

The Florida Prison Evangelist

Spring 2023



Gary Wyder 352.377.0058

Christopher Carter 352.619.3109



facebook.com/lbcocpm

lakebutlerprisonministry.org

lakebutlercoc@gmail.com

Spring forward!

We are happy with the labor and harvest in 2022. Last year we helped twenty-nine men obey the gospel. Twenty-nine more souls were added to His kingdom. Twenty-nine more opportunities given to strengthen our communities. What a blessing! Now in 2023, we are exceedingly glad to report to you that we have started the year with a bang as we spring forward! In these first two months, we have helped twenty men obey the gospel. Wow...! We also know that when things seem to be going well, attacks from the enemy may be just around the corner and we must be cautious.

⚠ Caution...

Our work requires caution in every aspect. We must be cautious with our surroundings in prison as well as our interactions with inmates. Caution is necessary with every effort to share the gospel too. We are thrilled to share the life-saving message of Jesus and help men join in fellowship, but we also must inform them of the cost (Luke 14: 26-35). If we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins (Hebrews 10:26). For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them (2 Peter 2:20-21). Exercising this caution to others is important because we must walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4). It is bittersweet that with this caution, we report to you twenty men have obeyed, rather than twenty-one. Bitter because we want all to obey and yet sweet because a man took heed to the caution.

Expansion

We always look to expand the borders of His Kingdom. This means we cannot be complacent or stagnant. We must continue to push forward through various challenges, willing to go where we find opportunity. Recently we counseled at Putnam Correctional in Palatka and at Jefferson Correctional in Monticello. We have men at these facilities who are interested in further one-one-one spiritual counsel. If you are interested in becoming a spiritual advisor, we will guide you through the process.

Defending the Faith Study Bible

Last year we began fundraising for this specific Church of Christ Study Bible. We have placed seventy-four of these in the hands of others. It is our goal to give one to every inmate wanting to learn. There is a heavy concentration of denominational doctrine in prison. This Study Bible allows inmates to dig in further when we are not physically present. Thank you to all who contribute to this cause. Please stay diligent in this effort as we want to keep these on hand. We have more need than we can fill.

2023 National Prison Ministry Workshop

Mark your calendar for **June 7-9, 2023**, for this annual gathering in New Orleans. David Green is coordinator of the event. You can reach David for more detail at dgreen.kir@gmail.com.

Prison Ministry Spotlight



The University City Church of Christ women's jail ministry began in 2000 with the realization of a need to share the gospel with incarcerated women in Alachua County. The founding members began to recruit volunteers, and a group was formed to represent the peace God brings to all — the Jail Doves.

The impact of the Jail Doves at the Alachua County Jail paved the way for another opportunity. In 2013 Jail Dove member Oretha Walker was informed of a need for volunteers at Lowell Correctional Institution for women. Oretha leads a Bible study at Lowell every Monday with assistance from Rebecca Barclift and Chris Payne. Classes offered include Anger Management, Parenting Matters, Attitudes and Behaviors. Oretha told us this:

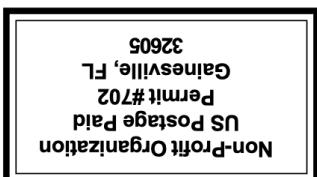
"When we first began our work we had to overcome several barriers. some of which have included: getting to know different chaplains, not having a place to teach, locked doors, moving from one area to another, teaching during meal times, inmates not called out for class, and inmates missing meals. There was no standard process. This led to frustration and discouragement; however, we came to realize this chaos is part of the system. We asked God to keep us calm and help us deal with whatever obstacles came our way in order for the Word of God to be shared."

"We have had as many as ninety to as few as five ladies in attendance. When we had enough volunteers we would go to Lowell 2 days a week. At Lowell our focus is to build and encourage social character and behavior by using the Bible. We use the Bible as our guide with hope these women reconsider their life choices. We believe if we are sincere in our efforts to teach the Word of God, hearts will change. This leads women to take responsibility for their actions, transforming their lives and ultimately impacting the world once they are released back into the community. If we want to have better communities we need to introduce skills of self-discipline, self-correction and rehabilitation while they are incarcerated."

The Jail Doves continue to recruit volunteers for this ministry. As the female population increases, so does the need for more volunteers to bring the Word of God to these inmates. If you or anyone you know is interested to help these women at Lowell, please let us know so we can "get you into prison."



Left to right: Davonda Brown, Becky Barclift, Pat Wyder, Barbara Reichert, Angela Jonas, Chris Payne, Oretha Walker, Judy Thomas, Faye Jonas
(Not pictured: Donna Brooker and Jackie Jackson)



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Lake Butler Church of Christ
PO Box 776
Lake Butler, FL 32054-0776

