

THE COMMUNITY OF
ST. DYSMAS

I was in Prison & You Came To Visit Me



Special 30th Anniversary Report

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30 YEARS OF GOD'S WORD BY GOD'S GRACE

Excitement and expectation welled as we approached the weekend of April 25 – 27 -- a busy weekend, full of joy and blessings, as the Community of St. Dysmas celebrated 30 years of God's Word by God's Grace. Amid the celebrations God's Word was proclaimed and hearts were lifted.

The celebration began with special worship in two of our four sites – MCIW and MCIJ, with the participation of special guests, the first pastor, Ed Nesselhuf and his wife, Diane, and the current Director of Prison Congregations of America (PCA), Mary Mortenson. During these services, Pr. Ed recited his poem, "What Was it Like for You, Dysmas?" and Mary shared God's Word. It was here, in MCIW then MCIJ that this all began thirty years ago.

Then, on Sunday nearly 70 people came to at Calvary Lutheran Church in Mt. Airy where the celebration began with Bishop Richard Graham of the Metro-DC Synod and Assistant to the Bishop Ron Schlack of the DE-MD Synod leading us, and Mary Mortenson preaching in a service of Word and Sacrament. Following the worship, was our dinner celebration and program that included testimonials from former CSD members and special recognition of former pastors. In his keynote address, Pr. Ed spoke of the life and resilience of this ministry.

Check out our photos at the end of this newsletter.

OUTSIDE LOOKING IN

"Our congregation so appreciated your sermon and spending time with us recently. You spoke of a population with which most of us don't have any experience. Now when we pray on behalf of those in prison, we have a new dimension to our understanding." *St Luke's Lutheran Church, Derwood, MD*

"We thank you for spreading the Good News of the work of the people of St. Dysmas. It is true that Christ can change lives and we were blessed to hear your stories of faith and courage...We would like to continue our discussion on ways our congregation can partner with the people of the St. Dysmas community." *Holy Spirit Lutheran Church, Eldersburg, MD.*

*Do you have a memory or inspiring story of an experience within CSD? If so, please share with us, and we will add your experience in coming editions of **Outside Looking In**.*

INSIDE LOOKING OUT

Before I joined the St. Dymas family my life was going in the wrong direction. St. Dymas has showed me the path I needed to walk. The path that our Lord wants all of his children to walk. That brings me to my favorite verse in the Bible, which is James 4:7-8 *“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”* That verse reminds me of all my flaws and the path of unrighteousness in which I walked with Satan. Now I have come to know our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in which I walk now and forever. **Michael Heacock, MCTC**

GET INVOLVED

JOIN WITH US IN PRAYER --

Join your prayers with these ... prayers from the *inside*

Please pray that Jesus will watch over and protect all of us who serve him. Pray for Richard C that he's released from court to the vets hospital. **Terry**

Pray for the homeless, sick, lonely, addicted, and suffering people in this world that God will shed his power and grace upon them and give them what they need to ease their suffering . I also would like to pray for my sister, Connie, who's struggling with addiction. **Fred**

Please pray for friends and family and for outside guests for safe travels. Please pray for me that the judges show favor on my behalf. **Russell**

JOIN WITH US IN WORSHIP AND IN THANKS GIVING

Why not have a special **CSD** Day at your congregation! To schedule a Sunday or other time for Pastor Rickel or Paula Thistle, AIM to visit your congregation to preach, to participate in an adult forum, or to meet at some other time, **contact us** at 443-306-1115 or CommunityStDymas@gmail.com.

If you feel a calling to participate or lead worship, participate in the music ministry, or simply participate to add your presence, please contact us at 443-306-1115 or CommunityStDymas@gmail.com.

JOIN WITH US IN YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Unlike other Lutheran congregations The Community of St. Dymas receives no internal financial support.

The necessary goal of CSD's Council is that every Congregation of our Synod and as many individuals as possible become financial supporters of The Community of St. Dymas. The best way your congregation can do this is by putting St. Dymas in your budget. This shows intentionally on your part and allows us to know we can count on you for support. Other possibilities might include special offerings either monthly or during special services such as Lent, unique fund raisers or include St. Dymas offering envelopes available for your people. If you come up with special ideas to raise contributions for The Community of St. Dymas we would love to know!

JOIN US WITH THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS

Thrivent Choice Dollars offers another way to support CSD. Through the Thrivent Choice Program, eligible members are designated Choice Dollars, based on insurance premiums,

contract values, and Thrivent Financial volunteer leadership. Check to see whether you are eligible to direct your Thrivent Choice Dollars to CSD on the Thrivent website www.thrivent.com/thriventchoice/program/index.html

Your dollars for CSD go far to support this ministry and to bring God's Word to many who so desperately need to hear God's grace, love and forgiveness.

WHO WE ARE

CSD – The Community of St. Dysmas – a Lutheran Congregation
within the walls of the Maryland Correctional Institution.

PASTOR – Rev. Gerry F Rickel

ASSOCIATE in MINISTRY – Paula S Thistle

DEACON -- Ray Toy

PRESENTLY WORSHIPPING AT THESE FACILITIES

MCIW – Maryland Correctional Institution – Women – women's facility in Jessup

MCIJ -- Maryland Correctional Institution – Jessup -- men's facility in Jessup

MCTC – Maryland Correctional Training Center – men's facility in Hagerstown

RCI – Roxbury Correctional Institution -- men's facility in Hagerstown

+ Please share this information with your congregation. +

I was in prison, and you came to visit me. Matthew 25:36b

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Bishop Graham and Bishop's Assistant Ron Schlack distribute Communion.



Pr. Rickel, Pr. Frederick, Chaplain Carr, Chaplain Bellamy, Dr. Erling (LTSG) and Pr. Price at worship



Former member Walter Talley giving testimonial, with Pr. Ed beside him.



Pastors Frederick, Nesselhuf and Rickel cut the anniversary cake.