

“Proclaiming Freedom for Prisoners”

Katie Harnish, Chaplaincy Coordinator Serving for 20 years



Katie Harnish, at her desk in LCP

This spring, Katie Harnish, Lancaster County Prison (LCP) Chaplaincy Coordinator marked her 20th year at LCP and with Support for Prison Ministries (SFPM). Katie has blessed those she has been around with her friendly personality, prison knowledge, and leadership skills in running the Chaplaincy Program at LCP. Recently we asked her to elaborate on her last 20 years.

What positions have you served at in LCP? I started as a part time assistant secretary in the Chaplain’s Office in 2003. I was also part time chaplain and secretary at the Youth Intervention Center for the girls in shelter and detention care. Chaplain Faye Stauffer retired in 2010 and I moved into the female chaplain position. In 2017, I became the Chaplaincy Coordinator and continue in that position today.

Thoughts as a young person starting in a prison setting? The prison seemed so big and intimidating initially, but I eventually learned my way around the building and the ins and outs of security and how the prison operates. I had the privilege of hearing many ministry stories from chaplains when they came back to the office after leading a Bible Study or working with someone through prayer ministry. It was powerful to see the ministry that happened through the chaplains offices in both locations as a young person.

Thoughts of working under Al Huber LCP and Marvin Reed YIC? Both Al and Marvin were influential in helping me to understand prison ministry and how to work alongside prison administration. They were passionate about prison ministry and great to work for and learn from. Al had wisdom and an understanding of how people work and think, I’m so glad I was able to learn from his years of experience.

What do you enjoy most about your job? I enjoy the one-on-one conversations that I’m able to have with women inmates listening to their stories and encouraging them that God has a purpose for their time in prison. There is so much pain and brokenness they’ve experienced that leads them to places they often don’t imagine going. By God’s grace and healing they can experience healing and freedom from their pain and the choices they’ve made. It is a privilege to see God at work!

I also enjoy the moments of laughter in the office among the chaplains. We need humor and laughter in such a heavy environment to keep us going. I love working with our team of chaplains as we rely on each other to share our own burdens and joys of life.

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Drawing from your prison experience what advice would you give to an individual wanting to work with inmates?

I would ask someone to consider their why. What is their motive? You have to know that it is God calling you. If you enter prison ministry to feel good about yourself or to try to change everyone, you will burn out. It is a hard ministry of not many returns this side of heaven, but so rewarding to see God working in individuals lives, revealing his love and grace and redemption.

Closing thoughts on your 20 years of service?

It has been such a privilege to serve as a chaplain at LCP over the years of my time with Support for Prison Ministries. I'm so grateful for God calling me here, and the many chaplains I've had the privilege of working with and learning from. I value the relationships we have with prison administration, officers and treatment staff as we all work together to serve the inmates of LCP.



TAKE OUT CHICKEN DINNER

Friday evening, October 27

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!!

Did you know you can include SFPM in your Planned Giving?

If you are 73 years old and facing Required Minimum Distributions from your IRA or 401k consider setting up a planned giving of tax free gifts to Support for Prison Ministries.

Everence, or an investment broker of your choice, can help you with the best choices of tax benefits.

If you are over 70 ½ years old, the recently passed Act Secure 2.0 can provide trusts for lifetime giving to charities such as SFPM and provide tax benefits to you. Check with your tax advisor for more information.

Mental Health & Incarceration

By Del Burkholder

One of the biggest challenges to a prison ministry is the rising mental health cases, and the wisdom needed to minister Jesus Christ to these individuals. In the 1950's, there arose a well-meaning movement to close state hospitals in the name of civility. This unfortunately has led to mass incarceration of the mentally ill across the nation. Individuals with severe mental illness are three times more likely to be in a jail or prison than in a mental health facility. Jails and prisons have become America's major mental health facilities, a purpose for which they were never intended and not as equipped to handle. Also, at SFPM we have found Prison Aftercare ministries are not able to provide clinical staff to handle medication needed for those coming off parole and thus are not able to help or house them.



Mental illness is a condition that impacts a person's thinking, feeling, or mood and may affect his or her ability to relate to others and function on a daily basis. National Alliance on Mental Illness

The figures of mental health incarceration in prison are startling.

50% of male inmates and 75% of female inmates in state prisons will experience a mental health problem requiring mental health services in any given year.

30% of all inmates in the PA DOC receive some type of psychiatric medication.

Statistics above are from, "Mental Illness in America's Jails and Prisons: Toward a Public Safety/Public Health Model," by Dean Aufderheide.

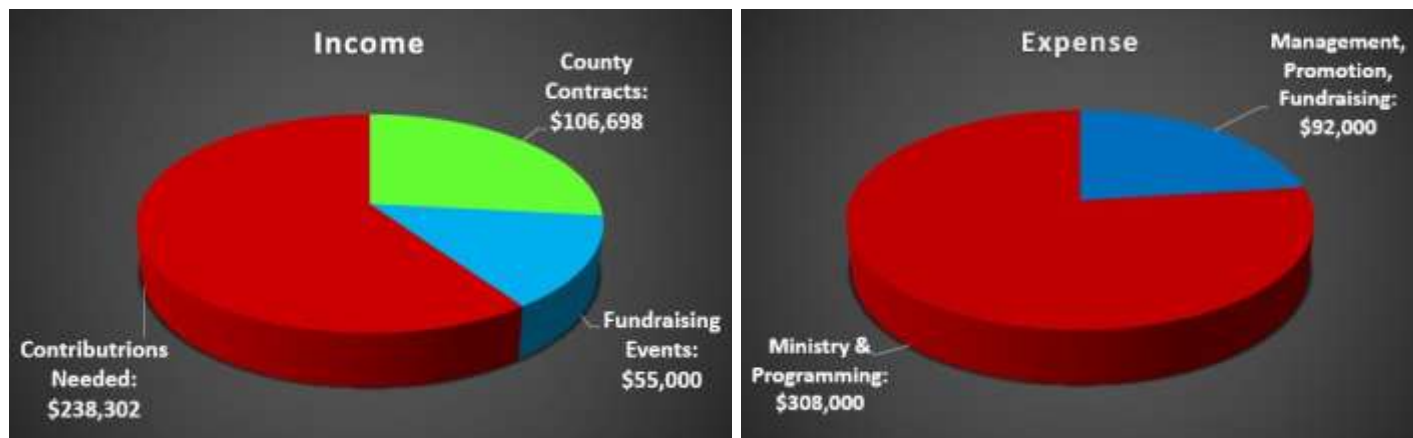
At Lancaster County Prison there are several chaplains and volunteers that minister specifically to inmates with mental health issues. Some of the regulars over the years are Kent Martin, Jake Riehl and Reuben Lapp. Reuben wrote this about his time ministering to these individuals.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to be able to minister to those in need in our local prison. I appreciate that we are able to have church in the Medical Housing Unit (MHU) on Wed mornings. The word of God makes the vilest of sinners/captives free."

In prison, some individuals do not always live in reality. A person may experience a hyper-faith complex where they feel God is guiding them and they have a special line to Heaven. An example of this is in my early days in a state prison Bible study there was an individual with obvious mental health challenges. During the Bible study we focused on a passage that talked about the return of Jesus Christ. At that time in the news there was a comet that was going to be seen in the sky. He pointed to the sky and said if you focus your telescopes behind that comet, you will find Jesus Christ on a horse with his train of followers. This man completely believed it and was trying to convince the class the God had shown him a prophetic utterance.

When our Chaplains work with individuals that do not always have rational views, we must always recognize their value as a person. We at SFPM will continue to bring the Gospel to all prisoners and continue to make aware the growing problems of handling Mental Health in prison and our society.

"The testimony of the Lord is sure making wise the simple." Psalms 19:7



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

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Natures Parental Lessons Del Burkholder, SFPM Director

On my early daybreak walk along a creek, a mother duck and her ducklings became uncomfortable with my proximity to them and swam out from the shore. From a different direction a male Mallard appeared and led the family to the other bank which was more camouflaged. Then the male Mallard swam to the middle of the creek as a distraction so my eyes would be on him. We can learn a lot from the ducks on the way a family unit should operate and the way parents look out for their young.

As we go through this time of year, which brings us Mother's Day and Father's Day, I think of split families which can result in future incarceration. One group has cited that a person is 20 times more likely to end up in prison if they grow up in a fatherless home. As Christians and churches I ask that we all do our part in lifting up the need for a strong family unit in our communities. We may be contributing to one less prisoner.

Start children off on the way they should go, and when they are old they will not turn from it. Proverbs 22:6