

“Proclaiming Freedom for Prisoners”

Returning to the City after Prison

By Del Burkholder

What is it like for an inmate to be released after serving 10-30 or even sometimes 40 years in prison? Then the only place that is home to you is a large city? This is what many prisoners who are released from State and Federal prisons experience. The city can swallow you up and provide many temptations to returning inmates.



Men of Purpose Meeting
(back row: l-r) Willy Zook, SFPM; Greg Womack, Men of Purpose; Allen Mantz, L.I.F.E Ministries; Lewis Lee, Men of Purpose; Mike Martin, SFPM; Ed Sinkovitz, L.I.F.E Ministries, (front row) Del Burkholder, SFPM

SFPM state prison ministry, Streams of Life, had been active weekly at Mahanoy State prison from 2002-2020 and ministered on a weekly basis to many long term and lifers. Many were inmate leaders in the prison church. Some of these men have now been released and those from Philadelphia have formed a Biblical reentry program called Men of Purpose, which is in the process of becoming a 501(c)3 non-profit.

Men of Purpose is a group of ex-inmates that have served longer sentences in state prisons and now have been released. The men mostly reside in the city of Philadelphia. They do Bible studies through zoom and also travel together for special church events and brotherly recreation, such as boating and other things they have missed out on over the years. It is a unique ministry as it is operated by ex-prisoners with some oversight from established prison ministries. The objective of Men of Purpose is to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and edify the incarcerated and prepare them to reenter society and equip them to overcome recidivism (returning to prison).

Recently representatives of Support for Prison ministries met with Men of Purpose to offer encouragement and affirmation to their work that is happening in the city of Philadelphia.

In 2012 the US Supreme Court brought forth a ruling that would make two categories of people serving life sentences: juvenile and adult. One of those juveniles was Lewis Lee. He was the first inmate I ever talked to one on one on my very first time ministering in prison in September of 2001. Afterwards he was a weekly fixture at our Streams of Life Bible Study for about 18 years and was an inmate Bible leader in his institution during that time. He was a spiritual father to many young men, discipling them while in prison.

Since February 2020, due to the national act striking down life sentences to junior lifers, Lewis was freed and is now one of the driving forces behind Men of Purpose.
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YOU ARE INVITED TO OUR TAKE OUT CHICKEN DINNER



Friday, October 28

Serving at three different locations for your convenience:

Good's Store/Shady Maple from 3-5:30*

1338 Main St, East Earl

Martin's Country Market from 4-5:30*

1717 W Main St, Ephrata

Mellinger Mennonite Church from 4-5:30*

1916 Lincoln Hwy E, Lancaster

*or until dinners are sold out

Menu

Delicious chicken, cheesy potatoes, green beans,
applesauce, dinner roll, whoopie pie, drink

Suggested Donation: \$12/meal

For questions or more information:

sfpmdb@gmail.com

717-859-5519

Proceeds go to several prison ministries
and aftercare programs



Will you partner with us?

Fall has always been the time that SFPM depends on a lot of its funds coming in from our fundraisers and giving in general. 2022 has been a tough year for many with inflation and that has also impacted giving this past year. We are asking that you would consider a special gift this fall.

Our staff at Lancaster County Prison and Youth Intervention Center have been faithfully working all year. Resources are needed as we also minister in State Facilities and for all the programs related to prison work and aftercare that we support. Thank you in advance for your generosity during this time of continued ministry in prison work. Two options for partnering with us:

Make an on line donation:
www.supportforprisonministries.com
Click the Donate button

Mail a check to: (use enclosed envelope)
Support for Prison Ministries
PO Box 727
Brownstown, PA 17508-0727

Returning to the City after Prison

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Lewis writes, "On February 5th, 2022, I celebrated 2 years of freedom after serving 45 years in prison. The word of God declares in Joel 2:25 that He will restore the years that the locust hath eaten... Going to prison at the age of 15 there was so much that I had never seen nor did, but our God has been faithful to what He said in His word because in two years so much has been restored to my life."

For most individuals, getting out of prison after serving a long time is a very scary time. Just going to a McDonald's to order on one of their computer pads is an experience that an individual is not prepared for. I remember hearing the story of an individual that had escaped from prison and he got to a gas pump and he did not have the knowledge on how to use a gas pump because he had been in prison so long. Through his confusion and lack of ability to operate a gas pump, he was arrested. One of the goals of Men of Purpose is to help teach the returning inmates to learn technology, even something as how to operate a cell phone, which more and more is becoming a necessity in society.

Jason McKinney has been a part-time chaplain at the Youth Intervention Center for SFPM and his full-time work is operating D.I.V.E ministry, a Biblical based aftercare ministry that operates in Lancaster City. It is a program he started with wife Nicole. D.I.V.E is an acronym based on Biblical principles to reaching men for Christ to bring a changed life in them: **D**isciples. **I**dentify. **V**ictory. **E**mpowered.

They achieve this vision by teaching people Biblical truths through discipleship, service, and community; also providing a supportive network for them to live these truths out daily in their lives.

Currently, they offer a men's residential program that provides:

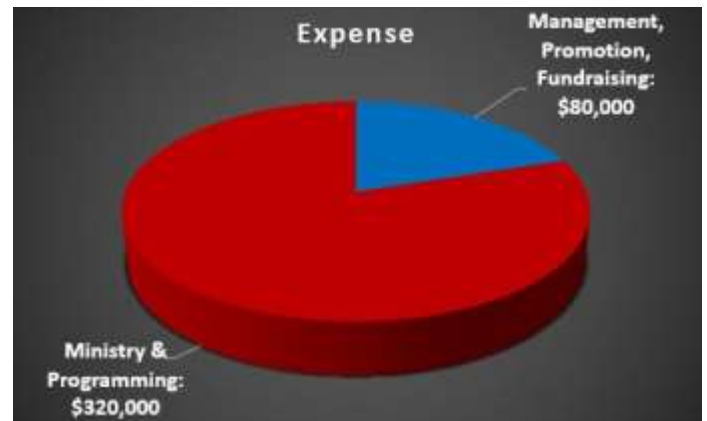
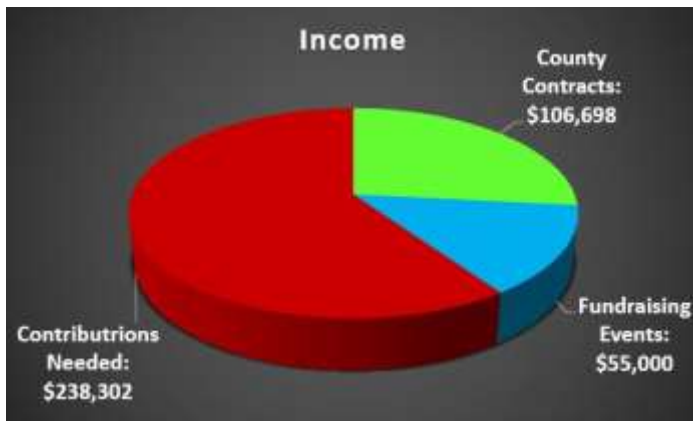
- Transitional housing
- Budgeting & financial education assistance
- Job search and training assistance
- Food assistance
- Faith development

We at SFPM are thankful for and encourage D.I.V.E and their aftercare work in the city of Lancaster.



Our hope at SFPM is that through ministries such as Men of Purpose, Philadelphia and D.I.V.E., Lancaster is that they can continue to receive men returning to the city, train them in the ways of the Lord, and then equip them to preach the Gospel of hope in Jesus Christ on the city streets.

*"And do not forget to do good and to share with others,
for with such sacrifices God is pleased."
-Hebrews 13:16*



**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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Not Perfect Yet?

I'm not perfect yet! I've heard that so often in prison over the years with inmates describing their journey with Christ. In reality none of us are perfect yet. We as humans often put expectations on repentant individuals that are higher than God expects of them. As prison Bible teacher, Jim Newsom, often says, "There are those who catch fish, but it is just as important to clean the fish after the catch."

I was blessed over the years to be invited to minister in many different prisons. One of the highest compliments I ever received from an inmate was: "When you speak to us you always put yourself at our level as a sinner saved by grace, and not perfect, and are still experiencing struggles in your Christian walk as we are." Keep in mind there was only one perfect man that walked this earth and they still nailed Him to a cross. The last words Jesus uttered on the Cross were, "It is finished."

The next time an ex- inmate, past drug user, or any type of redeemed past transgressor visits your church and their flaws are evident, just keep in mind God is still in the business of cleaning souls and it is a process.

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 1 John 3:2

Till we meet again. Del Burkholder, SFPM Director