

**JESUS WENT MISSING
FROM THE NATIVITY SET**

By Nelson W. Martin,
SPPM Director



I have an interesting story I kept in my file from last Christmas. A prison ministry newsletter reported that some inmates in a state prison received permission to set up a nativity set in the prison chapel. They excitedly worked on their task. A few days later the inmates realized that baby Jesus had been stolen from the display. The warden ordered a search of the entire facility and the figure was found, somewhat damaged and broken. Another inmate, a prominent member of a pagan gang inside prison, asked if he could put the broken Jesus back together. He did an excellent job, and as Christmas approached, the chapel nativity set was again on full display.

There are many people in our world today that don't care if Jesus is missing from their Christmas celebrations. They may even protest that the true meaning of Christmas is offensive. They may choose to ignore the Christ of Christmas. But I know there are many of you who read this newsletter that keep a Jesus focus at this time of year. Praise God, Jesus does not need to be missing from our nativity sets and Christmas celebrations.

And for those behind bars, chaplains and volunteers continue each day to take Christmas hope and joy to many. A baby Jesus figurine can be stolen from a display, but He can't be taken from our lives and hearts.

May all of you experience the truth of John 1:14 this Christmas of 2012 **“The Word (Jesus) became flesh and made his dwelling among us: We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only who came from the Father (God), full of grace and truth.”**

**RECORD SETTING
AUCTION**



The 29th annual Prison Ministry Benefit Auction was held at Farmersville Auction Grounds Friday and Saturday, October 26 and 27, 2012. The auction goal was \$95,000. We exceeded all expectations and had net receipts (after expenses) of \$105,257 to be shared with 6 prison chaplain ministries and aftercare programs. This was our best annual auction ever. Since the auction began in a small way in 1983, **almost \$2 million dollars has been raised for prison ministry causes through this annual benefit auction.**

This year, we had great weather (remember the week-end snow storm of 2011?) and excellent help from many volunteers. Persons helped to pick up merchandise from businesses, set up displays, were sale runners and auctioneer helpers, and worked hard to clean up after the busy two days. There were a record number of attendees who bid on items. A menu change was the Friday evening tasty chicken dinner provided by Big John's Catering. Other food stands and baked goods did very well. And we had many generous donations of merchandise and gift certificates from individuals and area businesses. Some gave generous donations to help cover auction costs so that more auction proceeds could go directly to the causes.

MAY GOD BLESS ALL WHO PARTNERED IN SOME WAY WITH US THIS LAST WEEK-END IN OCTOBER.
(continued on pg. 2)

WHAT'S INSIDE?

2012 Benefit Auction.....pg. 2
 2012 Year End Giving.....pg. 2
 Focus on Volunteers.....pg. 3
 News You Can Use.....pg. 3
 Janice Hess, Volunteer of the Year.....pg. 4
 State Award to Joel Bare.....pg. 4

RECORD SETTING AUCTION (continued)

HERE ARE SOME HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE AUCTION:

- * 3-D original art work by artist Lorraine Reiff A beautifully detailed Amish farm near Lancaster \$5,400
- * Ferguson TO-30 Tractor \$3,150
- * Metal Collectible Model 1850 Oliver Tractor \$310
- * Mariners Compass Quilt donated by Cedar Lane Fabrics and quilted by Martindale Sewing Circle, \$560
- * “31” Utility bag with Dutch Valley snack foods \$375
- * Wooden NFL Football made by a prison inmate \$160
- * New custom made wooden storage shed \$1,375



About 50 business gift certificates were sold on silent auction tables. Another 15 higher value certificates (carpenter and paving services, tree trimming, bed and breakfasts, lawn services, etc.) were auctioned with Saturday’s specialty items.

A highlight of the Saturday auction was a mid-morning visit by State Senator Mike Brubaker. A friend of our prison ministry, he told of his support of local prison reforms and the value of having chaplains serve in prisons. He donated a 10 person tour of the Harrisburg State Capital, with lunch, that sold for \$1,000. He also auctioned a John Deere theme basket. He introduced two International Legislative persons who were traveling with him for several weeks. Arsen Nikoghosyan of Armenia and Veronica Vragaleva of Moldova each took a turn auctioning a PA state and flag pin. They had never experienced an auction like this and were amazed about what was happening. Mike and his visitors talked to many persons as they moved around the auction house areas.



WE ARE GRATEFUL TO GOD FOR ANOTHER GOOD AUCTION. Funds go to Lancaster County Prison and Youth Intervention chaplain services, Spirit and Word aftercare ministries, Freedom Gate reentry house in Reading, Transition to Community houses in Lancaster County (including Potter’s House) and We Care Program, serving state prisons from Atmore, Alabama.



2012 YEAR END GIVING OPPORTUNITIES/FINANCIAL PICTURE

We continue to operate our local mission program with a full schedule of chaplains and in prison services. We are grateful that during 2012, contributions to SFPM have been somewhat stronger than the same time last year. We need about \$65,000 in contributions in December. Your gifts, by December 31, will help us balance the 2012 fiscal year and provide some funds to begin the New Year. In addition to cash contributions, we can receive gifts in other ways: donations of stock, real estate, life income plans, bequests and charitable designations from will.



Focus on Volunteers

“Volunteers are special and they make a difference”

Chaplain volunteers give about 75 hours per week. This spotlight features these committed persons who share so much inside the prison walls.

Jake Riehl began volunteering at the Lancaster County Prison (LCP) earlier this year. With his ready smile and enthusiastic spirit, he has made many good connections with inmates. Currently, Jake and his volunteer partner Kent Martin conduct the Wednesday AM church service in the Medical Housing Unit. Here they preach, teach, play video worship songs and take time to talk with inmates who may have many needs and concerns. Their church also does a Saturday evening service, and Jake receives a number of requests from inmates for one-on-one meeting time.



Jake is a busy young man. He manages his family’s market business, Halteman Family Fresh Meats, in the Reading Terminal Market in downtown Philadelphia. He is pastor of Word of Truth Church in New Holland. He and his wife Anna and their four children live near Parkesburg.

Jake cares a lot about people and feels called to the ministry of helping those who are down and out. He says with a smile, “Not all my connections are with clean and neat persons. We have lots of real needy people in our world that I want to assist.” A verse that provides guidance for Jake is Ephesians 3: 17 and 18 *“That Christ may dwell in your hearts . . . that you be rooted and established in love . . . that you grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Jesus Christ.”*

Jake ministers with a positive attitude. He tries not to get overwhelmed in assisting situations, but wants to allow God to do the work. He also says, “I always try to learn something new from each difficult situation that I encounter.”

THANK YOU, JAKE, FOR YOUR CARING AND EFFECTIVE PRISON MINISTRY

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Did you know? During the past year:

Amount of Bibles given to LCP inmates – about 2,000

Visits to LCP inmates by area pastors – about 3,000 (10 – 12 per day)

LCP Chaplain requests from and contacts with inmates 15,000 (about 1,250 per month)

Dennis Molyneaux began his new warden assignment at Lancaster County Prison on October 1, 2012. He comes to Lancaster from Montgomery County, PA Correctional Facility where he spent 37 years. SFPM staff and the new warden look forward to working together. Watch for an introductory story in our next newsletter.



Original poem written by R.B. (LCP inmate)
*Let's all join together and live now as one,
In peace, love and brotherhood, it has to be done.
To free our lives from such sin and hate,
And walk the straight and narrow path to Heaven's gate.*



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JANICE HESS NAMED VOLUNTEER CHAPLAIN OF THE YEAR

Over 60 persons, (SFPM board, paid staff, volunteers and spouses) had their annual picnic at the Middle Creek Church picnic grove in September 2012. This is an annual event sponsored by the board to say THANKS to our staff and volunteers for jobs well done. Following a delicious meal, catered by Big John, there were introductions, singing, staff gifts and time for affirmations and celebrations. Del Burkholder, who travels regularly doing PA. State prison ministry, gave an interesting ventriloquist show.

Janice Hess was recognized as Volunteer of the Year. Janice has been ministering to female inmates since 1995. Currently she gives about 12 hours a month. She has made many friends and connections over the years she has been involved. Janice lives near Lancaster and is a member of ACTS Covenant Fellowship Church. She is employed as Activity Coordinator for residents at Landis Homes. Janice was given an award plaque, along with several gift certificates.



JOEL BARE RECEIVES JDCAP ANNUAL STATE AWARD

Joel Bare, lead chaplain at Lancaster County Youth Intervention Center (YIC), was given a special award in October 2012 from Juvenile Detention Centers Association of Pennsylvania (JDCAP). The award given to Joel was for "Distinguished person outside the field of detention." It is an honor to receive a state award for services relating to chaplaincy and spiritual programming.

Here are a few comments that YIC staff included in the original award application. . "Joel is an energetic dynamic and dedicated individual. . . . He is a favorite of residents and staff alike . . .he does not only talk about spiritual things but is a good mentor . . . Joel has an impartial ear to listen to issues and problems of our youth. . . he interacts well with YIC staff and residents."

CONGRATULATIONS, JOEL, FOR A JOB WELL DONE



SFPM Director, Nelson Martin (center), meets with Chaplains Katie Miner and Joel Bare at YIC