

Our Mission:

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



Volume 27 ■ Number 2 ■ Fall 2025

REFLECTION ON MY SERVICE

WITH THE LA CROSSE JAIL MINISTRY

In December 2025, my commitment to the La Crosse Jail Ministry Board will come to an end. While it is always rewarding to know you've given back to your community, it is even more meaningful to recognize the ways in which this service has enriched your own life.

When I joined the Jail Ministry Board, I was aware of the value and impact of the programs already in place. My prior experiences volunteering with incarcerated mothers had given me an understanding of the unique challenges they face. I had the opportunity to assist these mothers as they read books to their children which were then taped and sent to them with the book. This gave the children a unique opportunity to hear their mother's voice and reminded the mothers of their need to change their lives. I also was involved in helping to entertain children while their mothers or grandmothers visited with their incarcerated family members, via video screen. The challenge was appreciated.

As I approach the conclusion of my six-year Board term, I am filled with gratitude for the opportunity to walk alongside so many remarkable individuals—volunteers, chaplains,

and incarcerated people alike. The lessons learned, the relationships forged, and the humility gained will continue to shape my perspective

long after my official duties have ended. In giving, I have received far more than I anticipated, and I step forward carrying the spirit of Jail Ministry's mission in my heart. To volunteer for Jail Ministry is a lesson in understanding, humility, and appreciation. As John Bradford wrote, "But for the grace of God go I."

Dee Paque



Dee Paque

The entire La Crosse Jail Ministry Board, including our chaplain, THANK YOU, Dee, for your six years of volunteer service on the board. Dee has been a board member who steps forward on a regular basis; serving on various committees, helping with fundraisers, and even writing up materials for us. Thank you Dee! Your helping hands will never be forgotten!

- Chris Magnuson

La Crosse Jail Ministry Board President

LA CROSSE JAIL MINISTRY 2025 BOARD MEMBERS

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St. Charles Catholic Church in Genoa

Elliot Bujan
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LA CROSSE JAILERS

La Crosse County's jailers play a critical role—helping maintain public safety while supporting people in the jail, many of whom face serious mental health and substance use challenges.

"We deal with a lot of mental health issues the public doesn't see," says Jailer Tim Shelton, who has worked for the County for 13 years.



"Every day brings a new challenge. We do the best we can, but we're not mental health professionals."

The jailers perform an important service for the public, but it's work that often goes unnoticed. "We're kind of forgotten about," says Tonya Siddons, who has 25 years of experience at the La Crosse County Jail. "It can be very

stressful at times, but having good coworkers pulls us through." Kari Anderson, who has been a jailer for 17 years, agrees: "Great coworkers help you make it through, day by day."

Please join us in thanking the County's jailers for their hard work, resilience, and the care they bring to this vital role:

- **Bakers** to prepare treats for them in December
 - **Sponsors** to support the pizza provided to the staff on Dec. 24th
- Contact our chaplain Ann Wales at Chaplain@lacrossejailministry.org.

Fundraiser money earned this year (so far):

Bake Sale & Raffle.....	\$1,054.81
Culver's in July.....	\$460
Brat Barn #1	\$291.42
Brat Barn #3	\$228
Pizza Ranch Event in June.....	\$584
Pizza Ranch Event in August....	\$521



Donations by former inmates:

So far this year, former residents have donated \$62.34. When they are getting out of jail, they can opt to take their money or leave it and donate it to us.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Culver's Fundraiser: Dine at the Culver's on Mormon Coulee Rd. Sept. 23rd from 5pm to 7pm. The jail ministry receives 10% of all sales plus any tips or donations collected during the event. Help us reach our goal of \$1,000!

Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast:

November 6th from 7:30am to 10:30am at First Presbyterian Church, 233 West Ave, S., La Crosse, WI 54601. Volunteers mark your calendars and watch for your invite.

2025 HOLIDAY NEEDS FOR RESIDENTS

This December we would like to give everyone in general population hygiene supplies and some treats. If you or your faith community would like to contribute to this effort, it would be so appreciated! The cost last year was \$1200.00.

We would also like to give all 12 blocks new **puzzles** and new **playing cards**. Contact our chaplain Ann Wales at Chaplain@lacrossejailministry.org.

JAIL MINISTRY AUG 2024-25 BY THE NUMBERS

Volunteers	97
(Video Visits, Services, Studies, Youth & Circles)	
Number of Services.....	124
Number of Studies.....	180
Circles of Support Groups.....	4
Chaplain assisted phone calls.....	275
Chaplain Visits	230

Supplies Given:

Address Book	533
Calendar	179
Drawing or Coloring Paper (4)	716
Embossed (stamped) Envelopes (2) ..	1637
Folder	593
Glasses	188
Hair Ties (2).....	595
Legal Pad	619
Manilla Envelope	605
Pencil with Eraser.....	700

Playing Cards.....	501
Spiritual Books	262
Rosary	21
210 people received haircuts and/or beard trims at a cost of \$3565.00.	

This list does not include the number of spiritual books, bus tokens, puzzles, games, books, and magazines handed out. It also does not include all the coats, shoes, boots, hats, backpacks, gloves, underwear, socks, shirts, and sweatpants given out. We are so grateful to all of you and your faith communities that have so faithfully donated and contributed to our supplies.

We are especially grateful to Franciscan Perpetual Sisters of Adoration for their very generous support to this last year of 10,000 to our ministry.

MESSAGES FROM INMATES

Resident: I want to say thanks to the volunteers that help the jail out and the chaplain. Our fellowship is strong here. God is raising workers and we wouldn't have the things we have without you guys. I hope you all have an amazing rest of the year. God Bless.

Former Resident: "The support, guidance, and love we experience in the ministry is a testament to God's grace. I've met with Chaplain Ann many times. I consider her a mother in faith. I also would attend the men's church hour, along with the bible study at night. All of the volunteers are so kind to us, like John, Mark, Bill, and Pastor Jerry. The La Crosse Jail Ministry nurtured my faith. I read my bible every day; I took notes in it. God is truly at work in my life; He knows what I need even before I do."

WHY I SERVE

LA CROSSE JAIL MINISTRY



Ruben Mendoza

I decided to serve mainly with keeping in mind the Gospel of St. Matthew 25:36-40, "You did it to me." However, I myself have experienced incarceration most of my youth, even being detained in the La Crosse facility. Therefore I had that personal draw to serve there somehow.

I serve at the La Crosse County Jail Ministry by assisting the Catholic Men's Group on the scheduled Sundays, specifically reading the Gospel of the Day according to the Church's Calendar. I approach the study based on the traditional practice of Lectio Divina, or Sacred Reading, while remaining faithful to the Church's substantial interpretation of the Holy Scriptures.

What moves me or inspires me when serving at jail is the Holy Spirit moving in us as a group and the joy that we receive when dwelling on God's Word.

What I believe that I have gained through the studies with the inmates is wanting to learn and imitate their child-like disposition to receive enlightenment by meditating on the Scriptures.

The advice that I give to those considering serving in jail ministry is primarily to include it in their prayers of discernment and to seek advice from a close friend. Whatever the decision, a humble request is to please pray for our ministry and the inmates, that we bear much fruit for God's Kingdom.

Ruben Mendoza

CHAPLAIN'S

CORNER

I will be retiring on December 31st of this year. It will conclude 5 years of service as chaplain, 20 years as a volunteer and 9 years on the board. I'm excited for the next chapter of my life. I am also beyond grateful to have ended my working career in this role. I have different groups of people I need to acknowledge.



Ann Wales

Volunteers - When I first started we had no one volunteering, Covid had shut everything down. I was wondering how I would ever get it all going. God was faithful though, when I put out the call many came back and new ones came forward. We have 97 volunteers serving in so many ways. I've found them all to be inspiring as I see their commitment to this population. They show up for them and give all they have for them. Some volunteers show up every week! It is admirable.

Staff - I have been impressed with the work the staff do here in the jail. I never understood the stress of

their job. Working in the jail with the conditions they have to face can be beyond tough. I am so very grateful for all of the wisdom, guidance and protection that they have provided to me.

Residents - Some have such sad stories. Some just want to continue on the path they are on. But some truly, and earnestly want to do better. They provide hope. They want to pursue their faith. I have been blessed by what I have seen and heard from them. There are many I will never forget.

Board Members - I have had the best and most faithful board members. Their burden for this population and their willingness to serve is exemplary. They have a hard job and I admire them for showing up and leading this ministry.

Supporters - I couldn't serve if you didn't give, pray, and donate. Your support has been truly humbling.

I thank God for leading me to this role. My Father has shown up for me so many times. I've experienced Him working in my life to enable me. I've felt His conviction when I haven't shown up with grace. He would give me the guidance I needed. I'm so grateful. I'm praying for the next chaplain, may they be as blessed as I have been.

Ann Wales, Chaplain

LA CROSSE JAIL MINISTRY CURRENT NEEDS:

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Winter Coats | • Puzzles (<i>gently used</i>) |
| • Warm Socks, Hats & Gloves | • Games (<i>see our Amazon shopping list link on our website</i>) |
| • Shoes & Boots (<i>gently used</i>)
(<i>all sizes, especially mens</i>) | • Paperbacks & Magazines (<i>gently used</i>) |
| • Sweatpants (<i>gently used</i>) | • Coloring Books (<i>new</i>) |
| • Underwear for men (<i>new</i>) | • Study Bibles |

We have a drop-off location at **Coulee Life Church** (N5761 County Rd SN next to Sand Lake Elementary in Onalaska). There is a bench inside the first set of doors and donations can be dropped there during the week from 9am to 6pm. In the event the doors are locked, please email info@couleelife.church or call 608-783-4770.

Technology Skilled Volunteers: If you would be interested in serving on one of our committees or the board, please contact our vice president at vicepresident@lacrossejailministry.org.

LA CROSSE COUNTY JAIL MINISTRY

P.O. Box 2675

La Crosse, WI 54602-2675

Non-Profit Org.

US Postage

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La Crosse, WI

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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!

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