OF THE BOARD

The board and chaplain would like
to thank the following members who
are leaving the board for their faithful
service: Marilyn Arndt, Dan Ferris
and Pam Squires. We are so grateful
for all of your work and wish you an

abundance of blessings. We would
also like to welcome the following
new members: Lynn Blakeley, Krysta
Deede, Charles Hall, Karilyn Parrott,
and William Pretasky. Thank you for
stepping up to serve.

WHY I SERVE

LA CROSSE JAIL MINISTRY

Until a few years ago I had not known anything about the La Crosse Jail Ministry. At that time, I had only brief insights into the experiences



Daniel Carlson

of those incarcerated within our local jail. I had participated in a few local men's Bible studies with people who had spent time in and out of jail or prison. I also had a close friend who had begun volunteering to support regular Bible Studies taking place within the La Crosse Jail. I was no stranger to volunteering within the local community and it was the invitation of this close friend that encouraged me to take part in this organization.

Since then, I have found more opportunities to reconsider my own understanding of how, why, and under what circumstances people may find themselves within the jail system. And I can appreciate more fully the people who want to address the challenges within the existing system by serving people with compassion, grace, and mercy regardless of their spiritual leaning. For our participating readers, please remain diligent in reading, watching, and reconsidering your own understanding of our jails and the people that are impacted by these systems. Our openness can hopefully help reshape our own and other people's attitudes around accepting all people as our neighbors.



THANK YOU!

The board and our chaplain would like to thank you all for your financial support this last year. We are happy to report that we came within \$5000 of our goal. We also want to thank everyone who contributes to our ministry either by volunteering and/or donating clothes, puzzles, books, and magazines. It is because of your generosity and compassion we can serve this population and hopefully help them to connect to hope and a faith community.

WORDS FROM AN INMATE

"The support from the jail ministry is phenomenal and makes my stay much less stressful helping me with getting items I can't afford."

TRAINING FOR NEW VOLUNTEERS

If you are interested in providing services or studies to the inmates in the jail, there will be a training on Tuesday, March 7.

Please contact the chaplain at Chaplain@lacrossejailministry.org or at 608-785-9772 for additional information.

BUILDING RESPECT UNDERSTANDING & GOOD WILL



Richard Strauss
Jail Ministry Volunteer

I thought volunteering at the jail would be interesting for me and the residents who choose to attend the program. If they're interested in Judaism and/or other religions, it's important to reach out and talk about what they'd like to discuss in order to build respect, understanding, and good will. There aren't many opportunities for friendly interchanges of ideas on religion, and I see this as a good one.

I hope jail residents learn more about religions with which they're unfamiliar. I hope too their questions and comments will prompt me to learn more about Judaism and other religions.

(A service on Judaism is offered once a month in the jail.)

MAGAZINES, PAPERBACKS, PUZZLES SWEATPANTS & BOOTS

If you have any magazines, puzzles (cardboard box and pieces only) or relatively current paperback books to donate, they can be dropped off at Coulee Life Church N5761 County Road SN in Onalaska. The front door is open during the week as they have a food pantry there. You may drop the items on the bench to the right behind our sign. Sweatpants, tennis shoes and boots can also be dropped off there. We do not, however, currently need any other clothing items.

WHY I AM A VOLUNTEER

"...It is in giving that we receive..."
"There but for the Grace of God, go I."
"I am doing what is mine to do. May Christ teach you what is yours."

These quotes, among others, have been my life-guiding principles. As a 19-year career counselor for state parolees in Fort Worth, TX, my life experiences with those less fortunate have been a spiritual reawakening and a learning eye-opener. This has expanded my values and beliefs concerning those in prison or jail and their many challenges they face upon being released.

For 12 years, I taught Scripture Studies weekly, and was a mentor to the female inmates at the Federal Penitentiary for Women, in Fort Worth, TX. Upon returning to La Crosse, I have served two terms on the La Crosse Jail Ministry Board and volunteered in the La Crosse County Jail Education Department. I am also a substitute to help for the Sunday evening spiritual services. Currently, I am a member of Circles of Support which operates under the La Crosse County Jail Ministry Board.

Many of the releasees, who seek to improve themselves through education, a job, a place to live and making good, trustworthy, and dependable relationships, are so often rejected. They have feelings of low self-esteem and seem worthless and dejected. We all make mistakes. I believe these people need respect, encouragement, support, healthy relationships, and a group from the community that can help fulfill



Sandra Hoeser
Circles of Support Volunteer

these needs. I am called to bring peace, joy, love, integrity, a personal touch, a listening ear, an open heart – the "Good News" of the Gospel – to those with whom I meet, work, and enjoy. This is one of the goals of the Circles of Support and why I volunteer to work with those who have certain limitations and restrictions.

Being the recipient of talents and gifts to help the Circles of Support core member (*one who is being or has been released from jail*), I feel good about sharing what God has given me. By helping this person with spiritual, moral, and relational support, compassion, encouragement, and a can-do attitude, I can help them learn alternatives to incarceration and provide them with community resources. As a member of a Circle, we become a foundational web of support that can provide strong communal human relationships necessary to healthy living and equip the core member to become a fully functional, acceptable, and caring citizen.

If you would like to learn more about volunteering as a circle member, go to the page on our website dedicated to Circles of Support and fill out an application.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We are looking for volunteers to provide services from the Muslim faith and Spanish speakers from the Christian faith. If you are interested, please contact the Chaplain.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

I have done jail and prison ministry for 23 years. Every now and then I struggle with having compassion. Most of the time when I am talking with people that are incarcerated or have been incarcerated, I'm able to set all judgments aside and God's love takes over. But I've had moments where it's been hard, especially thinking of the victims.



Ann Wales

Recently, I was reminded of two things. The life group at my church was studying Luke 10 and the story of the Good Samaritan. I began to remember how often God has picked me up when I've been broken and made poor choices. He's taken care of my wounds and brought me to a place of safety and comfort. I want to care for others as He cared for me.

Then at another time, I was talking to someone, and the question came up of how you can forgive someone when they don't deserve it. I was able to share that you don't forgive people if they deserve it, that's not forgiveness. Forgiveness comes when people don't deserve it. Yes, it is hard and yes there is a cost. There is a cost to the one who forgives, just like there was a cost for God to forgive me. Now, I'm not saying that I needed to forgive the people that I'm ministering to. I am not their victim. But this incident reminded me of God's wonderful grace. I am His ambassador here in this ministry to share that wonderful grace of forgiveness.

I am so grateful to God for these incidents and the many other times He has reminded me of His care and His grace. Thankful to be able to have opportunities to remind those incarcerated of His care and grace.

Thankfully,
Ann Wales, Chaplain