

Fall 2016 Presbytery Prison Partnership (PPP) Newsletter!!

"...he sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners" - Luke 4:18

In this Newsletter....

In this Newsletter, you will find information on Bryn Mawr Park's Prison Correspondence Program; Mt Kisco Presbyterian Church's "Bars of Soap" program for prisoners; Paul Kim's story told at Korean Presbyterian Church, IPCANGO's at the UN; Ecumenical Advocacy Days; the General Assembly meeting in Portland, OR; and much more!

Bryn Mawr Park's Prison Correspondence Program

BMPPC is a small church with limited time, energy, and resources, like many of its sister churches. When BMPPC was looking for a way to mindfully explore issues that they, as a faith community, could support, while answering God's call to live lives as faithful disciples, they began to explore the work of the Presbytery Prison Partnership. In 2015, they started small and simply: sending Christmas cards to a list of individuals that Hans provided to them. They designated a Sunday Coffee Hour for everyone to choose a few names, add a brief note to the card, sign the card, and address the envelope. **Theresa Colyar**, the wonderful coordinator of the program at BMPPC, explains, "This was a powerful moment for us as a church family. It was a bonding moment in which one could feel the presence of the Holy Spirit at work. The proof of God's work being put into action was to soon follow...responses back from those who received the cards! The appreciation and encouragement WE received from so many was overwhelming".

It was such a positive experience for everyone that they decided to send cards on Easter. They plan to continue this practice of sending cards to prisoners. As often happens when a seed is planted, something grows. There are currently four church members who have taken it upon themselves to form ongoing "pen pal" relationships with prisoners! Eight prisoners now have support and a connection to community that has been absent for them. As Theresa pointed out so clearly, "There is a renewed energy and sense of purpose and commitment for our church family. Now our 'family' is expanding and our congregation is thankful on many levels".



Members of the BMPPC Letter Writing Group. Left to Right: Mar-Li Colyar, Rev. Win Peacock, Theresa Colyar, Judy Skoog. Missing: Teresa LaBianco

From One Loaf to...800 Bars of Soap!

Just as Jesus was able to take one loaf of bread to feed thousands, the women of **Mt Kisco Presbyterian Church** were able to take an idea and multiply it into 800 care packages for the women at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility.

Tanis Moore, Suzanne Katz and Louise Crawford attended a presentation by PCMK Pastor,

Dale Southorn and his wife, **Elisabeth**, on female incarceration and were moved to get involved. They went to one of **Nancy Gernert's** Women 2 Women presentations, where **Dorothy Muller** spoke about the living conditions for women within prison. Tanis, Suzanne and Louise knew that, right now, they could not make that kind of commitment to regularly visit a female inmate. But they were so impressed with Nancy and Dorothy's work, they knew that they wanted to do something that would fit into their lives.

Suzanne connected them to **Sister Mary Anne**, who works inside the gates. After months of negotiations with prison administration, they got the green light to donate 800 small gift bags, containing 800 Dove soap bars and 3,200 note cards for the inmates to be able to write to their families.

As is often the case, the "givers" end up being the ones feeling most "given to". A month after dropping off the gift bags, a packet arrived at PCMK, full of hand-written thank you notes from the inmates. They said things like "The soap smells so good" and "God bless you for your thoughtfulness". What a bar of soap can do...and how it can change lives. Tanis, Suzanne and Louise have committed to doing this every year, and are deeply appreciative of the financial help that they received from The Women's Council at PCMK, The Social Justice Committee at PCMK, The Islamic School of Northern Westchester, The Mount Zion Apostolic Church, and Labor of Love. Many hands packed love and compassion into the bags. It seems that both the love and compassion were felt by the female prisoners.



Women, children and men of three faiths came out to help to assemble the bags, into which they put an inspirational message for each inmate.

PPP Community Conversation at Jeffersonville Presbytery Meeting - June 4-2016.

On a lovely spring day, member churches of the newly established PP-Club gave an inspiring panel presentation of their prison ministry in an outdoor setting at the Jeffersonville church. An audience of fifty people listened to examples of various forms of prison ministry in which the PP-Club Churches are currently engaged: letter writing, Bible study groups with prisoners, The New Jim Crow book study groups, development of reentry programs and more; followed by a lively Q&A.

The initial PP-Club churches include: Bryn Mawr, Rye, Scarborough, Union, White Plains and Korean Church of Westchester.

The PP-Club is open to membership for other churches interested in prison issues.



Jeff Geary of White Plains talks about his church's study of Michelle Alexander's book, "The New Jim Crow"

Korean Presbyterian Church of Westchester Reaches Out to its Own

Paul Kim, an engaging, recently-released young man, was invited to tell his incarceration story to an

audience of 100 English-speaking congregants at the Korean Church in New Rochelle. In a moving presentation, Mr. Kim told of how he was incarcerated at the age of sixteen for his involvement in an unfortunate, violent event as part of a gang.



Jonah So, Asst. Pastor; Paul Kim; Hans Hallundbaek; and Taejoon Lee, Senior Pastor

He described four years spent in solitary confinement, where he turned to Christ. Paul eventually earned his college degree from Bard College, where he is now continuing his studies on a generous stipend.

International Prison Chaplains Association (IPCA) NGO's at the UN

On July 19, PPP organized a service at the UN Chapel, followed by a meeting, lunch, and tour of the UN for international NGO representatives to the UN on Prison Ministry, as well as some involved in Prison Ministry in this country. It gave all present the opportunity to discuss their work, its similarities and differences, in their respective countries and cultures.

Those in attendance included: **Martin Faber**, Germany, IPCA UN NGO representative Vienna; **Frank Stufen**, Switzerland, IPCA UN NGO representative Geneva; **Jean-Didier Mboyo**, Congo, IPCA VP and additional UN NGO representative; **Jean-Claude Mukanda**, Congo, IPCA, and additional UN NGO representative; **Hans Hallundbaek**, UN NGO representative USA; and those locally involved in prison ministry: **Jill Schaeffer**, (NY Theological Seminary professor at Sing Sing); **Kent McNamy** (elder at Brick Church, NYC); **Cathy Surgeoner** (Chaplain at Taconic DDSO); and **David Mason** (co-founding member of the Prison Partnership Club and minister at Union Presbyterian Church, Newburgh).



Left to Right: Kent McNamy, Jill Schaeffer, Dave Mason, Jean-Didier Mboyo, Frank Stufen, Cathy Surgeoner, Martin Faber (rear), Hans Hallundbaek in the UN Chapel

Below, Rev. Mason shares his thoughts on the day:

"It was a profound and deeply moving experience to not only worship with other chaplains from all over the world, but to speak German with colleagues from Europe and their families who were present. Praying in that chapel was a spiritually connecting experience, guided by Hans' generous spirit. It was mind altering to hear the chaplaincy experience from other countries, especially from the Congo, in how different community and cultural practices are in Africa. In addition, we learned how Europeans do more with psychological rehabilitation than we Americans do. It was spiritually challenging to be face to face with the immense cultural differences in other places and the absence of resources to do such fine work in Africa. One

realizes how privileged we are to have the resources that we do in the West.

The United Nations tour was superb, one I will never forget. Seeing world peace being unraveled a room at a time was significant and faith challenging for me. I loved it. The tour guide was extremely adept, and I am glad I made the trip.

Thank you for including me in a short but empowering experience that day, one I shall never forget.

+Rev. Dave Mason"

[Click for link to IPCA](#)

PPP Visits Orange County Jail Immigrant Detainees

Sarah Henkel, Lori Hylton, Peter Johnson and Hans Hallundbaek visited the Orange County Jail, a large prison complex just outside of Goshen City, on August 10. They were invited by members of **First Friends of NJ & NY**, a non-profit organization dedicated to dignity for immigrants.

This 800-bed facility, in addition to being a local, "traditional" jail, holds an average of 200 detained immigrants from around the world. A thorough facility tour revealed excellent volunteer opportunities in both the education and religious sector of the jail. It also demonstrated, on a practical level, the plight of foreign detainees in our vast immigrant detention system. Might your congregation be interested in this ministry?



[Click here for more information on First Friends](#)

General Assembly

Two-thousand people, of whom 600 were delegates, attended the General Assembly in Portland, OR in June. PPP Coordinator, Hans Hallundbaek, was an appointed Ruling Elder Delegate at the GA and reports that the experience was "very inspiring and totally joyous". The elections of our first female co-moderator team of **Denise Anderson** and **Jan Edmiston**, as well as our Washington, DC Office Director, **J Herbert Nelson**, as Stated Clerk were most exciting (and history making!) The approval of the South African Belhar Confession, by a ninety-four percent majority of the almost six-hundred delegates, was profound.



Belhar Confession Vote Results.

The confession centers on Unity, Reconciliation and Justice for all peoples, including those at the bottom of the social ladder. Combined with the top leadership changes, this bodes well for a promising new wind blowing in our church.

[Click here for more General Assembly information](#)

Save the Date, April 21-24-2017.

Ecumenical Advocacy Days (EAD) in Washington DC

Join PPP for a visit at Cherry Blossom



Hans leading a PPP Prison Workshop at NY Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, DC at the 2016 EAD event.

Time in DC.

Advocacy days are highly recommended for all who are dedicated to social justice issues. It provides inspiration and advocacy training for like-minded people of faith from across the country and vital access to lawmakers in the nation's Capital. [Visit the EAD 2017 Gathering website here](#)

Yunola Productions Presents

ALIVE!
55+ and Kickin'

Saturday, October 1, 2016
3:00 p.m.
Ecolab Theatre
Culinary Institute of America
1946 Campus Drive
Hyde Park, NY 12538
Tickets: \$50 - \$95
yunolaproductions.com

As Seen on 60 MINUTES

ALIVE! is a moving musical testament to overcoming adversity and living victoriously at any age. Featuring solid gold singers 55 years and older. Soulful, emotional, fun, and powerful.
Brown Paper Tickets: 800-838-3006

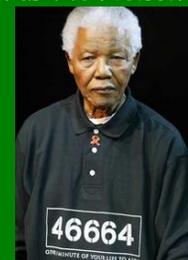
SAVE THE DATE!!

Theo Harris, a PPP Associate for three years, author of *Blessed and Highly Favored: Memoirs of a Multiple Felon*, and well known in the Hudson River Presbytery for his many presentations at our churches, is part of a performance group that has been on stage in Harlem for the last three years. The group has been featured on CBS's "60 Minutes" numerous times. They will be performing at the Ecolab Theatre at the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park on **Saturday, October 1, 2016 at 3:00 p.m.**

Tickets, ranging in price from \$50-\$95, can be purchased by calling Brown Paper Tickets at **1.800.838.3006**.

Mandela Rules

One of the focal points of the ACA 146th Congress in Boston this past August was the review of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, also known as the Nelson Mandela Rules. Developed in South Africa, they are named after the former prisoner of Robben Island turned President of South Africa. The Mandela Rules are an important tool to implement the UN Declaration of Human Rights into the global prison system. The key guiding principle states: "The treatment of prisoners should emphasize not their exclusion from the community but their continuing part in it".



Death Penalty Day...October 10

The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty is an alliance of more than 150 NGO's, bar associations, local authorities and unions. Founded in Rome in 2002, the aim of the World Coalition is to strengthen the international dimension of the fight against the death penalty. October 10, 2016, has been designated "the World Day Against the Death Penalty".

PPP's Facebook Page

Just a reminder that PPP has its own Facebook page, which we encourage you to both have a look at, and to "Write Something" that you would like to post or share with others about the important work that we are all doing.

We are very pleased to be sending the Fall PPP newsletter on Prison Ministry to you!!

Sharon Griest Ballen, Editor, PPP Newsletter
Hans Hallundbaek | Presbytery Prison Partnership (PPP) | hans@hudrivpres.org

STAY CONNECTED:

