



St. Dysmas  
hope beyond bars

Third Cross Quarterly  
a Publication for Friends and Supporters

## Why St. Dysmas by Justin



I once lived life solely to please myself. I, I, I, me, me, me was all I thought, all I did. My only desire was to satisfy cravings. Drugs were my god, and I was a devoted zealot. I sought complete control of my life to chase my wants uninhibited, so I rebelled against the law, forsook my family, fled from responsibility, and rejected God and His moral principles.

I was in control. I found meaning in being high. Control was mine. My way. Not societies. And certainly not God's. My way to please I.

But the control I had was a self-deceiving falsehood, because the control was not mine, but rather the drugs and my addictions reigned over me. I was a slave.

Ah, but how blessed that God is Sovereign. God has real control. God created control. I know this rubs many wrong. We do not want God to have complete control because then we are left powerless. But that is my point. When I ran from God, seeking control of my own life, I lost control and made a mess of my life, and I truly ended up powerless. In rejecting God and seeking to govern my life, I quickly became a slave to my desires. I made garbage of

life, very soon finding myself incarcerated for armed robbery.

Fortunately, Sovereign God pursued me and brought me back into His sheepfold (John 10:1-18). And He used the church of St. Dysmas as a means to His goal. Gracious God let me prove to myself that I have no control (and I could let either God or my fleshly desires have power over me) and then God provided a church to teach me His word.

Of course, when I first got to prison I continued to reject God. I blamed Him for prison. But God does not give up! He seeks for that which is lost.

Sitting in my tiny prison cell one evening, in a crumbling state of despondent despair, I felt life fleeing. Life in a cage is no life, but my "control" had led me here. I broke down and reverted to how I was raised. I prayed, asking God for help, for guidance. I was desperate, and I could not go on. I needed to trust someone other than myself. At this point I was only seven years into my sentence with thirteen more to go. I could not imagine making it to the end with my sanity. I prayed. I repented. I sought help.

A day or so after my prayer, while sitting in my cell reading, a gentleman I did not know approached the cell bars. The man, dressed in street clothes – not a prisoner pajamas or a guard's uniform – asked for me by name. He was the pastor of St. Dysmas. Mutual friends had asked him to check on me.

What an answered prayer!

I went to the St. Dysmas church service the following week. Taking Holy Communion, a peace washed over me, my mind calm and satisfied. God's wondrous works.

And now, with four years left to go, I am still at peace (Philippians 4:7).

This is the power of God and the benefit of St. Dysmas, a prison congregation. Without a congregation in prison, and the incredible volunteers, workers, and visitors who help the church run and live, where would incarcerated men – down-trodden sinners – turn? Certainly they would struggle to find the peace that comes through salvation in our Lord Jesus Christ.

## Welcome Pastor Wayne Gallipo



Hello, I'm Pastor Wayne Gallipo and I am very excited to be called as the new Pastor and Director of Development for St. Dysmas Lutheran Church. I have felt a strong calling to this ministry for several years and

feel very blessed to be called to serve the men of the St. Dysmas congregation inside the walls of the South Dakota State Penitentiary. I have been serving as Interim Pastor at St. Dysmas Lutheran Church at the Mike Durfee State Prison in Springfield, SD. I am passionate about proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ that has been given for all people. In a prison setting you see vividly the lavish, extravagant and radical nature of God's grace as you consider the reason the men are where they are and yet

loved unconditionally by God and receiving God's mercy and forgiveness. They are justified by the same faith that justifies those outside the prison.

I am looking forward to meeting as many of you as possible as you come to worship with the men at St. Dysmas and as I go out to congregations and speak about how you can be involved with and support the powerful ministry that happens at St. Dysmas. I can tell you positively that this ministry changes lives. It brings life, hope and peace into the lives of men who prior to hearing the good news of Jesus Christ have lived without hope and with despair and shame. Your participation and support makes this ministry possible and I feel blessed to be a part of it.

Peace,  
Pastor Wayne Gallipo

## Farewell to Pastor Bob and Pastor Kwen



We want to thank Pastor Kwen Sanderson for his good work and leadership to our St. Dysmas congregation at Mike Durfee State Prison in Springfield and Pastor Bob Chell for his faithful work at St. Dysmas at the SD State Penitentiary in Sioux Falls. Pastor Kwen is now serving and Chaplain at Avera Hospital in Yankton SD and Pastor Bob will retire as of August 1, 2017. We are hosting a breakfast reception on Friday, July 21 at East Side Lutheran (1300 E. 10th St.) in Sioux Falls from 8:30-10:30 AM. All are welcome to stop by and visit with them and thank them for their ministry.

# Welcome Pastor David Bentz



Hi I'm David Bentz, the new pastor of St. Dysmas at Mike Durfee State Prison (MDSP) in Springfield, SD. I officially began serving the Springfield congregation on June 15, 2017. The first time I worshiped with the men in Springfield I could really feel the Holy Spirit at work. I could tell how hungry they were to hear the word, and how they joyfully received it. I was humbled by how they welcomed me with open arms. I felt like this is really a ministry that makes a difference. Just as Jesus said, 'I was hungry

and you fed me, I was in prison and you visited me', I felt at that evening worship I was truly seeing Jesus in the men around me and I knew that this was the type of thing that I had gone to seminary to do; to make a difference in people's lives.

A little about me: I grew up in the small farming town of Porterville, California surrounded by orchards, vineyards and dairies. My father was a real estate agent and my mother was an elementary schoolteacher. We attended Trinity Lutheran Church, which was a small but active congregation that my grandfather helped found. It was filled with music and was where I learned to love the Lutheran liturgy and value our Lutheran identity. This identity confidently relies on God's grace, acknowledging that we are both saints and sinners and embraces the fact that we don't know everything about God's design. It also encourages us to have the humility to acknowledge that other faiths also have a role in God's plans. I did my undergraduate work at the University of the Pacific in Stockton CA, where I studied the sciences and vocal performance. I graduated with a BS in Computer Science in December 1998 and worked as a computer programmer for about 8 years before I felt a call to ordained ministry. It was at this time that my mom was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease and had to take an early retirement. After seeing the way her life was

cut short, I realized that I could not wait to do something that I found meaningful; I needed to live each day as if it might be my last. After she had to move to a nursing home, I started attending Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, CA where I received my Master of Divinity in December 2012. During my years in seminary they encouraged us to be open to serving wherever the church is in need. Following this advice led me to the Midwest and now into prison ministry.

I was ordained at St Paul Lutheran Church, Elk Point, SD in June 2013 where I have served for 4 years. We have a daughter who is now in high school and is just learning to drive. My wife works as a dental hygienist and likes to bake. In my free time I enjoy reading science fiction, cooking, brewing beer, fixing things around the house, and practicing yoga.

I hope to help everyone who comes and worships with us to understand that God loves them, that they have a call to do God's work, and that God has equipped them with whatever spiritual gifts they need in order to minister to others where they are at now. I'm excited to expand my ministry to the men at St Dysmas MDSP. I hope many of you will come and worship with us!

## MEMORIALS

March 2017 to June 2017

Margaret Novak in memory of Ray E. Novak  
Scott Iseminger in memory of Rev. Dr. Leroy and Orpha Iseminger  
Lyle and Lois Preheim in memory of Pam Dirkson  
Forrest & Shirleen Wixon in memory of Elaine Broz  
Kay Kendall in memory of Pastor Geise  
Rosemond Jurgens in memory of Joel Coor  
Elsa Englund in memory of Harold Tiede



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*Address Service Requested*

For more information about  
St. Dymas:  
call Sioux Falls - 605-338-1735  
[www.stdymas.com](http://www.stdymas.com)

If you need to change the number of  
newsletters you currently receive  
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## Reentry and Reintegration Program



We are pleased to report that our St. Dymas Reentry and Reintegration program is now fully funded. We are getting things ready to pair for our first candidates with congregations later this fall. Thank you to all the congregations and individuals whose generous gifts make this new and vitally important program possible.

St. Dymas is a vibrant, growing and dynamic ministry because of the generous support you provide. Your gifts, in any amount, are cherished, appreciated and used responsibly. Whether you prefer to give using the envelopes provided in our mailings or through the convenience of electronic giving through our website, [www.stdymas.com](http://www.stdymas.com), you can be confident your gifts have a powerful impact on the lives of those we serve in the name of Jesus Christ.

## Attention Thrivent Members

Thrivent members are encouraged to apply twice a year for a \$250 Community Impact Card as part of Thrivent's Action Team program. These grants take only a few minutes to apply for and have already been a tremendous help to St. Dymas, providing Bibles and books, musical instruments, refreshments and enhancements to our worship service. Please send an email to [info@stdymas.com](mailto:info@stdymas.com) indicating your willingness to apply for a grant on our behalf and we will be happy to assist.