



Third Cross Quarterly

a Publication for Friends and Supporters

Fall 2016

A Vision for the Next 25 Years

You recently received a letter about our new Reentry and Reintegration program for men released from prison. Here is how and why we are beginning this program. Shortly after I began as Pastor of St. Dysmas a colleague and friend, Pastor Wayne Gallipo, began worshiping with our congregation on Thursday nights. I think he said, "I like worshiping here." The Spirit which drew him to St. Dysmas also led him to serve on the governing board of Prison Congregations of America, PCA, who helped start St. Dysmas. Their mission is to help people of any Christian denomination start a prison congregation. They have planted X congregations in X states and have even more in the works. You can learn more about them here: www.prisoncongregations.org

Wayne had several conversations which he wrote about on the PCA blog. Here's an excerpt:

He was 70 years old, in ill health, and had just been released after nearly two decades behind bars. His family and friends had broken their relationship with him so he was on his own and had nothing. He was anxious and afraid. When he was released from prison he had a gate check for \$50.00 and a box that contained things from his cell. He wore the only civilian clothes he owned.

With no ID or bank account he wondered how he would cash his \$50.00 gate check. Imagine knowing that \$50.00 was the sum total of the money available for you to live on. He walked to a convenience store and they said they would cash it if he purchased something so he decided to buy a bottle of Dr. Pepper. This is when he began to encounter the

changes in the world that had happened while he was in prison. The lady at the till rang up his purchase and he looked up to see the bottle of Dr. Pepper cost \$1.69. He said, "I'm not buying a 6 pack!" She chuckled and gave him his change. He told me before he went into prison he could buy a 6 pack of pop for less than what that one bottle was costing him now!

With nowhere to go and nobody to help him the prison did make arrangements for him to live in a local hotel for a month. He ate hot dogs on bread rather than buns because bread was cheaper than buns. This was breakfast, lunch and dinner for him. He has no idea what the future holds for him or

how he will make it on the outside. He needs a loving, concerned Christian community to provide him with support, mentoring and education.

Another time, during worship at St. Dysmas Lutheran Church inside the walls of the

South Dakota State Penitentiary I happened to sit next to a man who told me he was being released soon. I asked him how he felt about that and his immediate response was that he was scared! Scared because he has no idea how he will make it on the outside.



These are the crew who rode bikes from Sioux Falls to Wauertown to attend the SD Synod Assembly. In doing so they raised over * thousand dollars for St. Dysmass. Thank you riders!**

L to R – Arlen Hawes, Pastor Kwen Sanderson, Pastor Daryl Schubert, Katherine Eisle (AIM), Susan Rhode (AIM), Pastor Jim Steen, Pastor Paul Rhode, Kyle Boese, Pastor Betsy Hoiium, Bishop David Zellmer, Pastor Randy Gehring, Roe Eidsness, Reuben Phillips, Pat Eidsness (AIM), Marla Hawes, Pastor Bill Tesch

These experiences led Pastor Wayne to connect with a congregation in Iowa who had a successful reentry program model which they generously shared with him, and St. Dysmas. This became the model for the St. Dysmas Reentry & Reintegration

continued on page 3...

Thanking Bishop Norm

During our 25th Anniversary year, Ascension Day 2015-Ascension Day 2016, we invited those instrumental in beginning our congregation to say thank you and present them with a license plate inscribed with Matthew 25:34-40. These are the verses where Jesus encourages those who would be disciples to care for those in prison and others experiencing hardship. Bishop Norm Eitrheim, who was Bishop when St. Dymas was in its earliest stages joined us to receive this honor.

The words of Bob, the inmate who presented Bishop Eitrheim were so eloquent I want to share them with you. He said:

"A little over 25 years ago some seeds of hope were sown on what appeared to be rocky, infertile ground. Imagine planting a church, a congregation of sinners inside prison walls. Even more worrisome, imagine that crop becoming a member of the ELCA. This was to-

tally unheard of 25 years ago.

However, due to the nurturing guidance and spiritual gardeners like you Bishop Norm, and your successors, those seeds have flourished into a great church with a great congregation in St. Dymas and a member of the ELCA. Therefore, we the congregation of St. Dymas, past, present, and future, wish to deeply thank you and those like you who found fertile soil where others saw only rocks and weeds."

I regret we don't record our services so I can't tell you exactly what Bishop Norm said in response and I can't recreate the eloquence with which he spoke. Picking up on the imagery of what Bob had said, he spoke about how St. Dymas had enriched our Synod and the church as a whole. He lifted up our congregation as a model of hospitality and spoke of how visitors to our worship carried the blessing's they experienced back to their home congregations, thereby

enriching them. As I said, I can't re-create his eloquence, however I can tell you I, and our congregation, were beaming with pride when he finished.

Giving back means more than you can imagine to members of St. Dymas. I recall speaking with a man who lost his prison job, paying 25¢ an hour. I was taken aback by how depressed and despondent he was until he said, "It made me feel like a man, Pastor Bob."

Thank you to Bishop Norm and all those who have supported St. Dymas through the years. Grace is a theological term which the men of St. Dymas experience as self respect, self worth, dignity and pride when you worship with us and stand alongside us as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Are you a Thrivent member?

Thrivent is changing the way it supports ministry by the creation of Thrivent Action Teams. Every Thrivent member is encouraged to initiate two projects a year with \$250 funding support from Thrivent. Projects can be in the areas of Service, Education or Fundraising.

Service grants could cover travel costs to visit St. Dymas, Education costs could provide meals to view and discuss the ELCA's new resource, "Called to Hear" about the criminal justice service. Fundraisers could supply yarn for men who knit caps donated to the needy or to provide a special meal or event in our congregations.

We would love to partner with you! Let us know how we can help.

THRIVENT FINANCIAL/THRIVENT CHOICE

June 2016

Marc Christofferson
Jeffery Clark
Correen Major

August 2016

Sharon Akland
Ione Anderson
Kenneth Anderson
Marc Christofferson
Joan Eitrheim
Joy Hagen

Susan Howlett
Correen Major
Denise Miller
Mark Miller
Norma Shumaker

July 2016

Sandra Cheney

In Memory of

Dorothy Prendergast by Charles and Marla Myklegard
Herbert Mueller by Margaret Muller
Gary Nesdaal by Selmer and Mary Hatlestad
Gary Nesdaal by Diane Nesselhuf
Roger Stavig by Glenn and Joy Hagen
Ed Nesselhuf by Robert and Suzanne Hansen
of Ed Nesselhuf by Andrea Degroot-Nesdaal
Ed Nesselhuf by Fred and Sally Rosin

Thank you to Thrivent Financial members who designate St. Dymas of SD as recipient of their Thrivent Choice dollars.

A Vision for the Next 25 Years Cont.

Program. You can read the full proposal on our website: www.stdysmas.com Just click on link on the bottom of the page, or contact us here at the St. Dysmas office by phone or mail.

Our proposal was approved by the South Dakota Synod Council and as soon as we have secured three years funding we will begin. We have started that process with a letter to donors which you received, and to which many of you generously responded.

We have moved into the second phase, contacting congregations and inviting them to make a three year commitment of \$1,000 in increased support of St. Dysmas for this program. We hope you will support this effort in your congregation. We stress that this is increased support because we need your ongoing gifts to support our present programs.

We are also exploring grants and major gifts from other sources. We are confident

that the Holy Spirit who led us into this vision will lead to its success. If you have responded, thank you! If you have not, we invite you to partner with us in helping our returning citizens successfully reintegrate.

Behind the Walls

One of the Lord's Blessings, By Allan

Sooner or later in life we are blessed with an opportunity to know someone who can guide us and mold us to what God has planned. I amazingly, or should I say graciously, have been given this opportunity twice in my life.

I was born in May of '76. When I was still an infant, Ed Nesselhuf was our church's pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church. A few years prior to my birth Pastor Ed presided at my parent's wedding, joining them in Holy matrimony. So, as you can see, he was a guiding force in my families' and my life. Pastor Ed also presided at my baptism.

As I grew older, I went to Sunday School every week. One of the first plays I ever was involved with was a Christmas skit directed by Pastor Nesselhuf. I played a Wiseman for the Christmas program. It brings a smile to my face remembering

those days and Sunday School lessons.

As I grew into my teen years, I distanced myself from the church and family. Although I started confirmation classes with Pastor Ed, I never finished them. I was sentenced to prison May of 2014. While incarcerated, I found the church again. Finding answers to questions and resentments I had fed upon and used for years. While in church, I chose to complete my confirmation with Pastor Bob Chell of St. Dysmas in Sioux Falls on the Hill*. As it came to pass, Pastor Ed was returning in a month to be honored for his help in starting our prison congregation, St. Dysmas, 25 years earlier.

On October 22, 2015, Pastor Ed came to the Hill and with Pastor Chell and the church in attendance completed the confirmation we had started 27 years

before. We joked that this was his longest confirmation.

While on the Hill I worked in the carpentry shop. I built the faith boxes churches use for baptism gifts and prayers. After Pastor Ed's death I was asked to construct a funeral urn with a similar design for his family. It was an honor and a privilege, although it was bittersweet. I was honored to be asked yet sad we lost him for now.

I pray that Diane, and Ed and Diane's children; Stephanie, Ben, Seth, Ana and Miguel are pleased with the work and care that was placed in each piece of Ed's resting place. May God bless them all.

*The Hill is the name of a unit of the penitentiary located in Sioux Falls.

Thrivent Choice

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans members, please direct Choice Dollars to St. Dysmas of South Dakota.

Either: (1) Log into Thrivent.com/thriventchoice and select "Get Started;"

Or: (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."



St. Dymas of South Dakota
1300 E 10th St
Sioux Falls, SD 57103-1779

Address Service Requested

Prayer Corner - Please pray for these concerns

- **Continued growth of St. Dymas presence at Yankton**
- **Reaching out to inmates across the State of South Dakota in after care**
- **Monetary donations for the ministry**
- **Continued development of St. Dymas Sundays throughout South Dakota**
- **Continued blanketing of the inmates in South Dakota with God's promises.**

For more information about
St. Dymas:
call Sioux Falls - 605-338-1735
www.stdymas.com

If you need to change the number of
newsletters you currently receive
call 605-338-1735

Leaving a Legacy by Pastor Bob Chell

I'm dating myself by quoting Sophie Tucker who said, "I've been rich and I've been poor. Rich is better." She was before my time, I just heard and remembered the quote. I don't want to call myself rich and I bet you don't either. The reality is that many of us do have more money than time. We listened to our parents and grandparents admonition to spend less than we made and are surprised to realize we have not enough, but more than enough. We're remembering, too, their admonition that, like the farmland and our children, this too is a gift from God for us to steward for the future.

As you determine how you steward the resources entrusted to you consider those ministries or charities which are close to your heart. Of course, we would like St. Dymas to be one of these but we trust God will look after us if you don't. St. Dymas is a member of Lutheran Planned Giving of South Dakota (LPG). Their representatives, Jim and Kurt, will assist you, at no cost to you, to give in ways that maximize what your heirs and charities receive while minimizing taxes. Planning can leave both heirs and charities with more funds than they would otherwise receive.

If you want to learn more contact Pastor Bob for an introduction, or contact LPG directly at www.lpgsd.org or by calling (605) 274-5030. They will not tell you what to do. They will help you be most effective in doing what you want to do.