



St. Dysmas
hope beyond bars

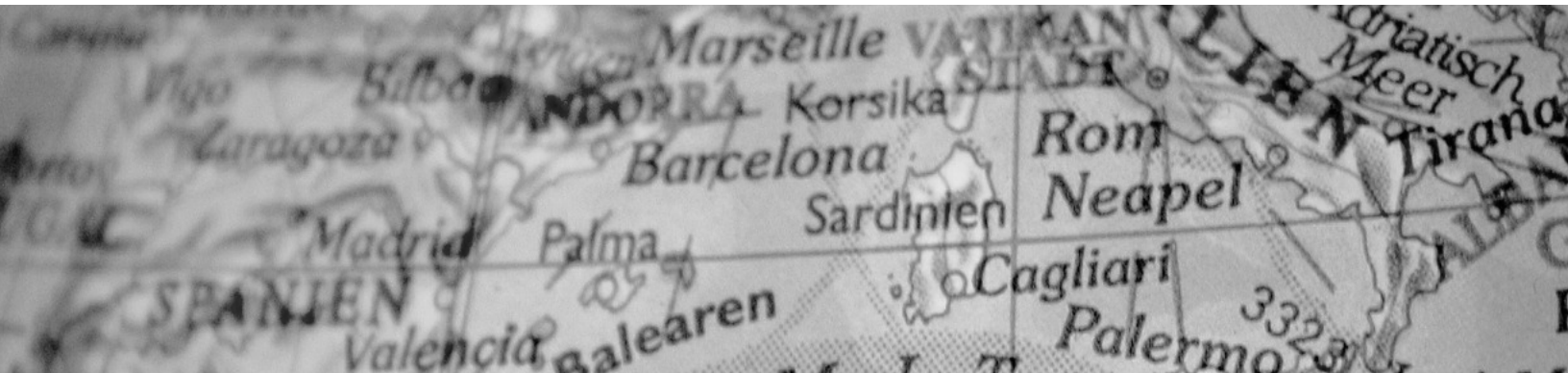
Third Cross Quarterly

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Spring 2017

ON THE MOVE FOR CHRIST!!

Pastor Wayne Gallipo
Interim Pastor for St. Dysmas, Mike Durfee State Prison



“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. Simon and his companions when to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed: “Everyone is looking for you!” Jesus replied, “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.” Mark 1:35-38 NIV

How many Lutherans does it take to change a light bulb?.....

CHANGE?!!!!!! Many if not most Lutherans are allergic to change. We enjoy stability, tradition and doing things the way we have always done them. So when change is necessary it can cause anxiety, uneasiness and even revolt within a congregation. In the verses above Jesus has gone away to pray. He had been healing many who were sick and had cast out many demons. He was a popular guy and many more people were seeking him out. His disciples no doubt were enjoying this and wished that it would go on but Jesus had other ideas.

He told his disciples it was time to move on to other places so that he could preach there as well because that is why he had come to live among us. This no doubt caused some anxiety with his disciples who were no doubt left there scratching their heads asking why they would leave a place where Jesus was in demand and very popular but they followed Jesus despite their misgivings.

St. Dysmas Lutheran Church at the Mike Durfee State Prison in Springfield, SD has recently experienced a major change. Inmates who use wheelchairs are unable to access our beautiful second floor chapel. After researching ways to provide access we realized there was no reasonable way to provide access to the chapel so we decided to move our worship to the visitation room in the library building.

When I first announced the need for the move in worship there was of course disappointment and concern. Some of the men

had worshiped in that chapel for years. It has stained glass windows and a beautiful mural painted on the wall behind the altar. After some discussion about the reasons for the change and casting the move in a positive light emphasizing the opportunities the new space will provide the groans turned to applause. The men of St. Dysmas were excited about the opportunity to welcome all people to our new worship space and they leaned into the move.

Our first worship in the new space was Thursday February 2nd and we had 15 to 20 more inmates at that service than we usually had in the old worship space. There was excitement in the air and the men are anxious to spread the good news and invite others to our worship. The Spirit is at work and the good news is being proclaimed at Mike Durfee State Prison!

Behind the Walls

What St. Dymas Means to Me

By Josh

St. Dymas at SD State Penitentiary

When I was asked to write about this subject, I admit that I was a bit intimidated by it. When I thought about my answer, it didn't really fit. So, I delved deeper and it became clear. What does St. Dymas mean to me? Well, it means everything to me. Let me explain a little. Before I came to St. Dymas I felt kind of lost, kind of like I was treading water in a great sea. Barely able to keep my head above the water, get-

ting more exhausted by the minute. I had no direction, no purpose in my life. I only existed, nothing more. When I found St. Dymas, it was like a life boat was sent out to save me. I started coming to service and kept my head down. I didn't want to be noticed. I never planned on being involved with the church at all. But God had a much different plan it seems. I was noticed and somehow I became much more in the

church. I eventually became the president of our inside council. I never saw that coming. My family, my friends, and everyone around me noticed the changes in me. St. Dymas rescued me. Gave me a purpose and a solid direction in my life. So if I can say St. Dymas means all of this to me, I can only imagine what it can mean for you.

Bathed in Tears By Christopher

*Tears fall from my eyes,
Through you I see the past
The Devil's lies.
I feel the wetness upon my cheek.
Your love, my Lord,*

*Overpowers the darkness in me.
I am not perfect, in fact far from.
Yet Jesus grabs me, He pulls me near.
I break down and weep, as He calls me son.
Tears fall from my eyes
because I feel the warmth
from His heavenly sky.*

*Thank you Lord for your Grace,
that brings me tears,
Cleaning my eyes, so that I may see.
Tears fall from my eyes
cleaning away the dirt of sin,
crumbling the wall
that keeps me from letting Jesus in.*



Rainbow Reflections

By Gary Gurwell - from his prison cell,
December 1998

Gary, an alumni of St. Dymas designed and made the stained glass windows in the chapel inside the SD State Penitentiary. Gary is now a returned citizen and a stained glass artist. Reprinted from Prison Congregations of America blog, January 2017

Prison is cold. Languishing in a plastic chair, an elbow resting on my bunk's metal headboard, I wistfully gaze through metal bars guarding my cell. Four feet beyond looms an expanded metal mesh barricade between angled iron uprights. All is a uniform gray - the color of fog, dirty dishwater, endless storm clouds.

Ten feet separate the mesh from a massive concrete and granite wall punctuated by openings posing as windows. From these glass blocks, refracted sunlight illuminates darkened corners. Then more bars, encrusted with oxidation and flaky paint exhausted from decades of exposure to the weather. A fortress built to keep men in - to keep the world's colors and life out.

The prison compound is surrounded by a towering 12 foot, heavy-duty chain link fence. Its double-thick, over sized

steel posts embedded in concrete, buried in South Dakota soil. At ground level spirals a loosely wound roll of razor wire so sharp if you touch it bare-handed, you bleed. All is topped off with two more rolls and armed tower guards with orders to shoot. My world is gray and harsh and cold - so cold it chills the blood and freezes the soul.

Suddenly a burst of sunlight pierces the clouds, casting beams through the prisms of the glass blocks, spraying dancing, flickering rainbows across the walls. Colors so close, I can touch them - a ray of hope. Colors so bright, I can embrace them - a touch of warmth. A flicker of God's smile! God certainly knows how to gift-wrap his creation.

I recall a trip to Niagara Falls where I witnessed a complete and magnificent rainbow, stretching from New York State to Ontario, Canada. Another memory drifted across my mind, this time chasing a rainbow across Grandpa's Black Hills ranch. The summer rain's double rainbow surely ended in that aspen grove. I grabbed a shovel, ran out into the trees, ready to dig for that pot of gold. But it had already moved on.

How are your gifts used?

It's no mystery to those who no me well, or those who read of my losing my car in downtown Minneapolis for 14 hours in our last newsletter that attention to detail is not my strong suit. I wrote an earlier version of this reflection on a misplaced email or note for the Prison Congregations of America blog, <https://www.prisoncongregations.org/blog/>

How is our money used? It was an email or a note enclosed with a gift to our ministry, I can't recall for certain. I do know I failed to answer and can't recall who asked the question. The shortest and most honest answer is this: Your gifts are used to pay me and my pastoral colleague at Mike Durfee State Prison.

I cringe a bit when I type these words because it seems so self serving and selfish that when I ask people to support St. Dysmas I am asking them to pay my mortgage, for two toppings on the pizza I ordered last week and everything else.

It was the treasurer for the ministry I served as a campus pastor many years ago

who taught me that this is not only okay, but a good thing. Money was tight one year and I suggested forgoing a raise. He insisted I receive a raise saying, "You are our program," and went on to explain that I was not only the face of the ministry but the ministry itself. I'll confess to feeling honored at his respect for the role I serve and have thought about it over the years.

I like to work and have always worked hard to be a good pastor to those I serve and to meet their needs not my need for power, to be liked, to control or be comfortable. Yet, for all my efforts I realize sometimes the best thing I do is to show up. I thought of this recently when a man told me how much it meant that I had stopped to see him when he was in the SHU (Special Housing Unit, our penitentiary's nomenclature for the 'hole'). I learned early in my ministry, as all pastors do, that it isn't my pastoral skills which bring comfort but that I come on behalf of the church, a living sign of the Body of Christ.

We Lutherans celebrate two sacraments,

places where God promises to meet us; baptism and holy communion, but there is another place, not a sacrament, but a promise. In Matthew's gospel Jesus tells us we will find him in the least among us: the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the stranger, the sick and those in prison. This is the secret to the success of Prison Congregation's of America model of ministry which we practice at St. Dysmas. We welcome visitors to our worship service each week where they encounter Christ and, through the power of the Holy Spirit, they become the face of Christ to those who are in prison. A mystery and a miracle.

How is your money used? It's used to perform a miracle Thursday night's at 6:30 PM behind the walls of the South Dakota State Penitentiary and Mike Durfee State Prison...and sometimes for pizza.

Pastor Bob Chell
St. Dysmas of South Dakota

Reentry Update

Following the 2016 SD Synod Assembly St. Dysmas requested and received permission from the Synod Council to raise funds to begin a Reentry and Reintegration program for our returning citizens as they leave prison. We were asked to raise funds to support the program for three years. Thanks to the generosity of congregations

and individuals we will reach this goal as this newsletter goes to press. Our Associate (or outside) Council is set to begin the process of finding a Director and putting the administrative structure in place. Many men have indicated interest in participating and several congregations have indicated interest in putting together

a team to walk with one of our returning citizens. We are excited about this program which will provide an opportunity for men to transition back into society and enable congregations, individuals and St. Dysmas to be the Body of Christ which we are called to be.

MEMORIALS

DECEMBER 2016, JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2017

In Memory of Leroy and Orpha Iseminger by The Sioux Falls Area Community Foundation

In Memory of Leona Weidenbach by Lyle Weidenbach

In Memory of Ed Nesselhuf by Keith and Candace Joy

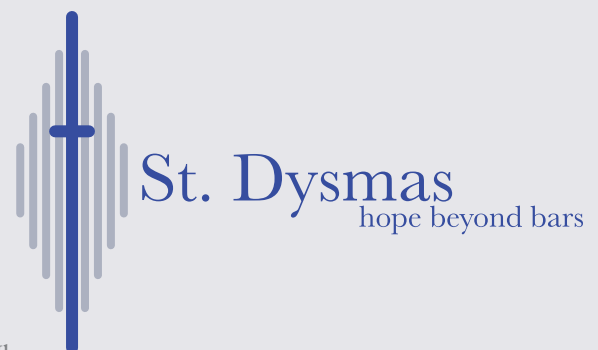
In Memory of Richard Bellows by Lois Bellows

In Honor of Pam Dirksen by Michael Dirksen

In Honor of David & Rita Myers by Jason & Andrea Sweeter

In Honor of Nellie Faye Hagberg by Raymond Hagberg, C. & Donna Zidko,

Harold & Barbara Laursen, Wilton & Georgia Johnson, and Curtis & Barbara Ulmer



St. Dymas of South Dakota
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Sioux Falls, SD 57103-1779

Address Service Requested

Prayer Corner - Please pray for these concerns

- **Returning Citizens and St. Dymas Reentry Program**
- **Legacy gifts supporting St. Dymas**
- **Monetary donations for the ministry**
- **Continued development of St. Dymas Sundays throughout South Dakota**
- **Continued Growth in St. Dymas congregation**

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

About That Envelope

You know, of course, that we send these newsletters for several reasons. First, to keep you connected, to assure you that your gifts in support of our ministry are used faithfully and make a powerful difference in the lives of those who are incarcerated. We cherish your partnership and do not take it for granted. We are honored by your trust.

Secondly, to invite your continued support. A third of our budget comes from

congregations and two thirds from individuals like you in response to these newsletters and our Christmas and Easter appeals. Because most prison jobs pay 25¢ an hour your support is crucial.

This month in addition to the estate and memorial gifts listed earlier in this newsletter we received an envelope full of checks from a couple whose children had honored them at Christmas with gifts in support

of St. Dymas. What a delightful surprise to us, and what a wonderful way to honor their parents. What better gift could there be for those of us with closets and shelves overflowing, than to know we conveyed to our children the importance of caring for others?

Rainbow Reflections- Continued from Page 2

The rainbow colors are fading on my cell walls. I find myself reflecting on God's covenant to Noah in Genesis, chapter 9, written in the heavens in brilliant ribbons

of blue, green, yellow, red, purple. It brings color, hope and a promise of a future to my gray world. An almost imperceptible voice whispers, "Rest easy, child, it is I who sets

the captives free. I am the rainbow and the rainbow's end. Seek and you shall find."