



Freedom Focus

A Newsletter with information for your partnering with us in

“Proclaiming Freedom for Prisoners”

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Saying Goodbye to the Auction

By Del Burkholder

Support For Prison Ministries Board of Directors has voted to permanently discontinue our annual auction. This has been an active discussion for over two years. While COVID-19 helped pause the auction, there are several other factors that led to this decision. It has been increasingly difficult to get volunteers, high value items to sell, and people willing to lead the auction. They all played a factor in the decision to close it down.



It is said that when something ends you should always look to how it began. The work of the auction began when the late David Weaver, a minister at Carpenter Community Church, had a vision to help Martin Weber's We Care work in Alabama. Carpenter Community Church played a very key role in the first auction. The first auction was held at Good's Auction which is now Wolgemuth Auction in Leola. Memories have faded of the first auction, but SFPM's Glenn Hoover tells of a small wooden ark that went for \$1,000 at that auction. The total proceeds of this first auction were meager compared to later auctions at Farmersville and Ephrata Business Center but this was the backdrop of a great work that the Lord has done. Thanks to those individuals that put the first auction together and continued to write 36 years of marvelous auction history.

Soon after the first auction, the SFPM board was organized to do prison work in Lancaster County. This group then organized each annual auction as a co-op auction; a way to raise funds for various prison ministries and aftercare ministries.

While there are many people that we could thank for making the auction successful we would like to highlight a few persons. The late Eugene Hoover, who faithfully solicited goods for the auction. Larry & Bev Rutt from Farmersville Auction who faithfully clerked the auction, and in the early years provided the Auction House. Aaron Martin and Joel Heisey for organizing the auctioneers. Judy Hoover & Cindy Fox for gathering quilts to sell. SFPM's Jewel Sensenig, who worked behind the scenes on all the printing and advertising. Board members who collected goods by driving trucks around the county to pick up donated items. Cliff Martin who kept the sale items flowing so the auctioneer knew what was being sold next. Nelson Martin who coordinated the auction for over 20 years. Most of all we are so grateful for the many individuals and businesses who donated items and auction attenders who bought the items. Without all you we would not have had an auction for 36 years, raising 2.8 million dollars to donate to prison or aftercare prison work. Thank you!

Since food was always a trademark of the auction, we will continue to do a spring and fall chicken dinner. We invite you to continue supporting us in this way.

Once again thank you for your support over the years and please pray for us as we begin this next chapter in our long history of serving Christ.

*I will not impose any other burden on you, except to hold on to what you have until I come.
To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end. Revelation 2:25 & 26a*

The Auction in Pictures



A U C T I O N R E M E M B R A N C E S

By Nelson W. Martin

The Bible book of Ecclesiastes wisely states, "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity." In the history of Support for Prison Ministries, this "activity" included an annual benefit auction that was held for 36 years, and then was cancelled in 2020 because of COVID restrictions. Now in 2021, the SFPM Board of directors voted to permanently discontinue the auction.



Nelson & Anna Mae Martin

There are many good memories. So many volunteers and staff got involved in planning each year. This involved soliciting for and picking up donated items, preparing advertising, setting up the auction, organizing and working with auctioneers, running purchases to buyers, helping load items at end of sale, and a big clean up of the building. For many years, this event was held at the rural Farmersville Auction. It was also a positive social event, the one time of year that SFPM board, prison staff, ex-inmates who volunteered, and the interested public came together for a good cause. When the auction outgrew Farmersville's space, we moved to the spacious and comfortable Ephrata Business Center.

Another highlight of the auction was the good food that was prepared and sold. Chicken dinners were a hit on Friday nights, as well as home made hot foods, baked goods and soft ice cream during the sale. Big ticket items sold over the years included 3-D pictures made by Abner and Aaron Zook and Lorraine Reiff, lawn mowers, outdoor sheds, pedal tractors, bicycles, quilts, theme baskets and unique craft and wooden items.

This was a "co-op" auction, meaning that 4 or 5 related prison ministries besides SFPM shared in the proceeds. In the 36 years (through 2019) net proceeds after expenses totaled over \$2.8 million. But we are now entering another season. Factors related to cancelling the auction include some continuing concerns with crowded events and COVID, younger persons don't seem to be attending/supporting auctions, the long hours of work and planning that are needed to do an auction, and another person was not found to take over the role of retiring auction coordinator Nelson Martin. SFPM has had some other successful fundraisers such as Chicken dinners in the Community and participating in Lancaster County ExtraGive program.

SFPM THANKS ALL WHO WERE INVOLVED OVER THE YEARS IN THIS ANNUAL EVENT. WE BELIEVE THAT GOD WILL CONTINUE TO BLESS SFPM'S MINISTRY OF OFFERING HOPE AND HEALING FOR THOSE IN PRISON AND WE APPRECIATE YOUR GENEROSITY.



TAKE OUT CHICKEN DINNER

Friday night, October 29

**From 2 PM to 5:30 PM
(or until dinners run out)**

Available for pick up at the following places:

Mellinger Mennonite Church
1916 Lincoln Hwy E, Lancaster

Martin's Country Market
1717 W Main St, Ephrata

Good's Store/Shady Maple
1338 Main St, East Earl

For questions or more information:
sfpmdb@gmail.com
717-859-5519



You can also make a donation on line through our website. A self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your gift to partner with SFPM. THANK YOU !!

Check out our website for updated photos and information: www.supportforprisonministries.com

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Support for Prison Ministries

Charles Ray...Completing 50 Years of Ministry



Charles Ray has been a volunteer clergy at LCP since 1970. When personal clergy visits were suspended in 2020, due to COVID, Charles was not able to continue meeting with the men incarcerated. In March of 2021, our chaplain's office started providing virtual zoom meetings for clergy interested in electronically meeting with inmates. Charles was not able to do zoom visits and felt it was time to end his clergy visits with men at LCP.

After over 50 years of one on one visits, which predates SFPM at LCP, Charles will be greatly missed by all of us in prison ministry. He says he will deeply miss visiting the men. He plans to continue writing and encouraging inmates in prisons that still accept written letters.

Charles has many memories of men whose lives were changed by Jesus and became productive citizens, men of God, and even ministers. One verse that inspired Charles is, "I was in prison and you visited me" from Matthew 25:39. From all of us at LCP and SFPM, THANK YOU, CHARLES. We will miss you at LCP!