



Freedom Focus

A Newsletter with information for your partnering with us in

“Proclaiming Freedom for Prisoners”

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SFPM Prison Conference Happenings

It was March 6, 2020, when Support for Prison Ministries (SFPM) held its last Prison Conference and within a week the nation was being shut down due to COVID. Three years later, on Saturday, March 4, 2023 the Prison Conference resumed. We met at Hinkletown Mennonite Church and it was the largest conference we ever had. We weren't sure what to expect but people came hungry to learn, share, support, and network together. In addition to SFPM we were joined by the following agencies: We Care (Alabama), Outward Focused (Indiana), Jubilee (Lebanon), Potter's House (New Holland), New Person Ministries (Lancaster/Reading), and Men of Purpose (Philadelphia).

The morning started with an ex-offender panel moderated by veteran State Chaplain Guy Giordano from Wilkes Barre. The panel consisted of 3 former lifers, Joe Bennett from Birmingham, Ala. and Greg Womack and Lewis Lee, both from Philadelphia. The audience was moved by what God had done in their lives while in prison and able to see their transformations. The three received a rousing standing ovation at the end of the session.



The day started with pastries, fruit, and coffee.



We had about 100 people in attendance.



Katie Harnish, SFPM Chaplaincy Coordinator

SFPM Chaplaincy Coordinator Katie Harnish moderated the Chaplains panel of Ben Dunlop (Jubilee), Bud Roda (SFPM), and Dave Bucher (We Care). This panel gave the audience a glimpse into the everyday happenings in the life of a chaplain.

After a delicious lunch of roast beef, mashed potatoes, green beans, corn, and sides the conference continued. The third panel of the day was on The Future of Prison Ministry. SFPM Director, Del Burkholder, moderated the panel which included Jubilee CEO Ryan Newswanger, We Care President Don Metzler, and Chaplain Phil Maust from Somerset PA Department of Corrections. The main theme was the changes in prison policy through COVID and a look at a continued emphasis to keep religious ministry freedoms in prison.



Delicious Roast Beef Dinner

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CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Chaplain Tyrone Hightower Called Home



On December 23, 2022, Support for Prison Ministries Chaplain Tyrone Hightower passed into the waiting arms of Jesus. Tyrone, alongside his wife Vernell of 29 years and 5 months, had been serving at Lancaster County Prison since 2013 on a part-time basis. Tyrone retired at the beginning of the 2020 COVID outbreak. Several months later he became ill and struggled with several health issues which ultimately led to his passing. In his young years, Tyrone was involved with the city drug scene and first met his wife at the Liberty Medical Center where she was ministering with a church group. After becoming saved, Tyrone kept attending services and after a year of persistent attempts to try to court Vernell she finally agreed to a date. They were married within 4 months!

He started his business, Hightower Construction, in Baltimore. He also gained a Bible education from Baltimore School of the Bible. He and Vernell started Transforming Power Ministries in 2007 which included rescue missions and prisons in Baltimore. They ministered in York rescue missions and prisons frequently and then became regulars at Lancaster Prison with SFPM.

Tyrone's personality would light up a room when he walked in. He was a giver of the resources God blessed him with and sometimes paid rent for those in need. He had a heart for the lost, and when a former inmate failed and went back to prison, he was there to show them the love of Jesus. He would tell men getting out of prison, "If you can't find a job, start your own business." One young man took his advice after prison and started a barbershop, which Tyrone helped him get started. On opening day Tyrone anointed that barbershop with oil. That man is still successful in his walk with the Lord and cutting hair today.

Tyrone's Mission verse was Jeremiah 33: 3 "*Call onto Me and I will show you what you know not.*" Tyrone answered the call to the fullest in presenting the Gospel to those hurting and those in prison. Please keep his widow, Vernell, in your prayers. As his life ended, we can say, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" Till we meet again.



HELP US RESTOCK OUR BOOK AND BIBLE SHELVES

We give out hundreds of Christian books and around 1,500 Bibles per year inside Lancaster County Prison and the Youth Intervention Center.

_____ Bibles x \$8.00 = \$ _____

_____ Books x \$10.00 = \$ _____

**Clip coupon and mail to: SFPM PO Box 727, Brownstown PA 17508-0727
Or go to www.supportforprisonministries.com and click on Donate**

SFPM Prison Conference Happenings (continued from page 1)

The final panel of the day was focused on Prison Aftercare. It was moderated by Lloyd Hoover of Potter's House and the panel consisted of Jordan Kauffman (New Person Ministries), Mark Bowen (Jubilee), and Rob Weatherholtz (Potter's House). Discussion centered around handling government requirements and the aftercares maintaining their Christian values and mission while following the laws.



Prison Aftercare Panel



Lloyd Hoover,
Potter's House

While the conference was going on inside Hinkletown Church, SFPM's Board and many volunteers were helping with a Roast Beef Dinner drive thru fundraiser for SFPM. A team of people packaged the meals in the lobby of the church while runners took the packaged meals outside where another team of people were loading the orders into cars.



Volunteers prepping the Roast
Beef Dinners



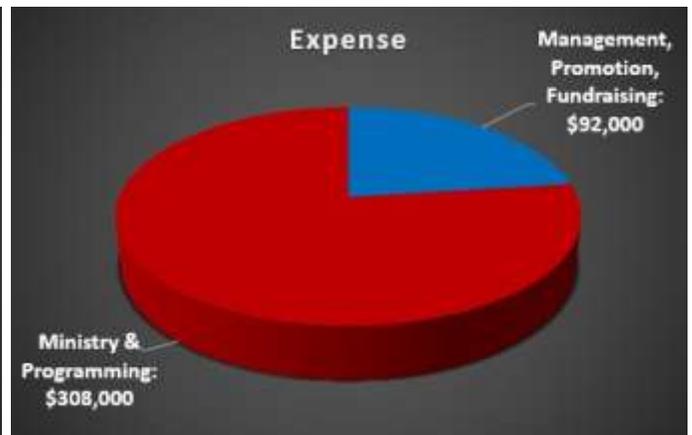
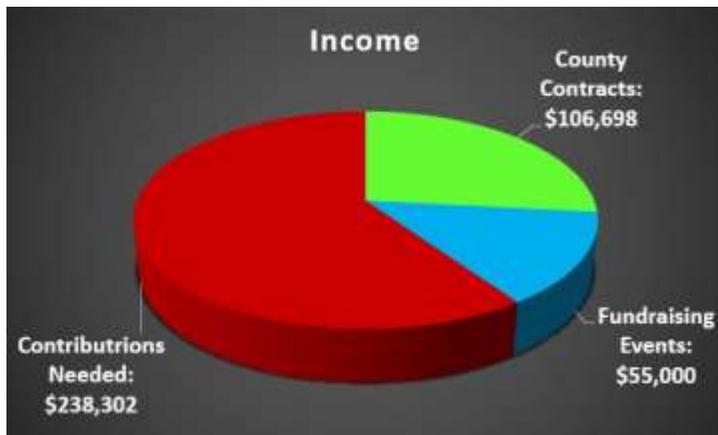
Cars lined up to the road waiting to
pick up their delicious meals



Cars aren't the only way to go
through a drive thru!

SFPM would like to thank the ministries, participants, SFPM board and staff, attendees and the many volunteers that made this a very successful Prison Conference. Persons left the conference with a new understanding of the deeper need for help and support for inmates pre and post incarceration. Attendees were grateful to hear the testimonies from ex-inmates, chaplains, and aftercare programs. A special thanks to those that purchased the Roast Beef Dinner at our fundraiser.

SEE YOU AGAIN MARCH OF 2024 FOR ANOTHER PRISON CONFERENCE AND ROAST BEEF DRIVE THRU!



**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 !!**

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Support for Prison Ministries

The Bible and the Inmate Del Burkholder

Recently I have been preaching at different places & prisons on the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. When Satan tempted Jesus, Jesus didn't say, "I am God and I do miracles." He simply said, "It is written..." giving us an example of the importance of the written Word.

Prison is a place where an out-of-control life often stops, and an inmate slows down and reads the Bible. This is why it is important for SFPM to put Bibles and study guides in prisoner's hands. Also, it is a good thing to give a Bible to an inmate, but it is even better to be able to help that inmate navigate through the scripture in a way that he can understand what Jesus has done for him. In Acts 8 the Ethiopian was reading from the book of Isaiah and God sent Phillip in a divine appointment to help the man understand what he read. Everything we do in prison ministry must pertain to the Bible, while there are other good works and movements, they must be second to the reading of the Bible.

One time I was asked how we handled the changing times in ministry in the prison realm. My response was, "Don't get flashy. Just put the emphasis on the Cross and the Word of God." When we get distracted from the main objective, complacency may set in. Thank you to all the friends and supporters that make our Bible efforts at Support for Prison Ministries possible through prayer, encouragement, and gifts!