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Winter 2021

PRISON OUTREACH MINISTRY



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Director's Report September 2021

We pray that we can soon start our 21st year of weekly Bible study classes at all the institutions that we have been entering prior to the disruption caused by the COVID virus. This past year has been a continuation of the last 8 months of 2020. Due to the COVID virus we have not been allowed to enter Federal, State, or County facilities with one exception. Pastor Dave Bunnell and two volunteers were given permission to teach the **Threshold** program at FCI Loretto. That start date was pushed back to July. We held classes for seven weeks until the number of COVID cases increased to where we were not allowed to enter.

When we return for our weekly classes, a major task will be rebuilding our programs. In a sense it will almost be starting from scratch. Many of the men in our classes were given an early release due to the virus. In one class of 14 only one is still incarcerated. We know that there will be staff changes in the institutions and a turnover of the inmate population. However, our programs are well known and have been well attended in the past. We believe that once we are allowed back the men will return.

Another challenge will be getting new volunteers to "visit those in prison" and "remember those in prison as if we were there fellow prisoners". One of the

volunteers who started at the

first year of classes at FCI Loretto and every year since, passed away this summer. Another longtime volunteer recently went into a personal care facility. Our volunteers are getting older. Recruiting volunteers is often a difficult challenge, but once they answer God's call, they return year after year. Very few quit.

Prison Outreach Ministry operates with two part time staff. We had 15-17 volunteers who have donated in excess of 3,800 total hours in a normal year.

This year in addition to prayers to return we ask prayers for the inmate population for both the ones who attend our classes and those that don't. We have an ongoing need for Spanish speaking volunteers to allow us to better serve the Hispanic inmates. When we return, we anticipate many new participants and we will need financial assistance to purchase Bibles and study materials.

Our vision is to continue to offer weekly Bible studies at all the facilities where we had been prior to the shutdown and pray for entry into new locations. At the suggestion and help of a former inmate (not one of our men) we are trying to develop and will continue to try to develop an aftercare program for sexual offenders after their release. This will be done with a Zoom format to reach across the entire country.

Randy S Datsko Missionary / Director

Prison Outreach Ministry

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Thank you for your ongoing and faithful support

Contact us at:

www.wpapom.org

W PA Conference Advance Special

Your church can contribute to the Prison Ministry
Our # is CC003300

Prison Outreach Ministry



Randy Datsko is our Missionary Director who not only leads studies in SCI Laurel Highlands and FCI Loretto but can also be scheduled to speak to your church or organization by calling our office at 814-849-2612 or by calling him directly at 814-659-7562.

Please consider becoming a monthly supporter of WPA Prison Outreach Ministry

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Are you or someone from your church volunteering at a prison in Western Pennsylvania? Give us their email or phone number so that we can include their stories to encourage others in volunteer ministry! Send their information to dave@cemlife.com.

Scan the code on the right with your smart phone and it will take you to www.wpapom.org.

