

A Peek Behind the Walls

We invite you to follow Alvaro Febus, Chaplain, and Jewel Sensenig, Administrative Assistant, as they walk you through what a day in prison looks like for each of them. It is a unique job and most people never get to experience life behind the walls...so join us as we show you around!



My name is Alvaro Febus and I have worked as a chaplain at LCP for 4 years.

I'd like to invite you to join me for a peek inside Lancaster County Prison (LCP). Here is a snapshot of what a typical day/week looks

like for me as I walk the halls of LCP.

The first thing I do each of the three days that I'm at LCP is greet the office staff and grab a cup of coffee. Then I sit down and look at the requests that have come in for me. These requests might be for me to come and have a 1-1 with an inmate that I have been meeting with regularly, or a 1-1 for an individual I haven't met yet but is desiring to talk to a Chaplain. I also get requests written in Spanish asking for Bibles, or other religious materials in Spanish.

After I'm done gathering my requests, I also check in with office staff to see if there is anything that needs to be taken care of immediately. For example, the Chaplain's office receives medical and death notifications and then I need to inform the inmate if someone in his family is in the hospital or if someone has passed away.

(continued on page 2)

“Hello, Chaplain's office. This is Jewel. How may I help you?” That is a line I say many times a day as I answer the phone in the Chaplain's office at Lancaster County Prison.

Our office is located on the second floor. From the time I enter the building until I am at my desk, I take 79 steps and go through 14 doors before getting to my desk. That journey includes first going to the basement level to get my keys for the day and then back up to the main floor and then the second floor. There is an elevator but...79 steps are great exercise!!

I've worked in the Chaplain's office for 5 years, but I've been with SFPM for 20 years. Prior to working in the prison, I worked from home doing accounting and publications. Transitioning to the prison 5 years ago has been wonderful.

I love being in the Chaplain's office and doing my best to keep things running smoothly for the Chaplain's so that they can minister to the inmates.

I start my day by listening to phone messages, checking emails, and then answering requests from inmates. Inmates can request Bibles, books, correspondence courses, to attend Bible Study, to attend church services, to have an outside clergy visit, or to speak to a Chaplain. These requests come in through the computer and I work on gathering the things they want and putting them in a box for the Chaplains to deliver to the inmate. In a week we receive 150-200 requests.

(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

Every Tuesday, I lead a Spanish Bible Study in the morning. Then on Tuesday afternoons, I lead an English Bible study. On Thursday afternoons I lead another Spanish Bible study and then end the week on Friday mornings by leading an English Bible Study. We offer a Bible Study for each housing unit and each Chaplain is assigned to the same group each week.

Besides leading Bible studies, I meet 1-1 with inmates. In a week's time, I average 15-20 individual meetings with inmates that usually last about an hour. I also deliver Bibles, and Christian literature to inmates who have requested them. In addition, I grade the Spanish Emmaus Correspondence courses for our Spanish speaking population. We also challenge inmates to memorize 10 verses, in either Spanish or English. After they say the 10 verses, we issue them a study Bible that they can take home with them. I enjoy listening to them say their verses to me and encouraging them to embrace God's word in their heart!

At least once a month, I come in on a weekend to facilitate church services for various housing blocks. Churches from the community lead the services but I am there as a chaplain presence. I also lead some of the church services, as needed.

As I meet with inmates some want to hear my testimony, others want to share about their struggles with faith, marriage, child abuse, sexual addictions, crimes they committed, frustrations with the system and/or themselves, and many more topics.

My favorite part of the job is meeting 1-1 with inmates and providing advice and eventually seeing fruit from the conversations. Aside from being a Chaplain, I am also a Pastor at Iglesia Cristiana Carismatica Maranatha, in Lancaster city, and quite often ex-inmates show up at my church. I look forward to keeping in touch with them on the outside.

I enjoy our lunch time conversations with my fellow Chaplains. We gather and have conversations that are edifying and very encouraging to each other. The joy of the Lord overwhelms us! I count it a privilege to serve the Lord in this capacity and being able to present Christ to folks that were once lost but now are saved. That is where the satisfaction lies! God bless you!



(continued from page 1)

I also schedule all clergy visits. Each week we can have up to 84 clergy visits. Each visit must be scheduled through our office, so I spend a lot of time on the phone or emailing ministers who are willing to meet 1-1 with inmates.

In addition to answering requests, I also answer the phone. I've talked to many distraught mothers and grandmothers (and other family members), who are worried about

their loved one and need a listening ear. There are also difficult phone calls from family members who need us to go and tell an inmate that someone is in the hospital or has died. Those are always hard phone calls to answer and if they allow me to, I pray for people on the phone or ask them if I can add them to our prayer letter.

We offer three different Bible correspondence courses that inmates can participate in. Two of the courses we mail out to graders on the outside. I take care of keeping track of all the courses and mailing them to the graders and then returning them to inmates when the graded tests come back. I also grade one of the courses myself. I thoroughly enjoy interacting with the inmates by grading their courses and writing notes to them. I have even gotten to meet some of my "students" because they have come to my church, West End Mennonite Fellowship, after they have been released. It is fun to meet them in person on the outside and to be able to continue to encourage them in their walk with Jesus.

LCP can be a heavy place to work. There are so many broken people. The Chaplain's office, though, is full of joy and laughter. The Chaplain's need a place to be able to come to for a break from the heavy things that are being shared with them. There is a chair right beside my desk, and I love having a Chaplain come in and sit, talk, or cry together. I also invite officers and prison staff to come and find peace in our office. This is a small peek behind the walls and into the Chaplain's office. It is a joy to be able to work for Jesus inside LCP.

Called Home: Remembering Jim Newsom

By Del Burkholder

In the mid 80's I heard of a prison minister and Bible teacher moving from Florida to Lancaster. I was told his name was Jim Newsom. Soon after he moved here, I was introduced to Jim by a friend. Jim became the reason that I started on my journey in prison ministry work when he invited me to aid him in teaching the Bible in prison. He became my mentor in prison work. Jim then moved his ministry, Rivers of Living Water, from PA to Louisville, KY. That led to the beginning of our Streams of Life prison ministry; a ministry structured for Bible teaching in state prisons.



Jim was convicted of 2nd degree manslaughter and paroled in 1978. He then became one of prisons most popular evangelists and Bible teacher in the U.S. Jim had a way of crafting words together that audiences would remember long after his talk ended. His legacy as a Bible teacher will not be forgotten. Almost all my prison sermons include an example of one of his prison illustrations or profound sayings. Jim became an icon of prison ministry, starting in the 1980's. (continued on back page)

TAKE OUT CHICKEN DINNER



Friday evening, October 25

Available for pick up at the following places:

Mellinger Mennonite Church
1916 Lincoln Hwy E, Lancaster

Dove Westgate Church
1755 W Main St, Ephrata

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

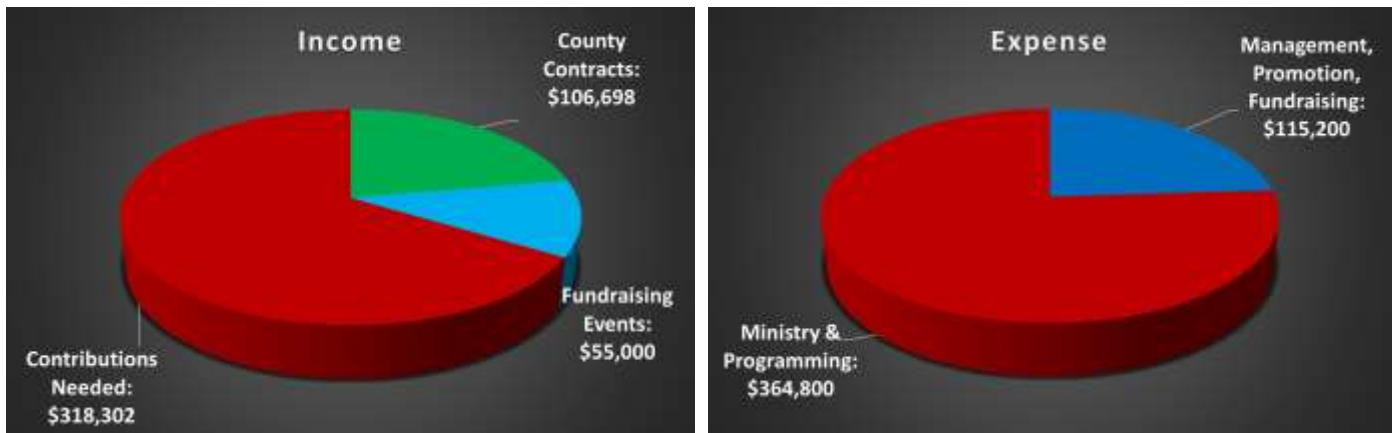
For questions or more information:
sfpmdb@gmail.com
717-859-5519

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

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



Support for Prison Ministries has been running significantly behind on our giving this year. As we go into this fall fundraiser, please consider a gift to help offset the cost of the dinner. The proceeds from this fundraiser are used for our prison programs and other prison ministries that SFPM supports. Thank you!



**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 !!**

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

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Called Home: Remembering Jim Newsom

(continued from page 3)

He has left a legacy of inmates that have made decisions to become true followers of Christ. Many volunteers and prison ministries were influenced by Jim. He was not just a minister and teacher, but also possessed a magnetic personality that caused individuals to gravitate toward him. Jim was held in the highest esteem by inmates he ministered to. Jim was also a very gifted author of practical theology, and these writings were very popular. These last years, as he could no longer travel, he wrote some articles for our Streams of Life newsletter for the incarcerated.

It is said, "You should leave the world a better place." Jim Newsom was incarcerated, left prison, and then started a prison ministry. On June 25, 2024 Jim left the world a better place as he lived and ministered wholeheartedly for Jesus. Our condolences to his wife Diane, his daughter Jess and her husband, his son Jason and his grandchildren, on their loss. Till we meet again.

They only were hearing it said, "He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." Galatians 1:23