

VICAR'S CORNER:

Time and Presence – the essence of prison ministry

It has been a pleasure for me to be working as Vicar for the CSD since July 2006. I have joined Pastor Bill in worship leadership and preaching at MCTC, MCIH and RCI and have been on the teaching rotation for Bible Study at MCIH. Since my background is counseling in a prison setting, I am delighted that Pastor Bill and I are also providing pastoral counseling at RCI and more recently, MCTC.

Throughout my experiences in prisons, I have found that "those on the inside" often wonder why those "on the outside" take the time to be with them, worship with them and talk with them. Aren't there so many other things to do? Better things to do? Safer things to do? Clanging doors, constant noise, and institutional peculiarities do *not* make these worship and Bible Study sites the most "worship and Bible Study friendly," as the world looks upon these things.

My answer is something like this, "God has called me to prison ministry and has led the way. The truth is, God calls each us to be in places of need, with others in need. We need each other to worship, support, encourage and study God's Word together. It is my pleasure being here with you."

While it is true that those in prison are "just like us" in that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, there are differences. We do not live in a 7 foot by 9 foot space with another person. Education levels are generally lower for those in prison. Percentages of those neglected and abused as children and abused as adult women are higher for those in prison than on the outside. Percentages of those with mental health issues and alcohol and drug addiction are higher for those in prison than on the outside. A high percentage of those incarcerated have lived in poverty. Theirs is a stress-filled, noisy,

humiliating and crowded environment of control and oppression with few choices to make and much more limitations for positive growth, vocational training, economic well-being, individual attention and time alone.

Because of these things, giving the gifts of our "time" and "presence" in worship and activities of the CSD are invaluable and appreciated. The message we give is "you mean that much to me and to our faith community," a message that is in response to the one God's love gives to us in the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ.

Volunteers are needed, especially in the Hagerstown institutions. Contact the CSD about volunteering once a week, even once a month. If you would like more specific information, we would be delighted to talk with you or your church. The men and women "on the inside" are waiting to meet you, worship with you, study the Bible with you, and be with you. All, those on the inside and from the outside, will truly be blessed by this "time" and "presence" together. In God's grace and peace,
-Vicar Sadie C. Pounder

Schedule of Opportunities

Inside Evening Worship Services

Monday Nights	MCTC, Hagerstown
Wednesday Nights	RCI/MCIH Hagerstown
Friday Nights	MCIJ, Jessup
Saturday Nights	MCIW, Jessup

Inside Evening Bible Studies

Monday Nights	RCI, MCIW
Tuesday Nights	MCIJ, MCIH
Wednesday Nights	MCTC

Speakers and Preachers

If you would like a special word on our Passion for Prison Ministry, or if you need pastoral supply for Sunday worship, invite us to come to your church.

Call or E-mail:

Bob Mauck, CSD Office Manager
410-233-7897; stdysmas@toad.net
Pastor Bill Lundgren:
301-514-8473; legacyfaith@comcast.net

From Our President:

Viola Noffsinger is our Council President for 2007, is a member of St. John's, Creagerstown, and she leads a Bible Study at the MCI in Hagerstown.

Many events have occurred since the last congregational meeting in January. The updated constitution which complies with the ELCA model has been accepted by the Synod Council.

Committees recommended in the new constitution are beginning to function. The nominating committee must be elected by the congregation - thus the need for a special meeting this May.

The budget requires constant attention. An appeal for funds was sent out in March after the necessity to withdraw \$4,000 from the Mission Fund. **Many thanks** to all that responded to the special appeal and in advance to those that remember CSD in the future.

For the first time in many years an audit was performed by Mr. John Boblitz. He was able to pass the CSD financial records for 2006 with "flying colors". Thank you Bob Mauck, Office Manager and Joanne Hunt, Treasurer for superior work with the books.

The revised constitution, a budget and an audit were requirements of the "Mission Team Evaluation". Of the major points yet to be established is the By-Laws and Mission Statement. The By-Laws committee has worked diligently and is asking for comments before putting the final touch to the document for presentation.

The Mission Statement team has asked for your thoughts before June 10th as they plan to meet on June 14th at 11:00 on the site of the Synod Assembly in the canteen area. Please send your thoughts to one of the following:

Pr Bill legacyfaith@comcast.net
Joanne Hunt stdysmas@toad.net
Viola Noffsinger stdysmas@toad.net

We have been very fortunate to have Vicar Sadie Pounder with us for the last nine months. She has been working mostly in the Hagerstown area in order to save on mileage and because we share her with St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Hagerstown.

I encourage you to share your thoughts and concerns with me before the congregational meeting so they can be on the agenda and if necessary research can be done in advance. We will rejoice in your attendance at the May 20th meeting. It begins at 1:30 at Second English Lutheran Church, 5010 Briarcliff Road, Baltimore. A regular meeting of the Congregational Council will immediately follow the 1:30 meeting.

Peace to you all,
Viola Noffsinger

It's Not What You're Thinking

Most people, if they pause to consider what prison ministry is, will imagine the sound of a large steel door slamming shut behind them as they enter into the institution. However, many of the things that are included in prison ministry do not happen inside. So whether or not you are able to enter a prison, being the light of Christ to those behind bars is within your grasp. The following are some of the activities included in the CSD Encyclopedia of Prison Ministries:

- As a daily devotional prayer, ask the Lord to help you forgive, those that have committed a specific crime. Change the crime each day and when you have forgiven them all, start over.
- Write a letter to someone in prison. Ask us for names (see last page of newsletter).
- Sponsor one week's rent for someone living in a transitional house that provides programs to those released from prison.
- Tutor a child who has a parent in prison.
- Refer to CSD the names of employers who will hire someone with a criminal record.

It Takes A Thief

The Community of Saint Dymas is very proud to be among those who have assisted Mr. John Mingo prepare his second collection of poems for publication. John, a member of CSD and former resident of the Maryland House of Corrections in Jessup and MCI Hagerstown, was released from prison a year ago, and is now the manager of a transitional house for men in recovery in East Baltimore. Dr. Clarinda Harriss, Professor of English at Towson University, and Editor/Director of Brickhouse Books, is the editor and publisher of this work. This book is entitled "It takes a Thief." Pastor Bill provided a brief reflection for the book's forward:

It seems fitting, that John has produced this collection under the title "It takes a Thief." Saint Dymas is the name that Christian tradition gives to the thief that hung on the cross next to Jesus Christ. In the 23rd chapter of Luke, as both were dying, Dymas calls out, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus replies, "Today you will be with me in Paradise." For many it takes a thief to reveal that those who suffer at the hands of human justice can be restored through faith. I give thanks for the ongoing work of God in John Mingo, and the gift of his poetry. May this book fill you with compassion for those who made mistakes and served their time.

It is our hope that you will help support John as he continues to model the path of recovery, from addiction and incarceration to freedom. Autographed copies of the first printing are available for \$25.00 from CSD while supplies last. Call in advance to reserve your copy.

Special Congregational Meeting

Sunday, May 20th, 1:30pm
Second English Lutheran Church
5010 Briarclift Road, Baltimore

Prayers and Letters

Please join us in praying for or writing cards or letters to the following men and women who were in worship during the month of April. If you chose to correspond with and encourage one of our members, please send it to us, so that we can forward it to the addressee in one of our own envelopes. We ask that you use only first names for yourself and the person you are writing, and do not give your address or phone number to the inmate (however, be sure to give it to us so we can forward you any response they may write).

Hagerstown

Ron	Arnold	Lester
Lee	Duane	Zathang
Chuck	Bryan	Dale
Dean	William	Gary
Marcos	Keith	Tom
Carl	Jeffrey	Donald
Joe	Kevin	Charles
William	Brian	James
Tavaughn	Lloyd	Mitchell
William		

Jessup

Alfred	Jack	Edward
Charles	Ray	Kenny
Dave	Mark	Gary
Byron	Rhonda	Dagmar
Krystal	Georgia	Amy
Karen	Cathleen	Chevelle
Amber	Annette	Melissa
Patricia	Tyra	Connie
Brooke	Shelby	Virginia
Heather	Kym	Helen
Jeanie	Bridgett	Joanne
Ashley	Cheryl	Laura
Judith	Leona	Shameika
Tamatha	Rebecca	Elizabeth
Nicole	Kelly	