How To Start a Prison Congregation

Mary Mortenson, Executive Director, Prison Congregations of America

Rev. Terrell McTyer, Minister of New Church Strategies, HOPE Partnership

Rev. Dean Bucalos, Mission Specialist, NBA Prison and Jail Ministries
USING THE PRISON CONGREGATIONS OF AMERICA MODEL OF PRISON MINISTRY
What is the PCA Model?
The Framework

• Denominational sponsorship and oversight

• Congregational “members” are inmates
  ○ Defined by participation

• Congregation is led by pastor from the outside who is trained by and accountable to the sponsoring denomination
Inside – Outside Relationship
The Reentry Stage is Set

• Prison congregations feed into a healthy reentry pipeline

• Relationships are already built

• Reentry can be casual or formal
Denominational Sponsorship, Ecumenical in Practice

• A prison congregation is diverse

• Worship and programming are open to all, within the parameters of the facility

• A prison congregation looks like the Kingdom!
Why a Congregational Model? Why Do You Go To Church?

- Community
- Continuity
- Service
- Skills
- Involvement
- Ownership
Mountain Top and the Plain

• “I’m tired of being saved every week. I want to serve.”

• “Pastor Ike preached me back into the fold every Thursday night.”
Cooperation Without Compromise

• Our job is to help all the various stakeholders play nicely together.

• We seek to model respectful dialogue and behavior with corrections staff and other ministries.
PCA Congregations

34 Worshipping Communities
16 States
9 Denominations
4 Disciples PCA Congregations

St. Francis of Assisi Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Draper, UT (2011)
Rev. Charles Hines

New Life In Christ Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Louisville, KY (2013)
Rev. Carol Wieger

Church of Another Chance
Nashville, TN (2015)
Rev. Scott Jamieson

Prisoners of Hope Christian Church (DOC)
Memphis, TN (2017)
Rev. Bud Wilson
For More Information

- www.prisoncongregations.org
- 605-321-0509
- mary@prisoncongregations.org
HOW CAN DISCIPLES GET INVOLVED?
Why start a congregation inside a correctional facility?

Well, perhaps Matthew’s Gospel can shed some light...”just as you did it to the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” (Matthew 25:40 NRSV)
Congregations inside men’s and women’s correctional facilities
Worshipping at New Life in Christ Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Baptizing in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit

Pastor Carol Wieger baptizing a new member of the church at Dismas Charities-Diersen, a women’s detention center in Louisville, Kentucky
Ash Wednesday service
Welcome and Hospitality

Outside churches join the women for worship in their congregation behind the bars.
All are welcome at the Table of our Lord

Members of the church serving communion.
The ministry of presence and compassion
Bringing messages of hope, forgiveness, mercy, and grace
Come, share the Lord!
Q&A – Thank You!

Prison Congregations of America: prisoncongregations.org

HOPE Partnership: hopepmt.org

NBA Prison and Jail Ministries: nbacares.org/prison-and-jail