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LA CROSSE COUNTY  
**JAIL MINISTRY**  
Volume 12 • Number 2 • Fall 2018



**Your gift is greatly needed!**

**La Crosse County Jail Ministry Gift Form—Your Support is Welcome!**



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**Please consider helping Jail Ministry with a tax-deductible donation.**

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**YES, I would like to make a donation to Jail Ministry in the amount of:**

\_\_\_\_\_ \$100 \_\_\_\_\_ \$75 \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_\_\_ \$25 \_\_\_\_\_ Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

This gift is "in memory of" \_\_\_\_\_

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**Plases make checks payable to:**  
**Jail Ministry**  
**P.O. Box 2675**  
**La Crosse, WI 54602-2675**

**Introducing Our New Chaplain**

I am delighted to introduce our new jail chaplain Mr. John David. After an extensive search, John began work in the County Jail on June 11. He jumped right into his new assignment and is quickly "learning the ropes" of the chaplain position.

During our interviews, John consistently expressed his passion to serve as our jail chaplain. As you can tell from his comments in this newsletter, he has a strong vision for offering support and hope to inmates and enthusiasm for what jail ministry can become.

John is no stranger to the County Jail. From teaching his well-received parenting classes to inmates to coordinating the Circles of Support program, he has worked closely with inmates and staff.

We look forward to what we hope will be a long partnership with John as he develops further in the role of the chaplain.

We appreciate your financial support for the chaplain position and for the personal items and services he provides for inmates. We also appreciate all the other ways you personally support the Jail Ministry.

*Don Campbell*  
Board President

**Chaplain's First Thoughts and Biographical Notes**



"Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?"

Matthew 25:44

We are blessed to work in Jail Ministry. While our roots source from diverse faiths and traditions, we share the same passion to serve people out at the farthest margins and with the greatest needs. There are scarcities of windows and hope when people come into jail. In this lack of true light, many people lack healthy relationships, mental wellness, and healthy behaviors not chained in addiction. Most people come here also lacking "stuff," and many times, requests for stuff are the first requests I get — paper, pencil, envelopes,

stamps, greeting cards, books, magazines, playing cards, and puzzles.

In this actual poverty, and in this mentality of poverty, the challenges can often feel overwhelming. The odds do not seem in my favor as I walk with someone and encourage a shift of focus from seeking base items to seeking a relationship with God.

We become broken. We need mercy, grace, and love. I have just heard some things from Pope Francis in conversations now at the Synod on Young People that crystallize for me how we carry out our mission: that morality is when we fall, (not if we fall), we get back up; and that we must put in the center the One who heals all wounds.

I am blessed to work in Jail Ministry. I hope that you and our local congregations will continue to support our ongoing ministry to "the neediest of God's children," as my predecessor Deacon Tom Skemp often referred to our people here. I also hope that you will support our additional endeavors to share prayer requests from people in jail with our local communities of faith, and to find more ways to reconnect or connect people with local congregations before they are released from jail.

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Lastly, I was asked to share about myself. I am the oldest of 5 children of a Roman Catholic family who has lived for a few generations in Tennyson and Potosi, rural Southwest Wisconsin. I always wanted to be a priest, attended Holy Name Seminary in Madison, then no longer felt called to the priesthood. I acquired a Masters in Social Work as a means of "secular ministry." I have counseled people in a homeless shelter for people with severe mental illness, in two daytime resource centers for people who are homeless, and in two housing authorities. I have worked in children and families services in Arizona on the Tohono O'odham Nation, the 2nd largest reservation in the United States, and in Wisconsin.

Here in La Crosse, I organized the 2015 and 2016 multi-faith prayer services for the La Crosse Community Thanksgiving Dinner, and I served as the Director of Compassionate Community Faith Alliance (CCFA) as we grew 13 Circles of Support of volunteers to meet weekly in supportive relationships for people after their incarceration for 6 months. Teaching parenting classes in this jail for the last 7 years has been my favorite job. My journey and guidance in ministry is summed up by the hymn by Father Willard Francis Jabusch that I've been singing in my head since I was a boy:

"Whatsoever you do to the least of my people, that you do unto me."

Thank you for everything you do for Jail Ministry.

*John David*  
Jail Chaplain  
[jdavid@lacrossecounty.org](mailto:jdavid@lacrossecounty.org)

## Seeking Donations of Warm Clothes

Have any warm clothes you could donate? We are looking for warm clothes (hats, gloves and mittens too) of all sizes to give inmates when they are released. If an inmate was arrested in the summer months and gets out in the winter months, they often don't have warm clothes to wear as they take their first steps towards a new life. If you have clean clothes to donate, especially coats, bring them to the Jail Reception Window on weekdays Monday through Friday 1:30 to 4:30 P.M. at 333 Vine Street in La Crosse.



## 2017 Jail Statistics

In 2017 the jail had 5,700 bookings with an average attendance of 204 a day. There are a lot of spiritual needs to be met with this population and we are looking forward to meeting those needs with the help of our new chaplain and all of you! If you would ever be interested in volunteer opportunities, visit our website for more information.

### La Crosse County Jail Ministry Board Members

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If you would like to serve on the La Crosse Jail Ministry Board, email [chaplain@lacrossejailministry.org](mailto:chaplain@lacrossejailministry.org) and ask for more information.

## God's Hotel

I checked you in again last night my child,  
because it hurt me so bad to see you out there running wild.  
All tired and sucked up you appeared to me,  
but put a mirror in front of you, and you can't even see.  
That you are a number among the walking dead,  
Sores all over your body, confusion in your head.  
Jail is not the place you want to be,  
but it's my hotel, where I can work on thee you see.  
You weren't just arrested, you were rescued from yourself.  
I had to bring you back here, to put your habit on the shelf  
Give you some rest, some food and some talk,  
Encourage you and love you, before I let you walk.  
Don't be like a mule that's led around by the bit.  
Just listen to your warnings, and I can help you quit.  
This could be the last time you have to come into this place,  
Just listen to me the Creator of All with tears upon my face.

*A La Crosse County Jail Inmate*  
June 2018

## We've updated our website!

Please go to <http://www.lacrossejailministry.org/> to view the updates and a special video from Channel 19 on the La Crosse Jail Ministry.

## We are going electronic and need help from you!

If you would prefer receiving this newsletter and other news from La Crosse Jail Ministry electronically, send your email address to [chaplain@lacrossejailministry.org](mailto:chaplain@lacrossejailministry.org). Help us save money on postage and paper.

## Donations can now also be made online!

Would you like to financially support the La Crosse Jail Ministry? La Crosse Jail Ministry offers individual spiritual direction, counseling, and rehabilitative support to inmates along with meeting some of their personal needs. This ministry needs your support to continue to fulfill its mission. Please send in this envelope with your donation or you can go to our website to donate online: <http://www.lacrossejailministry.org/support-us/>

