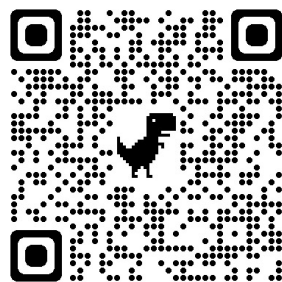


LA CROSSE COUNTY JAIL MINISTRY

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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ANNUAL VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION
BREAKFAST - SEPTEMBER 19



We had our first Annual Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast on September 19 held at First Presbyterian Church. Our emcee was one of our volunteers Emily Brown. We received great feedback on the event. "What a party!" "The event was awesome!" "The guests were beaming, and the food was delicious!" "It was great to see so many people with the same passion." It was a wonderful time to celebrate all our volunteers that give of their time and energy to help our ministry fulfill their mission.

We were able to serve a full breakfast because of a grant awarded to us by the La Crosse Foundation, pastries and donuts donated by Linda's Bakery. We owe a special thanks to Ann Garity, who created and donated mugs which were given to people who had served 10 or more years in jail ministry or Circles of Support.

We would also thank the following for donating to our event: Annette Yoshizumi, Dan's Shoe Repair, Debbie Mosling, Charisma Salon (Tania Rackow and Kathy Bloor), Festival Foods, Kane Community Garden, Kwik Trip, Lisa David Olson (www.LisaDavidOlson.com), Susan Moore (Pixel Publications), and Yoshi's Bait Company.

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" _____



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

**LA CROSSE JAIL MINISTRY
2024 BOARD MEMBERS**

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MARTY GUNDERSON'S PASSION IN JAIL MINISTRY

LA CROSSE JAIL MINISTRY BOARD MEMBER

When I was in the United States Air Force, I was stationed in countries that practice the Islamic faith. There was a call to prayer five times a day, each day. I wondered why my faith as a Christian doesn't have a call to prayer. To be honest, I felt a little left out. I did some research and found many passages in the Bible where God calls for Christians to always be in prayer. I realize that no one can "always be in prayer", anyway it would be impossible for me. What did work though, for me, was "to be in an attitude of prayer". It still works for me to this day. If I see a man, woman, or child struggling or having a difficult time, I ask for my Lord's intercession. I ask for protection, mercy, and peace that only God can give.



Marty Gunderson

Some years ago, when I was a La Crosse County Jailer, I encountered a man who had been arrested many times. I tried to talk to him. I found out where he was from and other personal bits of information. I tried to see if there was anything I could do for him. Each time he was arrested his mental health seemed to slip further and further away. His hair and beard were matted. He didn't make eye contact. His speech was slurred. His hygiene was almost nonexistent. Life was not loving him. In short, he was a very poor soul, and certainly one in need of prayer.

The La Crosse County Court wisely concluded that this man needed specialized treatment at the Mendota Facility in Madison. Some weeks or month later this man returned to the La Crosse County Jail. What a difference his time away made. His hair was cut, and beard shaved, and best of all he was smiling and talking. He told me of his journey, and that he expected to be released in court tomorrow. He also said his family would be at court to pick him up and take him home to Iowa. The last thing he told me was, "When I was at my lowest point thanks for being nice to me". I shook his hand and wished him well. My only thought was, "thank you Lord!" We can never know how God will use us, or how we affect other people's lives. I remain to this day in an attitude of prayer.

GRANTS & GIVING

Our board would like to thank the jail ministry for the following contributions as well as for all our donors.

- Franciscan Perpetual Sisters of Adoration gave us a gift of \$10,000.
- La Crosse Community Foundation gave us \$2,500 Grant.
- First Congregational Church \$2000.
- Gundersen Health System gave us a donation of \$1,500.

CIRCLE OF SUPPORT

Our Circles of Support program is also looking for volunteers interested in being a part of a diverse circle of people mentoring someone transitioning out of jail or prison.

Contact our Chaplain if you would like to create or join a Circle of Support.

WHAT DOES A TYPICAL DAY LOOK LIKE FOR LA CROSSE COUNTY JAILER TOBY BERG?

"I do a little social work, I do some janitorial work, I do some health counseling, I do some financial management, and that's outside of the routine stuff like meals and laundry," he says. "We are often first on the scene when medical things happen. It really is something different every hour of the day." Many inmates at the county jail have mental health issues and although professional support is sometimes available, it often falls on jailers to work with people as best they can. "Even though we are not trained mental health professionals, we have to



Toby Berg

deal with situations as they happen," Toby says. The bond among jail staff is tight. "It's a unique experience that brings you together," Toby explains. "Sometimes you have to lean on your coworkers and sometimes they have to lean on you, because you know what your colleague is going through." Toby has a lot of empathy for the inmates he works with. "Everybody makes mistakes in their lives," he says. "Every once in a while, I'll bump into somebody outside of work, a former inmate, and a few times, I've had people say to me 'you made a difference when I was in there, you made things better for me,' and when you hear that it's just huge."

PIZZA PARTY

If you would like to donate to a pizza party for the staff on December 24th, please send a check to the La Crosse Jail Ministry.

WHY I SERVE

LA CROSSE JAIL MINISTRY

I'm a big believer in redemption and mercy and honestly believe that people shouldn't be defined or cast out by society because of their mistakes...we all make them! I started sharing God's message as a confirmation Catechist at my last parish in Toledo, Ohio and felt compelled to do the same when I moved here to La Crosse. I've volunteered at the Jail Ministry coming up on a year now. I learn a lot during my sessions with the residents and from the fellow bible study leaders. They both keep me motivated to learn as much as I can about scripture and to share it in a way that is understandable and impactful. God has changed my life for the better and all I can do with that gift is to share it with people who are in desperate need of his message and love. I looked forward to volunteering with this organization for many years to come!



Emily Brown

Emily Brown
Blessed Sacrament, La Crosse, WI

DONATIONS NEEDED NOW

We need warm boots, coats, and sweatpants (all sizes and mainly for men). We are also in need of Bus Tokens. For a list of other items, check out our Donation/Support page on our website Lacrossejailministry.org that includes an Amazon shopping list.

VOLUNTEER INTERVIEW W/ BETHANY DUNNUM

LIVING WORD CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Why did you decide to volunteer?

My family were newish members of Living Word Christian Church. I didn't even know such a ministry existed until the coordinator of our church's jail ministry spoke about it to the church and asked for help to minister to people in the jail. I immediately knew I needed to respond. It was confirmed by the poke from my husband sitting next to me saying "You need to do that."



Bethany Dunnum

How long have you volunteered and how do you volunteer?

I began serving in about 2009. In the past, I have been involved in Wednesday morning women's bible studies as well as Sunday afternoon services at the Juvenile Detention. Currently, I lead Sunday evening church services monthly for female jail inmates. In addition, I meet with female inmates via video chat as requested to provide spiritual encouragement.

What's been your most rewarding experience?

One specific instance: I was attending a community Good Friday service at another local church. I was approached by a woman I didn't recognize. She told me how she knew me from jail ministry, that she was clean and sober, working, and attending and serving in her church. I love and appreciate hearing a wonderful success story! In general: Matthew 6:21 - "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." In this case, the treasure is a little bit of my time and effort. I never expected to have such a care for women who are incarcerated, but here we are... 15 years and counting.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

I recently received a note from a former resident:

I wanted to share a couple of God things with you. Where I work the radio is left on K love and each day I hear "I Was Made for More" (by Josh Baldwin) - it brings me to my knees! God is so Good! I am doing well, working hard, going to meetings and counseling. I am going to be ok!! Thank you again for your time and prayers when I was in jail. You helped me so much with no judgment to boot!"

As a Christian, Christ's love compels me to be a chaplain in the jail. Notes like this are a bonus. I was glad to be there and glad I was able to play that song for her. Thank you to all of you that donate to our ministry so I can continue to be in the jail.

Ann Wales, Chaplain



Ann Wales

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We have multiple ways that people could help us with jail ministry. A few of the ideas are the following: committee members (*Community Outreach, Publicity*), fundraising event helpers, donation collectors of both clothes and library materials, donation organizers, posting posters, contacting faith communities, organizing staff appreciation, etc. If you are interested email president@lacrossejailministry.org or call the chaplain at 608-785-9772. You can also go online and fill out a form on the Volunteer page of our website lacrossejailministry.org.