

God’s Call on a Woman’s Life

By Del Burkholder, SFPM Director



Recently one of Lancaster County Prison’s extraordinary volunteers retired at the age of 83 years after many years of visiting women at the prison. Ruth Burkholder first went into Lancaster County Prison to visit inmates in April of 1984. Del Burkholder, SFPM Director, sat down with this special lady to interview her on her years of visiting women behind bars.

What got you involved with prison ministries?

My husband, Willis, was involved with prison ministry at Lancaster County Prison (LCP) but in 1982 he and our 17-year-old son, Charles, were killed in a plane crash. I was out picking beans a day after the funeral, and I said to God

out loud, “I am only 43 years old and I could live another 43 years.” God audibly responded, “Who said 43 years, take one day at a time.” This was my commitment and God was able to use me for His glory over the years taking my faith one day at a time.

What are some memories of your ministry time?

Many of the women that I ministered to at LCP didn’t know their fathers, some didn’t even know who their mother was? Some didn’t have homes and they would spend time at Water Street or even plan their arrests, that their crimes would keep them in prison over the winter until it was warm again. I would tell them if you are that smart to figure this out can’t you use this planning for positive things in life.

Some encouragements and disappointments of your many years of ministering to women in prison?

There are many that continue to text me or keep in touch with me. They have been transformed by God and are living successful lives and raising their families. The disappointments are those that have fallen back to Satan’s influences and gave up on their Christian life. I think of the verse, “For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.” 1 Corinthians 14:33

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A Time of Loss

By Del Burkholder, SFPM Director



While I like to write encouraging words dealing with prison work, this time I feel led to address to the many friends of SFPM a personal note of recent loss in my life. My wife, Tammy, passed away on Sunday, April 3, 2022.

About 6 years ago Tammy began experiencing very gradual loss of movement. Over the next several years she was diagnosed at Penn Neurology Philadelphia with Multiple Systems Atrophy, a rare and very aggressive version of Parkinsonism, most common in people in their 50's. From that moment forward both Tam and I knew her time on earth was probably limited. It left her almost totally immobilized the last 2 years of life, including forcing her to have her feet elevated to keep from passing out. She handled her approaching fate with courage and never lost her sense of humor. While the disease robbed her ability to have the emotion of crying, it never took away her ability to laugh. Tam and I shared a special bond of closeness in our marriage and all through

our marriage every phone call between us always ended with love you or text with Lvu. Tammy believed until the end that Jesus could heal her if He chose and if it was in His will. Unfortunately, this was not meant to be in God's plan for her life on earth. Tammy is now forever healed in a City that has no pain or crying as those things have passed away in her life.

I remember hearing a pastor tell the story about how their young son was in a violent car crash. As he and his wife stood by their son's bed as he was slipping away, he looked to his wife and said, "Well now I guess we need to learn how to deal with this affliction in the way we have been telling people to deal with their problems and loss." From the outset of Tammy's illness, I always wanted to show the way a Christian is supposed to balance tragedy with their faith rested on Jesus Christ. Even as a Christian, the loss of my wife hurts really badly.

They always say you don't know how something feels until you experience it yourself. I realize that being in ministry and even doing some funerals, death notices in prison and prison memorial services over the years, I have probably not been as sympathetic in the past as I could have been with what the person is feeling during their time of loss. By personally experiencing this loss I now know what many have felt during the loss of someone very close.

I was touched by the many cards, texts, and encouragement sent my way. I was especially moved by the outpouring from many prisoners and ex-prisoners that I had ministered to over the years throughout this state. They reached out with their condolences during this time of loss.

I want to publicly thank the SFPM Board of Directors, and our prison chaplain staff that stood with me when I was unable to function in full capacity as Director. You supported me during this extended time of care giving for Tammy. And thank you to the readers and supporters of SFPM that has enabled this ministry to continue moving forward during this time of loss.

Till we Meet again.

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away. Revelation 21:4



TAKE OUT CHICKEN DINNER

Friday evening, October 28

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

More information will be available on our website: www.supportforprisonministries.com as we get closer to the event. Click on the Chicken Dinner Tab for updates.

We look forward to seeing you at one of our three locations! Thank you!!

	<p>In March, Covid restrictions were lifted at LCP and we started doing group Bible Studies and 1-1 clergy visits again. Since then we have done:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">176 Bible Study groups with 1,258 attending the groups173 1-1 Clergy visits <p>We are so grateful to be ministering in this way again!</p>
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What advice would you give to someone starting in prison work?

I did visits three times a week for all those years. When you make a commitment you have to be there. You need to care for these prisoners you are ministering to. There are many times I would be on Rt. 222 on the way into LCP and I would say to God, "How am I going to do this today? I have nothing to offer. Why am I even going in?" Often times those were the times God would move and produce the most fruit. To God be the glory!

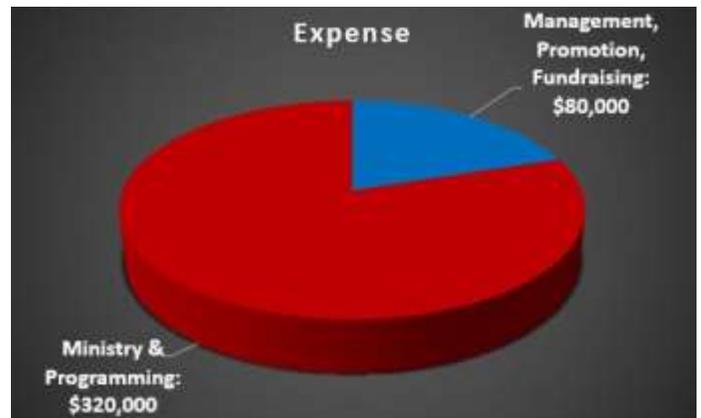
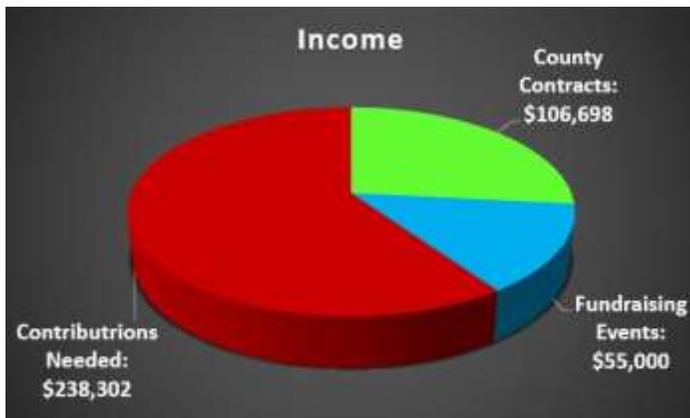
What is a saying or Bible verses you would like to leave with the readers?

There are so many that are special to me, but one in particular that comes to mind is Proverbs 21:1 "*In the LORD's hand the king's heart is a stream of water that he channels toward all who please him.*"

From the entire Chaplaincy team at LCP and all of SFPM, THANK YOU, Ruth, for answering God's call on your life and seeing many hearts changed for Christ over the years!

Focus On Finances

2022 Budget: \$400,000



**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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Lancaster County Prison Chaplain, Seth Crouse and his wife, Liz, welcomed Everlee Hope Crouse to their family on March 20, 2022.

Estella (6) and Maverick (3) are thrilled to have a little sister joining the family!

