



Missionary Evangelism to Corrections

Sharing the gospel & Christ's love with those in corrections since 1982
I was in prison and you came to me Matt. 25:36cESV

Anoka County Please Pray for these Neighbors

May 2021 MEC News

MEC volunteers minister at the Anoka County Jail which is under the Sherriff, the Community Corrections programs which covers three youth programs and the work release, the Community Addictions Recovery Enterprise, and Stepping Stones Emergency Housing and Shelter. MEC has been blessed with good working relationships with county officials since before 1982, when Jerry Soma and Dick Pettman were instrumental in administration. As the years go by and county personnel changes, please pray that new relationships will form and the staff will continue to allow our volunteers with the Gospel to minister in these places. To meet with individuals, and bring God's message of Christ's love to those who need it.

Artwork from one of the mothers from AC who wrote to thank You!!
Songs, Video's & Verses for Mothers
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We do have some current needs for volunteers. If you think you are called to serve at one of these facilities, please let us know since it requires some preparation for you to be ready at the time the jails reopen for volunteers.

In most of the facilities where we hold services or classes, there are separate ones for both men and women. There are larger group church services and small group Bible Studies in the downtown jail. Four of the programs involve Saturday night and Sunday morning or evening church services, a bible study or outreach classes in each of the units during the week, and some individual spiritual counseling.

Please pray for volunteers, for communication with the staff to be clear and that we have favor with them. The youth can be very respectful and the evidence of them needing God's love

Anoka Co.
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Spotlight Joel Holter



Joel Holter has been faithful to ministry to the youth at Anoka County Lino Lakes Juvenile Center and the Washington County Jail for 28 years. He is encouraged when "I meet people after the fact and see them doing well with their families. This doesn't happen often because of the restrictions on volunteers, but "it is a fact and I have met three of these families". Although we cannot use names as confidentiality is important, he remembers a man who "drove up to my truck with a big grin and pointed to his son in the back seat. This was a young man who I had ministered to at RJC." Joel has prayed with many who have asked for him to do so, when he has ministered to them.

Joel worked at a challenging job for forty years and was a witness there, bringing the message of Christ to his co-workers and had a reputation for being a hard worker. When he was finished there, he trusted God to provide a job where he could do more direct ministry. Now he is working at Minnesota Teen Challenge as a Recovery Coach. One of the clients there remembered Joel from when he had ministered to him in the days of his youth: "We were able to work on the things we needed [for faith and recovery from addictions]."

He reminds us to pray for the clients, the volunteers and the staff because, "There are others who do not do as well. It tears you up and it is discouraging to have to attend their funerals. If you are asking for what you can pray for, it

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Songs Video's & Verses for You and Your Mothers!

While listening to songs to encourage and honor our Mothers, I listened to both secular and Christian ones. Some of them were really hard to listen to, such as the one who honored his mother who was a crack addict and said how hard it must have been for her to raise two bad boys. He turned to things that made easy money and felt good to be able to pay rent when it was due.

Having prayed with mothers who are in danger of losing their children or who have lost them it stings deeper. Having heard women who have said, "This stuff is real!" - while referring to how Christ and the Bible is helping them, Oh how it drives home the need for our prayers and for the Christ, His Word and His Spirit to be shared.

The card you see on the front page was created by a mother who came to or came back to Christ when she was incarcerated. She writes.

"Thank You! For all God's Work you do, In Christ," - Tina N.

"This Amazing Love" by Emily Laudeman

"In My Arms" by Plumb

"A Mother's Love" by Jim Brickman

"Find Your Wings" by Mark Harris

"Everything to Me" by Mark Schultz

"Call Her Blessed" by Stacey Noll

"Faith of Our Mothers" by A.B. Patten

"One Heartbeat at a Time" by Steven Curtis Chapman

"Don't Forget to Remember Me"

by Carrie Underwood

"When You Come Home" by Billy Gilman Above from Holidapy.com

Slow Down by Nicole Nordeman

Counting Every Blessing by Rend Collective

O Love of God by Laura Story

Mama's Knees The Blythe Family

The Blessing Mothers Day Compassion Church

Mom Song – A Mother's Day

"Tribute" Gateway Community Church

Mothers Day 2015 Kid Interviews

Mother's Day Song – My Beautiful Mommy

What Will You Say?

Mother's Day Short Film – I Will Love You Forever

Mother's Day Church Video Announcement – Revival

Skitguys.com Motherhood & Mom Goggles 2

Called Her Blessed by Stacey Noll

A Mother's Day Song Gena Hill

She Put the Music in Me David Ross Words & Music by Calee Schroeder



comes out in very specific and very good questions. It can be challenging for them to reach out for faith, so pray that God will make the desire for Him to be strong, that they will be requesting programming and volunteers will be allowed back in.



The work of God's Holy Spirit and the skill of the volunteers is evident each week in the lessons presented and the life challenges many of these youth and adults are facing. What they have learned so far is not serving them well. Often what the authorities in their life are teaching can be conflicting. This age is vital in their development and they are sorting out issues as they are transitioning from childhood to adulthood. It is not an easy time for any youth and the needs here

are great. Pray for these young people, and for the adults also, as they leave and go back to the environment they came from or to new homes and new relationships. Pray for the truth of God's Word to take deep roots in their hearts and that they learned the true meaning of love.

The Anoka County jail houses 248 inmates. In a highly controlled environment, volunteers coming in bring a more personal connection with life. Pray for the volunteers at the Anoka Co. Jail:



Greg & Sandy Tronson, Mary Zelin, Ron Sandstrom, Sally Marrier, Pat Anderson, Todd Johantgen, Christian Zelin, Keith Hedges, Howard Hastings, Keith Kottke, Dale Pehrson, Cory Demars, Doug Whitney, Bob Eddleston, Tom Velner, Mike Karlstad, Grant Hedges Jerry Frank, Ted Hajnasiewicz,

Kole Feist, Bill Messer & Dennis Nicholson are on sabbatical. Dewy Lysen is on board to start when they resume orientations. The staff we work with most there are Jill H and Mel. H.

Working with the youth: Joel Holter, Jim Carr, Tom Lucey, Roger Koskinen, Dale Jacobson, Mike and Kristen Stephan, Gary Irwin, Steve Ford, Cindy Harris, Jody Pedersen, Mark & Sue Deiman, Don Gibson, Dean Diers, Steve Shaw, Ron & Audrey Misiura. Sir Paul D., and Heather Stevens who sub occasionally. Derrick J. and Nate P. are staff to pray for. These programs serve around a hundred youth, church services range from 10 to 30 and other studies range from one to 25 participants each week.

The CARE program which is served by Chuck Kemp, Dan Bradley. The staff is Angela B. This program is for those with mental health issues who are court-ordered to treatment.

The ACWR is a Work Release or "Huber" program and is for inmates with court approval to work during their incarceration. Volunteers there are James & Diane Weber, Rande Christensen, Bill Hurney, Todd Johantgen, Steve Holmstrom, Greg & Sandy Tronson, Joe Edgerton, Lori Hoskins, (Debra Nelson is on sabbatical.) Amanda Rose, & Gary Irwin, Keith Domino, Rob Skime, Paul Hunkins, Lori Forstad, Paul Nei, and Tim Winn. Barb A., Carrie C., Susan F. & Catherine W. & Cesar M. are not sure if they will be able to come back. The jail staff is Matt H. Gary W., Matt H., Andrew T., Cory Rick S. Work/house/release houses 240 inmates but they are more spread out in the facility. Currently with covid they are running around 45.



Greg & Sandy Tronson, Mary Zelin, Ron Sandstrom, Sally Marrier, Pat Anderson, Todd Johantgen, Christian Zelin, Keith Hedges, Howard Hastings, Keith Kottke, Dale Pehrson, Cory Demars, Doug Whitney, Bob Eddleston, Tom Velner, Mike Karlstad, Grant Hedges Jerry Frank, Ted Hajnasiewicz,



Pray for Sherriff James Stuart and for Dylan W. and the commissioners who oversee the community corrections. Please pray for the corrections department and for the county as much unrest spills over from Hennepin County with the George Floyd/Derek Chauvin and Daunte Wright/ Kim Potter cases.

would be that.”

Joel says his testimony is not an easy one to give. “I was married to my first wife. She had been cheating on me for a year and I did not know it. I stayed another three months and a day. When I was coming home one day, walking down the apartment hall, I had flowers to give her. She did not want them and asked me to leave. I packed up my Chevy and was driving down I694. I was being selfish and thought I could show everyone how much I loved her and my daughter if I could drive my truck over the bridge. I was driving fast, bouncing around and having some fun. I had never done that before, but as I focused on the river, I heard a voice saying, “But you forgot about Me!”. As I focused on the lights of the bridge, which was an overpass bridge, the same voice spoke to my conscience and I knew I had forgotten about the LORD and was going to hell. I pulled the truck to the side quickly. When I went back the next day I saw a big pole, which I must have just missed.

I laid down and cried like a baby, then told the LORD that I would do what He wanted me to do, go where He wanted me to go and say what He wanted me to say. In treatment they do not like it when you say you were delivered from drugs, heroin and alcohol, but I was, - and I was so happy inside. I went back to the bars but did not drink. A year later when my “friends” told me that they didn’t want me there and I could go to the other side and drink my pop, I left and never went back.

Working with the guys I am working with now [as a recovery coach at MNATC]; I see that Satan tugs on you constantly and you get emotionally tired. Satan is always pushing your buttons. [Even after I came to know Christ], I went to the strip club. I did not look at the entertainment or drink but I went there just to try to feel normal. When I left, there were three street preachers who stopped and talked with me. I told them I was saved and they questioned that. Many people were going by; it was a congested and noisy spot near the bus stop. We prayed and I cried out loudly to the LORD in front of everyone. I would not go to church before that because I thought it was full of hypocrites, but then I went to Campus Church and got involved.

Some men there wanted me to do prison ministry but I was too scared. Years later Paul Peterson asked me and I said no. Paul was on the board with MEC then and volunteered at more than one facility. One of them was the youth program at Lino Lakes. I told Linda if they ask me again a year later, I will go. That is what happened, he asked me almost a year later to the date and I came. I started at “The Shelter.” The youth program which they used to call “The Shelter” is now called the “Non-secure”.

Before Joel met her, “the same voice that spoke to me when I was in the truck, spoke to me about Linda. ...After we had been married for a year, I asked the LORD to give us a house in a cul-de-sac with a lot of trees in the back yard and some property. A friend called me to look at one. It was too expensive but the LORD gave us a good deal and He provided. It was near to where I am ministering and it shows that God knows us and provides.”

When asked if there was anything he would like to say, his response was “It is an absolutely wonderful ministry, not only have I given my heart and time but I also do monetary donations, because it produces fruit.”



“When I asked God for a home with some specifications we could not afford, He provided one near where I have been ministering all these years....

Joel

“When you consistently do what you are supposed to do, things go quite well.” Joel Holter

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