PRISON MINISTRY

The Prison Ministry Commission seeks to share the love of God with people involved in the criminal justice system by providing direct services to prisoners and their families, advocacy on criminal justice issues, and by recruiting and supporting prison ministers, both lay and clergy.

Our Scriptural Directive: . . . I was in prison and you visited me. . . . Just as you did it to the least of one of these who are members of my family, you did it to me. Matthew 25:36b, . . . 40 Continue to remember those in prison as though you were in prison with them . . . . . Hebrews 13:3

What is Prison Ministry? It is any act or acts done in the name of God that benefit those who are involved in the Criminal Justice System. It may be direct contact with incarcerated people, but many activities do not require direct involvement. It can be a full time commitment or take as little as a few hours a month.

Who can do prison ministry? Anyone who has experienced the love of God and believes that people with God's grace can turn their lives around. Anyone who takes Jesus' command seriously.

In the Episcopal Diocese of Lexington we have volunteers who:

- Attend bimonthly meetings to plan, support and educate on Prison Ministry issues. The Prison Ministry Commission meets every other month on the third Saturday (next meeting is March 19) at 2:00pm at St. Raphael. Everyone is invited to attend for a very informative meeting.

- Speak about prison ministry to churches and religious organizations.

- Write cards and letters to prisoners.

- Visit prisoners and provide a listening ear.

- Lead Bible Study, meditations, and worship.

- Serve as volunteer chaplains in prison.

- Stay abreast of and update the prison ministers on criminal justice issues. They receive criminal justice newsletters and communicate relevant information to the volunteers.

- Write letters to newspapers, legislators and other lawmakers advocating for better sentencing laws, voting rights, reduction in mass incarceration, abolition of the death penalty, reentry of prisoners into society, among other issues.
• Support organizations that work on criminal justice issues, such as CURE (Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants), The Sentencing Project, Centurion Ministries, Kentucky Coalition for Abolition of the Death Penalty, American Civil Liberties Union, and Southern Poverty Law Center.

• Work for the benefit of prisoners’ family members and the children. In our diocese we have had Camp Haven, a Camp for Prisoners’ Children and the Children’s Christmas Stocking Project. Others have provided parties and get-togethers for prisoners’ children. While others conduct support groups for prisoners’ families.

*All prison ministry commission members organize and conduct a biennial conference on criminal justice issues for the greater community of Christ.

**Our appeal: Please pray for what Christ would have you do to minister to prisoners and their families.**

We encourage you to contact either Billie Stockton, member, Prison Ministry Commission or Emily Cardwell, Chairperson, Prison Ministry Commission with any questions.

Emily Cardwell 859-879-3633; 859-559-2170; or emily_cardwell@yahoo.com

Current Prison Ministry Members:

Grace Perrieah, St. Michael’s, Lexington
Emily Cardwell, St. John’s, Versailles
Guy Hamilton Smith, St. Raphael’s, Lexington
Kay Miller, Nativity, Maysville
C.C. Johnson, St. Raphael’s, Lexington
James Wells, St. John’s, Versailles
Michael Henderson, Nativity, Maysville