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Prison
Congregations
of America, Inc.

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Prison Congregations of America, Inc.

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“... to collaborate with Christian denominations and prison officials so that prison congregations are established in state prisons across America.”

August 2018

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Gifts

By **Mary Mortenson**

There are four groups of people that I have been privileged to know these years of involvement with PCA. First among them are the prison congregations. The prison worshipping communities vary in size from 15 to 90, yet among them there is sweetness and authenticity. These people dare to believe the Gospel news that God loves us all, without requirement and without reserve, and then they strive to live in response to that good news by caring for others. They evangelize, they serve communion, they sing or play instruments and they are role models for all of us.

These prison worshipping communities are led by pastors who are trained by and accountable to the sponsoring denomination, and who live in the constant tension of serving the inmates as well as the staff, and in obeying facility rules while proclaiming freedom in Christ. I know of no other call like that of a prison pastor, whose work can be at once inspiring, exhausting, and lonely. Several weeks ago, Rev. Carol Wieger of New Life Christian Church Disciples of Christ of Louisville, Kentucky wrote in part: *My heart is heavy this morning. Another beautiful soul has been taken by this horrible thing we call addiction. In the last six years that I've been serving with this particular community – especially the last two years as pastor at New Life in Christ*



Executive Director
Mary Mortenson

Christian Church – I've seen quite a few lives destroyed by this disease. HOWEVER, I've seen far more lives turned around and many families brought back together... Many women succeed when they just thought they couldn't do it... Milestones reached and passed. So, while I pause for a moment and mourn the loss of my friend this morning, I also take a break to thank God

for the success of all the women that have made it. I think Lisa would want that.

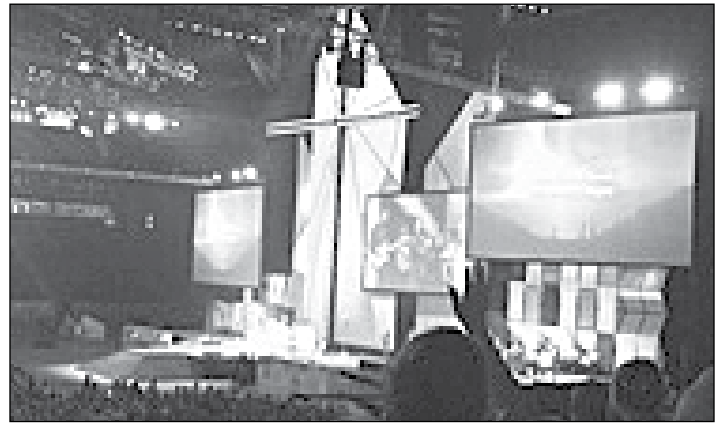
Prison Congregations of America is blessed to be served by a truly remarkable Board of Directors. These people, who are listed to the left of this article, represent different geographic areas and bring unique talents to the board. They lead without micro-managing and they hold me in affirmation and challenge – depending on the situation. This issue of the newsletter will offer you several opportunities for giving a financial gift. Among them is this: Please consider giving a special gift in honor of the PCA Board of Directors, leaders and Jesus-followers extraordinaire.

Finally, a group of people I have come to love and admire is you, our donors and supporters. PCA runs solely on donation and it is no secret that we simply couldn't do the work we do without your support. Fundraising is hard work. I have never wanted to be that person who is always

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This Changes Everything! PCA at ELCA National Youth Gathering

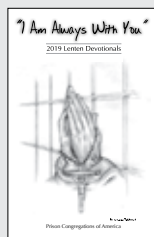
Rev. Rick and Rose Admiraal represented PCA with an interactive display at the ELCA National Youth Gathering in Houston, Texas earlier this summer. Pastor Rick serves on the PCA Board of Directors, and he is also the pastor of New Life Prison Community in Newton, IA. He reported, "In our 30'x30' area, we had a table of information about PCA. We were also giving out hundreds of bookmarks with an explanation of PCA on it. But we also had a PVC jail cell with a cardboard cutout of Jesus inside. It was interesting to see how the young people interacted with this. Some would come by and ask "Why is Jesus in jail?" I'd tell them that I did the crime but HE's doing the time. Or we'd tell them that Jesus is in prison because he has a heart of compassion for those who are hurting. Wherever there are homeless or hungry or prisoners, there is Jesus among them.



Or we'd tell them about Jesus' radical solidarity with the incarcerated. "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'" (Matthew 25:40, NIV) Some of the young people were bothered by Jesus locked up behind bars. One of them even pulled the cardboard cutout of Jesus out of the jail and set him free. This stands in agreement with one of my Facebook Friends who wrote this hashtag comment on my page – #FreeJesus. Many people snapped photos with Jesus and posted on Instagram – #JesusandMeinPrison. Take a look for yourself."

2019 Lenten Devotional Booklet

Members of prison congregations are working on submissions for the 2019 edition of the Lenten Devotional Booklet, "I Am Always With You." If you are a donor this year, you will get a booklet, but they are available to anyone who asks, so let us know if you would like one. (mary@prisoncongregations.org)



PCA Transition News

The PCA Director Search Committee is conducting interviews, as they come ever closer to recommending a name to the full board. So far the news is that all applicants are amazingly qualified!! We'll send out a special notice when a decision is made.

Web-based Donation Opportunities

GoodSearch and **GoodShop** are easy ways that we can contribute to PCA. GoodSearch (<http://www.goodsearch.com>) is an on-line search engine. If you sign up on their site to support PCA, a small donation will be set aside every time you use the search engine. If, when you are shopping on-line, you go to your favorite site through GoodShop, (<http://www.goodshop.com/goodshop.aspx?charityid=916169&widget=1>) a percentage of your purchase price will go to PCA.



search.com/goodshop.

Amazon Smile is another online way that you can support PCA. Simply go to the Amazon Smile site and sign up. (<http://smile.amazon.com/>)

Prayer Corner

Please join us in prayer for all God's children who find themselves on the fringes of society. Help the church to have the courage to stand with these brothers and sisters by speaking truth to power.





YOU HAVE A HAND IN THIS MINISTRY!

DONOR LIST - GIFTS RECEIVED FROM JANUARY 1 - JULY 31, 2018

Endowment Gifts

Marilyn Holmgren

Sponsors (\$5000-\$9999)

Mission Partners (\$1000-\$4999)

Jeannie Bates

Church of the Damascus Road,
Fort Dodge, IA

Church of the Damascus Road – Texas,
Weatherford, TX

Michael Dirksen- In memory of
Pam Dirksen

ELCA Racial Justice Ministries, Chicago, IL

Faith Lutheran Church, Odebolt, IA

Chuck & Kaona Hazlett

Jack & Mary Mortenson

New Beginnings Worshipping Community,
Denver, CO

Pleasant Valley Lutheran Church,
Vermillion, SD

Women at the Well, Mitchellville, IA

X-tra Milers (\$500-\$999)

American Lutheran Church, Castlewood, SD

Becker Family Philanthropic Fund

Community of St. Dysmas, Catonsville, MD

Pamela & David Deacon-Joyner

Chris & Nadeen Flohr

Wayne & Debbie Gallipo

Gayville-Bergen Lutheran Churches,
Gayville & Meckling, SD

John Harrison

Living Stones Prison Congregation,
Shelton, WA

Steve & Enid Peterson

Santa Isabel Ministry to Immigrants,
Elizabeth, NJ

St Francis of Assisi Christian Church,
Draper, UT

Lyle & June Wagner

Friends of PCA (\$100-\$499)

Doreen Arneson

Lois Bellows, in memory of

Richard Bellows

Craig & Becky Black

Marsha Block, in memory of Dileen Ninke

Margaret Borstad, part in memory of
Edwin L. Borstad

Connie Bruinsma

Neil Bullock

Raymond & Mary Burnett

Calvary Lutheran Church, Rapid City, SD

Mary Nelle Cook, in honor of
Mary Mortenson

Custer Lutheran Fellowship, Custer, SD

Myron & Constance Dahlstrom

Scott Daily

Joan Dolejsi

Dr. Kay Foland

Freedom in Christ Ministry, Anaconda, MT

Elta R. Helgelien

Steven & Wanda Helmers

Jayne Heying-Bilka

Sandy Jerstad

Natalie Johnson, in memory of

Robert L. Johnson

Living Word Lutheran Church, Milbank. SD

lone & James Klinger

Dottie Loos

Michelle Loseke

Marcy Lund, in memory of Bob Lund

Kathryn & John Miller Giving Fund

Frank X Miller

John & Mary Moe

Diane Nesselhuf, part in memory of

Ron Moyer

Jerry & Karen Nettifee

Joran Olson, in memory of Debbie Gallipo

Paul Olson

OM & Beverly Osheim

Dave & Linda Osmundson

Jean Peszko

Dolores Peterson

Ronald Peterson, in memory of

Anna-Liisa Peterson

Shelly Pfaff

Wayne & Joann Piebenga

Gary & Frances Rasmussen

Resurrection Lutheran Church,
Indianapolis, IN

Greg Schock

Margaret Schulz

Glenn & Marlene Sellevold, part in
memory of Pam Dirksen and
Debbie Gallipo

Roger Semmler

Keith Smith

Southwestern Minnesota WELCA,
St. Peter, MN

Bev Sponheim

Paul Stone

St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, SD

Trinity Lutheran Church, Estelline, SD

Vic & Ethelyn Uttke

Arn Vollmer, in memory of Steve Vollmer

Trinity Lutheran Church, Rapid City, SD

Jim & Gen Tuinstra

Duane Weisshaar

Gary Williams & Li Fjerestad

VIP (\$1-\$99)

Anonymous

Robert Barclay

Helena Bauer

Carol Bebo

Sharon Caffee

Earl Carlson

Bob & Carole Chell, in memory of
Marvin Chell

Church of the Damascus Road, members
at Fort Dodge, IA

Church of the Damascus Road, members
at Rockwell City, IA

Ronald Couchman

Carol Cressman, in memory of Joel Cook

Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl, in memory of
Debbie Gallipo

DeWayne Delzer

Scott & Barbara Dempster

Dan & Arlene Drew, in memory of Joan
Hilmoe & Gail August

Thomas Earley

Graydon & Karen Elverud

Drs. Joan England & Orla Christensen
First Lutheran Church, Torrance, CA

Carol Forster, in memory of Dick Forster

Charles & Patricia Graham

Paul Hasse

Norma Hofer

Dr. Marilyn & Jon Holmgren

Donald Holst

Bruce & Sandra Jordan

Gary & Patricia Junker

Rose Jurgens, in memory of
Rose Goodroad

Charles & Mary Ann Kretschmar

Orand & Ruth Liebelt

Dr. & Mrs. Herbert McClellan, Jr

Kathryn Miller

Gail Morgan

Dean Noble, in memory of

Pamela G. Dirksen

Greg Noble, in memory of

Pamela G. Dirksen

Our Savior's Lutheran Church Friendship
Club, Sioux Falls, SD

James W. Ozanich

Ellen & Richard Plocek

Bill Roberts

Allan Saugstad & Cheryl Matthews

John & Patricia Scherrman

James Simons

Frank & Lorene Smedley

Shari Smith

Lloyd & Janet Sohl

Joseph & Gwendolyn Stanton

Debra Thormodsgard, in memory of

Julie Thomas

Calvin Tonsager

Jeff & Stacey Tveit

Verlie Yockey

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IN MEMORY OF / IN HONOR OF GIFT FORM

*Prison Congregations of America accepts gifts in memory of someone who has died or in honor of someone on a special occasion.
Just note your contribution accordingly. Be sure to tell us to whom to announce your gift.*

Please Print: I am enclosing a special gift in the amount of \$

In Memory Of _____ In Honor Of _____

To celebrate his/her/their _____

Send announcement of gift to: _____

Address _____ City, State, Zip _____

Indicate on acknowledgement that gift is being made by:

Your Name(s) _____

Address _____ City, State, Zip _____

Phone (in case of question) _____

PCA Congregations

There are currently 34 worshipping communities in 16 states, listed in order of when they were established.

- ◆ 1984 – The Community of St. Dymas, Jessup and Hagarstown, MD – Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) – 5 point parish in Maryland Correctional Institution for women and Maryland Correctional Institution for men, and Patuxent Institution, all in Jessup, the Maryland Correctional Training Center in Hagerstown, and the Central Maryland Correctional Facility in Sykesville.
- ◆ 1990 – St. Dymas of South Dakota, Sioux Falls and Springfield, SD – ELCA – Both men’s facilities
- ◆ 1991 – St. Dismas Episcopal, Graterford, PA – Men’s facility
- ◆ 1997 – Church of Hope, Pierre, SD – American Baptist Church – Women’s facility
- ◆ 1997 – The Church of the Damascus Road, Ft. Dodge & Rockwell City, IA – ELCA – Both men’s facilities
- ◆ 1997 – Followers of Christ, Lincoln, NE – ELCA – Men’s facility
- ◆ 2000 – New Beginnings Worshipping Community, Denver, CO – ELCA – Women’s facility
- ◆ 2003 – Prison Lighthouse Fellowship, Sioux Falls, SD – Baptist General Conference – Men’s facility
- ◆ 2005 – Cornerstone Prison Church, Sioux Falls, SD – Christian Reformed Church – Men’s facility
- ◆ 2006 – Living Stones, Shelton, WA – ELCA – Men’s facility
- ◆ 2006 – Women at the Well Mitchellville, IA – United Methodist Church – Women’s facility
- ◆ 2007 – Grace Place, Fort Pillow, TN – United Methodist Church – Women’s facility
- ◆ 2008 – Celebration Fellowship, Ionia, MI – Christian Reformed Church – Three Men’s facilities
- ◆ 2011 – St. Francis of Assisi Christian Church, Draper, UT – Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) – Women’s facility
- ◆ 2011 – New Life Prison Community, Newton, IA – Christian Reformed Church – Men’s facility
- ◆ 2012 – Freedom in Christ Prison Ministry, Deer Lodge, MT – ELCA – Men’s facility
- ◆ 2012 – Living Stone Prison Church, Springfield, SD – Reformed Church in America – Men’s facility
- ◆ 2013 – New Life in Christ Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Louisville, KY – Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), The Diersen House, women’s half way house
- ◆ 2014 – The Church of the Damascus Road, Jacksboro & Breckenridge, TX – ELCA – Men’s facilities
- ◆ 2015 – Church of Another Chance, Nashville, TN – Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) – Men’s jail
- ◆ 2016 – Breaking the Chains Church, Milwaukee, WI – ELCA – Men’s facility
- ◆ 2017 – FreeIndeed, Anamosa, IA – ELCA – Men’s facility
- ◆ 2017 – Prisoners of Hope Christian Church, Memphis, TN – Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) – Men’s facility
- ◆ 2017 – Santa Isabel Ministry to Immigrants, Elizabeth, NJ– ELCA – Men’s and women’s facility – 2 separate services
- ◆ 2018 – Grace & Hope Fellowship, Pendleton, IN – ELCA – Men’s facility

Why Do We Send Thank-you Notes?

By **Mary Mortenson**

I have sometimes been asked why we recognize every gift, even those given every month, with a thank you note. My reply is, "If you take the time to send us a check every month, we can certainly take the time for a short note." I truly believe that. Even if your gift is recurring through your bank or some on-line arrangement, you are still thinking about us, and I want to remind you how precious you are to us. It's been fun to write a different letter every month, which includes either news or some sort of story. Every letter is a celebration of all that we together are able

to accomplish.

Please continue your support into the coming years. I know that our new Executive Director is going to help PCA continue to grow as we accomplish the mission of worshipping communities in every prison. PCA will keep working until there are no more prisons without a congregation, so I don't see us being done anytime soon.

I invite you to consider a special gift in honor of the PCA Board of Directors, the prison pastors, or even my tenure as director. Whatever you decide know that you, your financial gifts, and your prayers matter to this ministry.

Partners at the Cross: With Gratitude & Hope

The annual Partners at the Cross banquet will be Saturday, October 20, 2018 at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, 909 W. 33rd St., Sioux Falls, SD. Doors open at 5:30pm with a silent auction, with dinner at 6:00pm followed by a program which will include some remembrances of the past ten years as well as some hopes for the future of PCA. The evening will culminate with the introduction of the new Executive Director. Tickets are \$25/each or a table of 8 for \$200. We hope you can join us for this event. If you are unable to attend, please consider using the enclosed envelope for a special Partners at the Cross donation. You can also buy tickets or make a donation on-line: use *Donate with Webpay* button at <https://www.prisoncongregations.org/donate/>



In Memorium

Pam Dirksen died on May 17, 2018 from complications of Fronto-temporal Lobar Degeneration (FTD). Pam was the Administrative Assistant for PCA from 2009 until her retirement in 2012. She had experience with prison ministry, having worked for many years for St. Dysmas of South Dakota. Her experience was valuable as PCA transitioned in 2009 to a new director. Her expertise, experience and enthusiasm for prison ministry will never be forgotten. Survivors include her husband Mike, son Jeff and daughter Michelle and family.

GIFTS

continued from page 1

asking for money, but I have learned that if I love this ministry as I do, then it is my responsibility and privilege to invite you into this adventure. I don't know why many of you are involved, but please know, I thank God every day that you are.

So there you have it – my gifts from the last years have come from inmate worshipping communities, committed pastors, smart and dedicated board members and faithful and trusting donors. Thank you for an exciting and rewarding journey! Together we are changing the church and the world, and together that holy work will continue under the guidance of the new Executive Director, who will be announced soon.

PCA Seeks to be "Greener"

Would you prefer to get this newsletter via email? Please let us know at mary@prisoncongregations.org.

PCA and Social Media

If you look at: www.PrisonCongregations.org, you'll find:

- Updated news!
- Our blog!
- Links to Facebook and Twitter



**AND PLEASE
"LIKE" US ON FACEBOOK**

Thrivent Choice

Thrivent Choice PCA receives generous donations from Thrivent Financial members through Thrivent Choice Dollars. Please consider joining others in this easy way to invest in the work of PCA. Either:

- (1) Log in to Thrivent.com/thriventchoice and select "Get Started."
- (2) Contact a representative from the Member Connection Center at 800-847-4836 and, when prompted, say "Thrivent Choice." When next prompted, say, "Choice Dollars."



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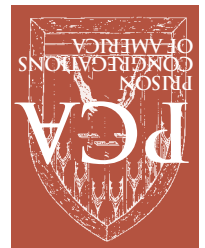
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